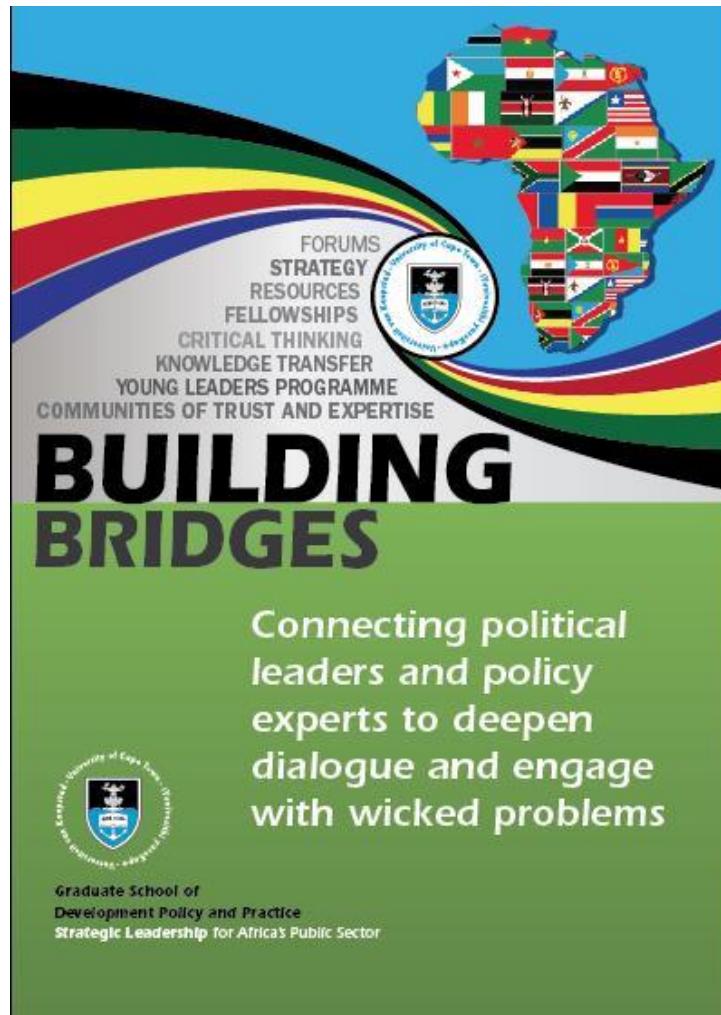


POLICYMAKERS' ROUNDTABLE

Driving African Economic Integration: Penetrating the Political Economy Obstacles

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BULDING BRIDGES PROGRAMME

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OBJECTIVES

The objective of the policymakers' roundtable on African Economic Integration, which is part of GSDPP's Building Bridges programme, was to identify some of the key obstacles to African Economic Integration, and strategies to address them. The roundtable brought together policymakers to identify and engage effectively with the levers of change using a political economy approach in order to move the integration agenda forward. It engaged with the following questions:

- What is the incentive, at a regional, national and sub-national level?
- What are the institutions that are helping to drive integration forward, or holding it back?
- What are the interests that are blocking more effective movement, or driving the movement forward?
- How do we develop effective coalitions of reform that will be able to counteract what appear to be blocking coalitions which prevent more effective African Economic Integration?
- How do we strengthen the reform coalitions to unlock the way forward?
- Where are the pressure points?
- Where are the levers of change?
- How do we drive change more effectively?
- What are some of the key areas where an effective research programme would help to drive the process forward?

SESSION 1: Setting the context: Identifying the obstacles and opportunities

Expectations and outcomes

While contemporary research suggests that there is actually a lot more progress in regional integration than meets the eye, the key issue is that a lot of what is happening is non-linear, not according to plan, and so it is exceedingly hard to measure the progress. Unless we can measure what we want to change, we will not know that it is changing. We need to establish what the impediments are and set the bar pretty high on ourselves as African intellectuals. We need to build this community of intellectuals where we can speak freely, commit to driving change, develop this collective mirror that we can hold up to African decision makers everywhere. We must show what the impediments are, but more importantly what the consequences are of taking incorrect decisions, or not taking decisions, which is frequently in itself a negative decision.

There is need to develop a candour about our issues. How do we hold our institutions accountable? We must look at how we can make decision making matter across the continent. Can we develop an African or Afrocentric development path? Beyond the declaration and fine words, what sits upstream of the decisions? The process at the roundtable would assist with the following questions: what impedes our collective integrative development? What will unblock that and what will be our basket of choices?

The political economy of African integration

A framework for thinking through the problems highlighted above was provided - the idea of the seven I's: initial conditions, ideas, institutions, individuals, interests, industrialisation, international order. The seven I's include both agency and structure.

Initial conditions are one of the structures. This refers to Africa's colonial legacy, the size of the project – integration is trying to unite a large piece of real estate – and extreme poverty of the continent. It is necessary to work out how to integrate this large piece of land, and what resources are used, seeing regional integration both as a means, but also as a constraint.

Ideas matter. There is a need to find ways of reconciling the demands of Pan-Africanism and the demands of the national project without undermining either. The idea of the state versus market has also affected how we think about regional integration.

Institutions: There is a strong awareness of Africa as a continent in the minds of African people and a strong sense of Africa and African-ness. But we have not found institutional correlates to that feeling. Why are national and regional institutions that are supposed to be the main agents for integration not performing their role?

Interests: There are fights that need to be resolved by government ministers involved in regional integration. In many cases the ministries that should be very active in regional integration, such as transport or trade, are marginalised. In addition, politicians are seen as rent-seeking and self-seeking. The main task is not to circumvent interest or to seek an autonomy that makes us detached from society, but actually to play politics by understanding what those interests are. More research on these interests is needed.

Industrialisation: On the one hand, we want integration to help us to industrialise. But at the same time, our lack of industrialisation makes it extremely difficult for us, compared to other regions. Africa's lack of industrialisation makes our integration path very difficult.

International order: The big founders of Pan-Africanism saw regional integration as a repositioning of the continent in a geopolitical sense and we should not lose sight of that. We have to realize that not everybody will be happy with Africa's attempt at regional integration. Not because they are mean spirited but because their interests may not correspond to our interests as a continent.

In light of the recent xenophobia in South Africa, it is important to bear in mind that we ought to think of a social Africa. If we think of Africa in purely economic terms, we will run into trouble. Recent events have also shown the importance of the national anchoring of the project. We had agreed on a Pan-African level that we would have *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* as our anthem and yet only one country (Namibia) plays both the national anthem and the Pan-African anthem.

On a positive note, a significant number of African leaders depend much more on economic development for their legitimacy than in the past which powerfully demonstrates that democracy influences policy in Africa today.

Africa seems to be far off early expectations of where it should be, partly due to structural adjustment and the Washington Consensus constraining development initiatives. But now we don't have any excuses, because we have had policy space for a while and that is what makes a big difference. It is important to protect that policy space, which at times requires extra effort. Africa is constructing a new narrative and it is basically about how we interpret structural transformation. Currently, we are equating regional integration, in a reductionist way, to trade. In terms of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, we are supposed to be in the fourth phase - coordination,

organisation of tariffs and non-tariff systems between regions, leading to a continental free trade area. In terms of where Africa is in terms of that expectation, of the eight regional economic communities (RECs) recognized by the African Union (AU), the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), which has 29 member countries is the largest community on paper, but is the weakest. It is the only one that does not have full economic union as its ultimate objective. Other RECs are making good progress in relation to the expectations of the Constitutive Act in the areas of free trade areas, customs unions and movement of people. Sometimes we are very hard on ourselves and harsh in the way we compare progress.

Africa is doing better in every single indicator than India, which is now the star performer of the world economy and has a population similar to Africa. (Mauritius is the number one investor in India.) It is important not be too negative lest we lose faith in some very complex processes that are at work. The regulatory systems of our countries, perhaps with the exception of South Africa, are unable to capture some of the more sophisticated evidence and data on intra-Africa trade, for example, in the telecoms and information sector. The volumes of intra-African investment are increasing by 23% annually. That's the average in the last five years. We have seen, through our studies that it is relatively easy, with some trade facilitation and transport investments, to double the intra-African trade, even with all the constraints within about five to seven years. Most of the funding is already arranged and the gap in relation to the level of ambition is reducing, so this is exciting.

We do not give enough credit. The narrative gets complicated because the relationship between the nationalist (people who are rooted and have a territorial identity that is stronger) and pan-African (a concept of the diaspora who did not have a specific territorial identity) does not match and has not matched and this is reflected in the widespread xenophobia in the continent. It is happening because the nationalist dream and practice that powered liberation and the Pan-African ideal of a post-colonial Africa have been in competition from the very beginning.

Africa can protect the space from outside interference by how it deals with domestic resource mobilisation. Africa has the capacity to earn a great deal more from taxation and drive a great deal more investment from domestic resources, properly mobilised. If we deal properly with domestic resource mobilisation and use this opportunity of politicians becoming interested in reformist policies for their own survival to push some of the agendas that are going to really transform the reality of regional integration, you will not see the elements of xenophobia that we are seeing now, and we will be a bit more satisfied with ourselves than we are right now. Let us lower the frustration – we need to see opportunities, because there are many.

Discussion

We have agreed to be fair and positive enough in our perspective to maintain motivation and momentum. We don't want to go back to the old days of Afro-pessimism but at the same time we cannot get complacent. We need to maintain high expectations and constructive criticism to guide us.

There will need to be an element of the top-down but there will definitely be an element of the bottom-up. We have observed that despite some of the weaknesses or lack of traction in the formal space, the private sector has surprised us; it has moved very quickly despite not having all the pieces

in place. We have also seen how civil society and intellectuals have come through to play their part in terms of the bottom-up. We still need to keep shaping the structure of integration, we cannot just leave it to entrepreneurialism, we also need to look at the role of states. We need strong champions in the state sector to play the rightful role that they should. Without strong champions at the state level momentum is lost. The big institutional pieces need to be put in place. Do the institutions function or not? How do we hold them accountable? What happens when you have big champions who are no longer playing a championship role in the way they ought to be?

PRESENTATION: World Bank report on the political economy of regional integration in Sub-Saharan Africa

The report attempts to demonstrate the comparative aspects of regional integration and change the perception in the World Bank about regional integration. The conventional wisdom on regional integration in Sub-Saharan Africa is that it offers fewer economic opportunities than other parts of the world. RECs in Africa are poorly designed and have little authority, unlike other parts of the world. Regional cooperation is rare in Africa. The conventional wisdom is however, wrong. Regional integration in Africa offers many economic opportunities and governments and the private sector are beginning to realize these gains. Failed/flawed RECs are a global pattern, not only an African one. Regional cooperation is becoming much more common in Africa. It is critical to set the record straight about economic integration. Not even the European Union is a textbook example of economic integration. It took more than 30 years from the inception of the European Economic Community to integrated borders; 35 years to the Maastricht Treaty; and close to 50 years to get the Euro. The Association of South Eastern Nations languished for years and Mercosur follows many failed RECs in Latin America.

Three factors that affect the success of attempts at economic integration include: having a lead government; private sector support; and the degree of complexity or number of actors involved. Some recommendations for facilitating greater integration efforts include: prioritize flexibility over rigidity; encourage simplicity over complexity; reach out to the private sector; and focus on joint infrastructure.

The reactions from the participants were that the report provided useful insights and showed the interest of the World Bank in regional integration to a greater degree than expected. However, the implicit division of Africa into Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), is contested. The founding documents of African integration should be taken into account and the World Bank should consider the entire continent not sub-Saharan Africa. It was argued that the report did not cite any African produced sources on regional integration such as AU and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) reports. The sequencing of the role of hegemons was not recognised. A lead government plays a significant political role but not in the beginning.

It was noted that the World Bank seems to have changed its position on regional integration, which previously was hostile to it, and associated it with industrialisation and preferential treatment organisation. The position of the World Bank seemed to be shifting. Previously the World Bank had had a pro-market but not pro-business approach because, until recently, it was opposed to state interventions to support private sector development.

SESSION 2: Aligning agendas: Leadership and accountability – The role of regional hegemons

The jury is out there whether a regional hegemon or leadership role is absolutely critical for the success of economic integration. Hegemons may not have much of a role as drivers of regional economic integration but may have a role in keeping the process going. This regional hegemonic role comes not only with responsibility but also leadership.

The following points were made to tackle the issue of leadership. The first one was about the immediate post-independence period. Given the artificiality of boundaries, that process was schizophrenic – independence versus integration. The second point was that when we shifted from the goal of political liberation to the goal of development, from the Organisation of African Unity to the African Union, the challenge of coherence became absolutely central. Coherence between continental and regional strategies and coherence between regional and national strategies has had a consequence on the type of leadership needed to move these processes. The third point was about hegemons. The theory is that we need a strong locomotive to drive regional integration but these locomotives are facing internal challenges which will need a certain type of leadership that can help them move beyond just the management of internal issues, so that they can prioritise regional integration.

The issue of hegemons was also framed around four issues in the form of questions to highlight how sensitive the role of hegemons can be.

- Why regional hegemons? Why the regional integration project in the first place? What is their significance? Conventional wisdom is that you need a driver/champion but it has not been tested. We also have to define the common benefits of integration and they should be defined on paper. Once you have listed those benefits, you have to agree on a formula for sharing those benefits. There should also be mechanisms for early identification of potential causes of conflict or disagreement and dispute resolution in place.
- What are the interests and political incentives for the role of these hegemons? What are the driving forces for these hegemons to play the leadership roles that we expect them to play?
- Accountability for who and for what purposes? It's about accountability of regional hegemons to the institution, to the regional organisation. The tendency for big countries is to think that they are over and above those organisations.
- What is it that the regional hegemons should not do in order for them to have a good presence and drive the agenda? One is the issue of domineering. There is always a temptation for forcefulness and imposition. It is important for a regional hegemon to be willing to underwrite risks. An integration project comes with risks and with costs. Because of the position of the regional hegemon, conciliation forms a better approach, in terms of the way decisions are taken and negotiations are made. The hegemon should be seen as the invisible hand driving the political process.

Discussion

Africa is the only region where we talk about hegemons that are not related to war, that have not imposed themselves through war. We have to be a bit hesitant about using this language, which relates hegemons directly to security in the African context. Normally the impetus for integration should come from other sources, other than the hegemon itself. It can be the private sector because they want to have expanded opportunities.

It is important to relate Africa's integration experience because it is relatively fresh and UNECA together with the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the AU have developed a regional integration index to be released in 2015.

The definition of hegemon should be expanded because hegemon can also be in terms of ideas and in terms of soft power.

There are sacrifices that have to be made by the hegemons. What are the responsibilities of the powerful? What concessions should they be making rather than what programmes they should be driving?

Regional hegemons can provide leadership but they can't work on their own. They have to work with others. How can we build a concept of regional integration in which the small players can also see their future, and where the big players have to move, but they can't move without the smaller countries. It is a consensus around a set of values and a sense of common benefit that can move integration forward.

It is important not to lose sight of the issue of voice and accountability and the role of citizens. Can the citizens who are likely to gain from integration outweigh the voices of the interest groups that fear that they will lose with greater integration?

One of the unresolved issues is whether a regional hegemon is a reality to be dealt with or is it just an illusion? What are the parameters/criteria that define a hegemon? Three criteria seem to have evolved: size, power and resources. Some say that it has to do with relevance, leadership, capacity and diplomacy and not just size. Others argue it has to do with economic progress. These are all debateable.

Whatever the term used, a regional hegemon or a champion is necessary to the integration process because you need a driver. There must be a key stakeholder that is putting some weight behind it. How that player will evolve and how it should conduct itself so it does not create fears of domination are questions worth considering.

When we have well-functioning, strong institutions, then the need for regional hegemons decreases. Where those regional institutions are weak, hegemons must play their role. But in situations in which there are hegemons, then the onus is on them to be farsighted and benevolent, and to be leaders, not bullies.

SESSION 3: Investing in infrastructure and development for African integration

Regional infrastructure is extremely time-consuming and costly. Neighbourhood effects make projects and raising funds difficult and increases the risk factor. It is therefore important to find mechanisms to remove the complex risk factors and to bring in a consequential way of addressing this. The most important structures are the RECs themselves. But since the implementing agencies are not always attuned to the problems, you sometimes need a separate vehicle. Emerging instruments in the last five years to try to confront this problem of financing infrastructure include: the diaspora bond, local currency bonds, syndicated loans by regional banks, regional infrastructure pools, private public partnerships and at the national level, big foreign loans from China.

The AfDB approaches infrastructure financing and strategies through country and regional strategy papers. It has a dedicated department called the Operations and Regional Integration Department (ONRI), which is an implementer for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Looking ahead, the challenges of infrastructure development and finance include:

- A maintenance deficit: So much money is being put into infrastructure but not into maintenance, in terms of doing it or having the capacity to do it.
- The role of the private sector: How do we involve them, especially the domestic private sector?
- How to use natural resources: A lot of countries see the natural resource boom as a source of necessary funds.
- Urban infrastructure: People move through urban areas and we need to develop them as connectors

The Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) is an infrastructure financing institution which finances infrastructure in accordance with what it generally thinks will promote regional integration and development.

It has developed two equations: the supply side excellence and demand side. Supply side excellence is about strategic planning capacity, choosing the right kind of project, preparing that project for finance, delivering that project on budget and on time, and having the operation and maintenance. Not taking the demand side into account is becoming a problem and governments have to apply their minds more with this as they deal with supply side deficits.

There is generally a lack of regulatory frameworks and effective risk mitigation frameworks in Africa. There is also poor selection of projects and the lack of bankable projects. We still have not grappled with how politicians extract rents from infrastructure projects. What is really worrying for DBSA is that the global economy is in the end of the commodity boom cycle. Commodity prices have declined, which means incomes to governments have declined and much of the loans that have been given to countries are in dollars. The dollar is massively appreciating against local currencies. Eventually, there will be arrears and financing in Africa is going to become a little bit more expensive than it was. DBSA has to start preparing for a few more defaults than there were before.

At the most general level, the logjam can be broken through a combination of new ideas, new actors, or newly empowered actors and new incentives and constraints. Where are these going to come from? One part of the necessary ideas relate to a meta-narrative, a sort of replacement for the liberation narrative that gives coherence to a Pan-African level. Other important levels of ideas are mezzo and micro ideas. There is also need for bottom-up ideas.

If we think about the fundamental aims of regional integration, and one of those is economic transformation, it is driven by two fundamental dynamics. The first is shifting people and resources out of low productivity activities into high productivity activities. The second is how do we enable firms and people with ideas to get access to resources to boost their activity so that businesses can grow and people can start businesses and boost the productivity of the economy. There is also the crucial role of connectivity: transport, telephony, information technology and electricity, and then we need to think carefully about the incentives and the constraints.

The first conclusion drawn is that if we want to ensure successful regional integration that will drive economic transformation then we cannot think about regional infrastructure without thinking simultaneously about national infrastructure. If we can get the two to go hand in hand, if we can drive regional infrastructure investments alongside national ones, then we are not only likely to get higher returns from both sets of investment but also to generate much greater support for the regional initiative as it proceeds.

Other important factors in driving infrastructure include governance. We need to get a handle on the extent to which rent seeking behaviour or other kinds of distortions introduced in the political system can affect the efficiency of infrastructure spending. For example, research by the International Growth Centre on road building in Kenya in periods of autocracy and democracy shows that ethnic favouritism undermines development. In periods of autocracy, Kenyan districts with the same ethnicity as the president received three times as much expenditure on roads from 1963 onwards. In addition, the research revealed that democracy is associated with the elimination of this favouritism. Even imperfect democratic institutions perform an important role in constraining the executive.

We have to think very differently about how we deliver different types of infrastructure and be aware of the different possibilities. Paul Collier has a typology where he identifies four different types of infrastructure that are financed in quite different ways: infrastructure for free; urban infrastructure through effective property taxation; infrastructure in rail roads subsidised by the state; and user paid infrastructure.

Discussion

Donors may be partially aware of the ethnic allocation of their aid.

The training of economists in Africa since independence has gone through several shifts and there has been an enormous waste of skills through this shift. There is need to think about training at national level for economists, engineers and project managers.

There are three deficits to highlight in NEPAD:

- NEPAD is weak in governance dimensions that have an impact in infrastructure development. We have a huge deficit in terms of project preparation capacity, from regional to national level.
- Huge deficit in project preparation capacity; It is not a problem of lack of finance but a lack of bankable projects.
- NEPAD still does not know how to go about the management of trans-boundary projects. It has some success stories but still has a long way to go.

One way of understanding the issue of investing in infrastructure development for regional integration/redefining economic transformation is to start redefining the objectives of regional integration. An exclusive focus on trade is the wrong approach. Development should be the focus.

It seems that the greatest challenge we have is technical capacity when it comes to infrastructure. Apart from South Africa, most of the countries on the continent have lost their capacity to be able to develop and be part of infrastructure construction. This capacity used to be there in the 1970s and 1980s.

Africa is dealing with a very particular history of structural adjustment where state functions and universities were pared down to the minimum. It is a fascinating history of how capacity is undermined.

The time has come for creation of institutions to capacitate governments on the science of infrastructure. This is becoming a very important science and the DFIs are in a state of evolution.

Technical capacity is important but fundamentally important also is accountability and transparency. We need to have monitoring and evaluation built in but also transparency wrapped around every dimension of this or we are going to continue to have distortions.

SESSION 4: Deepening a common vision and identity and building trust across Africa

If we can determine how to deepen a common vision, identity and trust then maybe we can come up with a lasting solution for the problems that ail regional integration.

The East African Community (EAC) example would serve us all because it has been through all kinds of iterations since its inception in 1917. At the time when it broke down in 1977 it was the most advanced regional bloc anywhere. It had common services, a single port and railway company, a telecom company and a regional airline. Before that it even had a single currency, a central bank and a ministry for East African affairs in the 1960s. It even survived political changes in 1971 and continued to survive until 1977 when it collapsed due to ideological reasons. It was revived 23 years later by Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda and nine years later, it was joined by Rwanda and Burundi. This coming together again does not seem to be based on having a common vision or even trust and identity, but rather because of being located in the same geographical region.

The EAC is likely to fail again because its members do not agree on anything. They have agreed on far too many things, such as a monetary union and a political federation and the closer they get to

realising these goals, the more agitated the leaders become. There is a need to agree on political choices and standards.

Another threat to regional integration in the EAC is that countries are moving at different speeds. The so-called coalition of the willing (Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda) is implementing infrastructure projects and moving ahead while Tanzania is holding back. The three countries have a single visa and people do not need passports to cross from one to the other. The reason why Tanzania has been holding back has nothing to do with what the people of Tanzania want or do not want but is due to a personality clash between the presidents of Tanzania and Rwanda. This shows that the EAC has not learned from the break up.

There is no real compelling reason for the Community other than trade but that is not compelling enough. Until members agree how to share the benefits, for example, tourism, how do we motivate each country to do what they need to do to make the EAC the number one destination in the world? There is need to redefine the objectives, agree on minimum political standards, learn from the past and be realistic.

Discussion

How do we change the narrative of regional integration from a focus on trade? People everywhere want a decent job, income, and the ability to give their children a better life in an environment of peace and security. Is there a way we can refocus the objectives of regional integration so that we focus on this common vision? That is not to say the big vision of pan-Africanism is not important, but that it is not enough.

While development has become a tangible aspiration at national level there is also greater accountability between leaders and citizens than there was in the past. The concept of virtuous circles and regional integration – that the relationship between greater accountability, desire for better lives for citizens and the push for growth and development is linked to regional integration – is something that we can build on.

The thesis that says that the identity of a leader shapes the persona of the state and the way the persona of that state is shaped both in its external interactions with other states is fascinating. In trying to modernise our societies we have to build impersonal and professional civil services and bureaucracies because that is the basis of meritocracy. The schizophrenia or paranoia of our leaders very much shapes the formation of our institutions, which presents the problem: How do we break out and build meritocratic institutions which are resistant to the imposition of the persona of our big leaders?

Saying that we need to move beyond trade, that politics and the social aspects are important is inviting us to take a political economy approach to regional integration. The economics are important and ultimately the end goal is about improving the living standards of the people. How do we actualise the key provisions of REC documents, charters etc? We need to put a lot of effort and pressure and other actors, such as civil society and the private sector, have a role to play in demanding accountability from politicians.

While trade is not enough, it is important because it is about creating wealth and one of the ways of creating wealth is to trade. Of course there are other issues of inequality of resource distribution that determine whether or not the wealth that has been created goes around.

There is a big gap between what the documents say and what the leaders end up doing. Citizens of East Africa are still very far from being able to hold their leaders to account. There is a huge chasm between the people and the political establishment. So to rely on the documents is a bit farfetched. The documents are there, but the leaders choose to do what they want.

If we cannot get the Southern African Customs Union right, what are the chances that we are going to get the discussions in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and beyond right? The last straw that is going to break the camel's back is probably the question of who sets the tariffs. It comes back to whether there is accountability to make regional integration work. Is this regional economic approach ever going to take us forward when there is national interest chauvinism?

Regional development needs to make sense for national development. Great schemes we think are Pan-African but are not seen as national, are problematic. There is conflict between accountability and autonomy of institutions.

Trade integration always creates winners and losers so we have to put in place a cushion and capacity. Development integration as a concept is a big idea that needs to be fleshed out. Currently, everyone is talking about industrial development and rules of origin. There is need to start with the basics and limit ourselves to what is tangible in the near future.

Accountability points us to define goals which are clear, feasible and measurable. It points us to goals that matter. In our context, these are goals that link very strongly with economic transformation. Accountability connects the national and the regional, because the national will always be important in delivery. Accountability is a very practical force and can be a very powerful idea in addressing many of the issues that have been discussed so far.

The session provided a much sharper diagnosis of the problem and recognised that we have to deal with not only the measurable but also intangible issues. What do the next 10 years look like and what are the pointers that we are heading in the right direction or not in the context of these intangibles?

CLOSING SESSION: From recommendations to action

Perhaps we should build in a prospective dimension to our work on regional integration where we imagine futures of Africa, which seems to a very useful exercise.

Regional integration must mean more trade. But we have to realize that trade is solving an efficiency question, bringing about huge structural changes. That brings about industrial policy, the whole debate about whether these markets are protected or not protected and how costs should be shared and deliberate instruments for correcting the market. Unfortunately, if member states have no national industrial policy, how can we imagine a regional industrial policy?

There is a new wave of young Africans, mostly in the diaspora, who talk about Afropolitanism. That is the original headache of Pan-Africanism, the tension between the diasporic vision and the nation state. The absence of black South Africans in this agenda is disturbing. When South Africa is integrating into the rest of Africa, we see a lot of white-owned companies. Black South Africans are not visible as tourists, business people, or in meetings such as this one.

Is there a set of projects that we could easily implement through regional integration but by not going through regional integration instruments? Having aviation hubs that make flying cheaper is something that could be proposed by working out the costs that we pay and explaining to everybody that the current costs do not make sense and that there are alternatives. Africans have relaxed border crossing for everybody else except Africans. It is like there is a self-hatred that will always undermine the regional integration project. Can we tackle these two issues (one is economic and the other is political) to render regional integration projects irrelevant? How do we go around politicians to get things going?

It is necessary to find a modern way of defining Pan-Africanism in a way that young people will understand. One way to redefine it is by implementing realistic, tangible concrete actions and projects that will make people feel that they are African. If regional integration is to be on the agenda, it needs to be in terms of solving basic problems and achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

There are a number of issues and areas that we need to explore intellectually and conduct research on:

- The issue around national dynamics and regional narratives: How do we use the regional integration project to fill the gap around whatever shortfalls and challenges we will see from the commodity collapse?
- The power of ideas and the disconnect between the regional and the national: What are the pro-integration constituencies? What are the anti-integration constituencies? We need to understand why they take the positions that they take. Labour is supposed to have a progressive orientation by its very nature. What is the position of labour in other countries? Are they pro, are they anti? What is the position of the private sector?
- National constituencies: Sometimes we crucify our political leaders but sometimes they respond to the national constituencies. We need to understand the national dynamics much more.
- Unpacking the components of the integration agenda: For example, in SADC there is a tension between trade and industrialisation. The free movement of persons is also an area of contention. How do we get there? What are the issues, what are the key constituencies? Why is it that some countries on the continent have been able to make it happen?

We should not discount the organic solidarity that, in spite of all the challenges, has made our coming together and working together possible. That is why other regions have fallen apart and Africa has not. We can refine it, we can repackage it, but we must hold onto it.