

## NEGOTIATING ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN EU AND ECOWAS: IMPLICATIONS FOR WEST AFRICAN INTEGRATION

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### Abstract

European Union (EU) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have been negotiating Economic Partnership Agreement for over fourteen years without significant progress. The stalled negotiation is affecting integrative initiative of ECOWAS vision 2020:20. This study not only interrogated the prolonged negotiations of the economic partnership agreement between EU and ECOWAS but also investigated the reasons for the prolonged negotiations and its implications for West African integration. The study adopted a combination of historical and descriptive survey designs. The population for the study was the ECOWAS member states. Qualitative data, supported by structured and unstructured interviews will be applied. Secondary data would be obtained from relevant books, Internet and other documents from EU and ECOWAS secretariats. Descriptive statistics and content analysis will be used in analysing the data. The study adopted Zartman theory of the weak versus the strong and neo functionalism. The study found out that the unfavourable clauses and selfish interests among the ECOWAS leaders are prolonging the EPA among other factors. The study recommended that ECOWAS countries must eschew self interest, overcome issues associated with distrust among member states, mobilise and sensitise patronage and consumption of local products amongst others, in order to promote integrative economic partnership negotiation and trade bloc

**Keywords:** Negotiation, Partnership, Integration, Implications, Economy, Policy, Environment, Performance implication

### INTRODUCTION

The partnering option, to facilitate trade relations and cooperation in achieving integration and economic development has become very pertinent. The nations in Europe and other parts of the world are forming regional and sub-regional groupings to tackle the encountered problems of development and integration, by trading with one another. Consequently, international trade has played a crucial role in the historical experience of particularly the developing world, (Torado and Smith 2004). To them, throughout Africa, Asia, the middle East, and Latin America, primary product exports have traditionally accounted for a sizeable proportion of individual gross national products, while in some of the smaller countries up to 25 per cent or more of the monetary GNP is derived from the overseas sale of agricultural and other primary products or commodities such as coffee, cotton, cocoa, sugar, palm oil, bauxite and copper.

Since many of the less developed countries depend mostly on primary products for foreign exchange earnings, this has become a problem as the situation continues to persist because the prices of these agricultural products are often unstable and are at risk. In addition to their export dependence as posited by Torado and Smith (2004), many developing countries rely, generally to a greater extent, on the importation of raw materials, machinery, capital goods, and consumer products to fuel their industrial expansion and satisfy the rising consumption aspirations of their people. For most developing nations, import demands have increasingly exceeded their capacity to generate sufficient revenues from the sale of exports.

The general philosophy of the EPA is to gradually transform the relationship between Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the European Union (EU) from one of dependency to one of mutual trade partners in the long run. The proposed agreement recognises the different levels of development of both economic blocs by allowing ECOWAS member countries to apply safeguards to protect their upcoming industries and sensitive products as well as foreseeing trade related support for West African countries under Economic Partnership Agreement Development Programme (EPADP). The target is to open up its market once signed while retaining the right to protect a share of its sensitive industries from European competition.

Furthermore, the Cotonou new agreement supports the economic development of ACP countries and recognises their sovereign rights to make their own decisions regarding their economy and development. It will also benefit sustainable development and poverty reduction, because Article 34, Objective 1, of the agreement states that: 'Economic and trade cooperation shall aim at fostering the smooth and gradual integration of the ACP states into the world economy, with due regard for their political choices and development priorities, thereby preventing their sustainable development and contributing to poverty eradication in the ACP countries' ([Http://www.ecowas.int/](http://www.ecowas.int/)).

It is crucial that commitments to poverty reduction are central to trade agreements; apart from being an end, it should also further people's capabilities and opportunities. The observation is that most of the time, the costs and benefits of trade are distributed unequally, deepening inequality by bringing prosperity to the little but increased poverty to the majority.

Other reasons for the EU-ECOWAS partnership agreement is also seen in the increasing threats of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and its cross-border implications, saying there is need for ECOWAS to draft a holistic maritime strategy to deal with regional threat posed by this phenomenon. Ambassador James Gbeho also included the resurgence of rebellion and banditry in Mali and other states in the Sahel region fuelled by unending crisis in Libya as part of the challenges faced by ECOWAS. Ouedraogo is not ignorant of the scourge of terrorism, which is gradually setting in the region.

The need to get an enabling environment where African products can be imported and proliferated without charges or tariff is another reason for going into the partnership. The reasons for ECOWAS partnership are inexhaustible. This is in line with the ACP – EC partnership agreement signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000 and revised in Luxemburg on 25 June 2005 and in Ouagadougou on 22 June 2010. The agreement is commonly referred to as the 'Cotonou Agreement'. Consequently because of the importance of the links between the European Union, its member States and the West Africa Region and the values which those parties share, EU members States and the West Africa Region wish to strengthen their close ties and to establish a lasting relationship based on partnership, development, and solidarity.

Also worthy of note is the Conviction of the agreeing parties to recognise the need to promote economic and social progress for West African people. This is to promote sustainable development and environmental protection requirements; as well as the principles laid down in the UN Charter, to respect human right. Likewise is the regard to the need for greater integration amongst the State of West Africa, for stronger relations between Europe and Africa. The task of the ECOWAS and the WAEMU is to promote regional cooperation and integration in anticipation of a West Africa Economic Union. This is with a view to raising living standards, maintaining and

increasing economic stability, strengthens relations amongst member States and contributing towards the progress and the development of the African continent. Essentially, the reduction and eventual eradication of poverty, sustainable development and the smooth successful integration of the ACP countries makes the partnership between EU and ECOWAS imperative.

Other philosophies for the EPA stemmed from the millennium development goals declaration, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2010. These include eradication of hunger and extreme poverty and the development objectives and principles agreed at UN conferences. This is to provide a clear vision and must underpin the partnership between West Africa region and the European Union and its member's status within the framework of this agreement. With the EU and its member States wishing to provide significant support for West African reform effort and adjust at economic level in terms of social development, whereas ECOWAS have undertaken to implement the joint EU – Africa strategy. This is with regard to the difference in the level of economic and social development between the West Africa region on the one part and EU and its members States on the other part. Since the need for the West Africa region's integration and economic development process needs to be strengthened, the EPA is justified. Also since the West Africa region includes a large number of LDC's and thus faces serious difficulties on account of its particular economic situation and its specific requirements relating to development, the promotion of its trade and its finances, is needed based on the gradual asymmetrical liberalisation of trade in goods and services, to the benefit of States of the West African region. This is together with the fact that the EPA must be a development tool serving to promote in particular sustainable growth, increase in West African States production and export capacity. There is also the need to support the structural conversion, diversification and competitiveness of West African economics, to bring about the development of trade, technology and job creation in West Africa and attract investment to the region. Reaffirming furthermore, that stability and a lasting peace are factors crucial to the achievement of genuine regional integration in West Africa, to which EPA will have to contribute, the partnership is pertinent to both EU and ECOWAS.

### **Methodology**

The study is basically a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research; however it adopted the descriptive mode of analyses. This section also includes: the research design, data sources and how they relate to the objectives of the research, study population; sampling procedures and techniques; and instruments used to collect data.

### **Research Design**

Research design is the framework or blueprint that specifies how data will be collected and analysed so that a researcher who is interested in the same area of study can use the work to confirm or refute the claims of the initial investigation, tracing the historical background of the economic partnership agreement between the EU and ECOWAS, with regards to trade, development and integration in the West African sub region.

**Population:** The population in this study are the ECOWAS and EU states which comprise 15 and 27 members respectively. The member states of ECOWAS include Nigeria, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Republic of Benin, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Liberia, Guinea, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, and Mauritania. The member states of the EU are twenty seven (27) in number, and these are: Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxemburg, and Netherlands. The EU has expanded to include several central and eastern European countries such as: Poland, the Czech republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, and Bulgaria.

**1.6.3 Samples Selection:** The sample selected for this study was the ECOWAS being the reluctant partner in the negotiations of the agreement. Within the West African sub region, two countries were selected as sample for the study. These include Ghana and Nigeria. Ghana was selected because of

her INTERIM status. Cote d'Ivoire also has the status of INTERIM EPA hence, the selection of one out of the two countries. Ghana was also chosen because of the country's agrarian dependent economy.

Nigeria on the other hand was selected because of her FULL EPA status. The two countries selected within the West African countries provided fertile grounds for the examination and investigations of the implications of the negotiations on the sub regional economic integration.

### **Theoretical Framework:**

This study is situated in Zartman theory (1971) which carries the opposite title of 'the politics of trade negotiations between Africa and the European economic community 'the weak confront the strong'. Noted in the exposition of the proponent of the theory are the divergence of interest between member of ECOWAS and EU and therefore the approach of the two blocs of the economic partnership question. Also ECOWAS not adopting same and equal opportunities and conditions for negotiating EPA are not the same and equal for the two blocs of actors, namely the poor; until now most heavily debt ridden, badly organised mostly agricultural producing and/or natural resources exporting economies of the ECOWAS sub-region on the one hand, and the wealthy, relatively physically buoyant, well organised, industrially and the technological advanced and capital-or/and industrial good exporting economies of the EU on the other.

Germane also to this paper, is the theory of the centre-periphery arrangements in international politics (Goldstein and Pevehouse 2013), which brings out the nature of the relation as regards the gains and the pains of the two regional groups-EU and ECOWAS, This gains and pains are better situated or understood in the dependency and world-system study approach or theory, influenced by Marxist and dependency school of thoughts, which represent the most recent efforts to interpret world's politics in terms of an integrated capitalist division of labour (Kegley & Blanton, 2011, Anderson, 2005). To them, the capitalist world economy, which emerged in the sixteenth-century Europe and ultimately expanded to encompass the entire globe, is viewed as containing three structural positions: a core or centre (strong well-integrated states whose economic activities are diversified and centred on possession and use of capital), a periphery (areas lacking strong state machinery and engaged in producing relatively few unfinished goods by unskilled, low-wage labour (Kegley, Jr. & Blanton 2011). They went further to assert, that the dependency school, hypothesised that less developed countries are exploited because global capitalism makes them dependent on the rich countries that create exploitative rules for trade and production.

### **Review of Literature:**

Authors and Scholars in international relations, organisations and political economy (Goldstein & Pevehouse 2013 Cohn 2012, Balaam & Dillman 2011, Spero & Hart 2010, Odell 2006 Spero 1980, Mitrany 1975, Zartman 1971 Haas 1964), have at different times made attempts toward espousing the world of trade and partnership negotiations in a globalised world as it affects the social, economic, and political development of states. This research therefore elucidates succinctly the level of interactions and interrelations between and among states towards achieving trade blocs, integration and development. The section looked at negotiation as a conceptual framework; negotiation as an activity and discipline; the various approaches to negotiations and agreements; types of negotiation and agreements; debates on economic partnership agreement between EU and ECOWAS; historical background of EU – ACP – ECOWAS Cotonou negotiations; issues about free trade; the political questions and regional integration; the stalled nature of EU – ECOWAS EPA negotiations; the politics and theory of negotiating EPA and gap in literature. There is no gainsaying the fact that several authors and scholars have worked on the theme stated above however, time and space will not allow the researcher to exhaust all of them in this study.

#### **2.1 Negotiation: A Conceptual Framework**

Negotiation is the art or science of security agreements on issues of conflicting or conflicting interest and values between two or more parties who are interdependent, and who are seeking to

maximise their outcome or payoffs through a non-violent means or process and based on mutual acceptance of or/ and commitment to such a means or process. According to Fisher and Ury (1992), negotiation is a fact of life. Negotiation is a “back-and-forth communication designed to reach an agreement when you and the other side have some interests that are shared and others that are opposed” (1992:6).

Henry Kissinger sees negotiation as, “a process of combining conflicting positions into a common position, under a decision rule of unanimity” (Kissinger, 1969). Negotiation is a central component of national policy-making processes from setting agendas, to determining what issues are to be addressed by policy makers, exploring options, finding solutions and securing needed support from relevant parties in order to ensure that planned policies are sustainable (Alfredson & Kungu, 2008). It has been argued that policy formation related to international trade agreements should take into account broader issues of public welfare, natural resource management and local subsistence economies in order not to jeopardize the development and poverty reduction prospects of developing nations and avoid an increase in domestic conflicts (Hall, 2006; Ramirez, 1999, cited in Alfredson & Kungu, 2008:9)

Alfred and Kungu (2008) maintain that while formal definitions of negotiation vary, theorists do accept certain basic tenets. Foremost among them are the assumptions that parties who negotiate agree in at least one fundamental respect; they share a belief that their respective purposes will be better served by entering into negotiation with the other party. Implicitly then, negotiating parties have come to the conclusion, at least for a moment, that they may be able to satisfy their individual goals or concerns more favourably by coming to an agreed upon solution with the other side, than by attempting to meet their goals or concerns unilaterally. It is this mutual perception that leads to the onset of negotiations and betrays the dependence that exists (to whatever degree) between negotiating parties. This common interest in a shared agreement is the starting point for the “common interest and mutual dependence that can exist between participants in a conflict with which, Schelling writes, “negotiation is concerned” (Schelling, 1960 cited in Alfred & Kungu, 2008).

Adekanye (2006) further points out that negotiation is only possible if/where/when the parties have achieved, or are close to achieving, or find themselves having a convergence of interest; a readiness for settlement such as the “timing for” and “ripeness of” negotiation and seizing the initiative at opportune moment; or even threat of circumstances such as the threat of force, state of desperation, or of a mutually hurting statement. The seven elements of principled negotiation according to Alfred and Kungu (2008) include identifying interests, people, alternatives, identifying options, criteria/legitimacy, commitments, communication.

According to Adekanye (2006), the most important element in any negotiation are the ‘parties’ (which also according to him can be found variously referred to in the literature as “actors”, “opponents” “adversaries”, “negotiating adversaries”, or “partners”). Thus according to Adekanye,(2006: 2):

Parties opt for negotiation only when they are ready to do so, although it may be because the parties now observe or sense a convergence taking place regarding the issues of conflicting interest or values hitherto dividing them. But the resolve to negotiation an end to conflict may have arisen from realization that alternative, usually unilateral methods of achieving a satisfactory result are blocked and the parties feel that they are in an uncomfortable and costly predicament that is the moment, in the exponents’ view, to grab onto proposals and initiatives for a negotiated settlement.

In essence, all other elements of negotiation depend on the attitudes, actions, responses and willingness of the parties involved. Although Adekanye (2006) places emphasis on the necessity of parties’ involvement in consolidating and sustaining negotiation settlements, he, however, states that the existence of parties and other elements listed above is not sufficient to ensure success of the negotiation process.

### **Negotiation as an Activity and Discipline**

Negotiating international trade agreements has become a full-time job for developing countries. They negotiate often in pairs, in regional groups, and as members of the World Trade Organization (WTO), where they make up the majority of members. The WTO in particular is one of the premier sites where globalization will be either managed or mismanaged. Some official talks aim for deals that shape international rules and state policies. Other talks seek settlements for legal disputes arising in the showdown of those rules. Ultimately all this bargaining helps determine who receives the gains and bears the burden of trade, with powerful consequences for local communities across the globe. Less developed countries have become dramatically more active in trade negotiations in recent years, as their polities and societies have become more dependent on trade. Even the smallest traders are better organized and prepared than in the past. They were prominent players in WTO ministerial conferences in Seattle in 1999, Doha in 2001, and Cancun in 2003. The result-for the entire world-depend more than ever on how developing countries negotiate.

Yet social science still does not understand the process of trade negotiation- as distinct from the institutions, laws, and economics of the issues-well enough. In particular, negotiation process research has under-represented the experience and needs of developing countries, where the large majority of the world's people live. Empirically grounded research on their negotiations is still in its infancy. What happens inside these frequent talks between delegations? What negotiation strategies have developing country delegations attempted and have they made any difference, considering the power disparities they face? How do they process information and influence their counterparts' beliefs during the talks? Why do some bargaining coalitions hold together while others fragment? Most centrally, what accounts for the varying outcomes we see? Is it possible to generalize about this complex process? Can one find any valuable lessons for practitioners who will face future negotiations?

To Odell therefore the content of developing countries' international trade agreements varies with the process of negotiation that produces them, and in turn that process depends partly on the institutions in which the process unfolds. The trade super powers' especially the United States and the European Union' dominate these processes for smaller and poorer players, achieving their objectives is a daunting challenge. In essence, their decisions about how to negotiate make a material difference to the result, for them and for the world (Odell 2008).

Likewise (Spero 2008) recent policy declarations and programs indicate a greater flexibility on the part of the North. They do not constitute a revolution in the international economic order. The policy ability of the underdeveloped countries to bargain for that new order will be tested in a series of negotiations in various international reforms in the years ahead.

One such reform is UNCTAD. Held in 1976, UNCTAD IV clearly demonstrated the new unity and offensive strategy of the South. Less developed countries reform a united and well-prepared front against the disunited developed countries. And these unity and preparation enable the Group of Seventy-Seven to reject a proposal by the United States for an International Resources Bank which the less developed countries viewed as a manoeuvre against their commodity program and to oblige the developed countries to agree to attend a conference to be held by March 1977 to discuss the international regulation of key commodities. The less developed countries also made some advances in the discussion of debt rescheduling.

Nevertheless, UNCTAD IV also demonstrated the limits of the conference as a negotiating forum. Much of the time was spent with North and South in conflict. The North rejected the commodity program; the South rejected the American proposal for a resources bank. The statement on the commodity program and modalities of commodity agreements and in any case entailed only an agreement by the developed countries to attend a conference. There seemed little likelihood that the developed countries would be cooperative at such a conference. Most-especially West Germany and the United States-remained opposed.

Following UNCTAD IV statements from U.S. policy makers, particularly officials in the Treasury, emphasized that the United States felt it had in no way committed itself to the idea of a comprehensive commodity program. Thus, as in the past, UNCTAD was an ineffective bargaining forum. Bloc organization led to polarization of positions. Publicity further politicized conflict and hindered serious bargaining. In addition, the North has never viewed UNCTAD as an appropriate forum for negotiation. As long as UNCTAD cannot impose decisions, it will remain ineffective for more than pressure politics.

The Conference on International Economic Cooperation (CIEC) is another forum. This producer consumer conference, composed of group representatives, began meeting in December 1975 and was to last a year. Discussions are taken place in CIEC's four commission on energy, raw materials, finance and economic development. The limited membership and the technical nature of the commissions may diffuse conflict and facilitate negotiation and agreement. On the other hand, the separation of energy from other issues may hinder the southern strategy of linkage, and CIEC, because of its limited membership and limited lifespan, may not be able to impose a common program. Thus in the end CIEC may be more useful for generating ideas and for putting pressure on the North than for reaching specific agreements.

Another avenue for North-South bargaining is GATT. The developed countries have evidenced an interest in discussing international commodity management in the multilateral trade negotiations. Developed market economies have been increasingly concerned about price stability and access to supplies of raw materials. Because of inflation the fluctuation of commodity prices, once an issue of interest only to underdeveloped countries, has also recently emerged as a principal issue of international trade in the North. Export controls such as the U.S. embargo on soybeans and scrap metal have been imposed by the north in an effort to moderate domestic prices; export controls have been used by primary producers such as OPEC in an effort to increase prices. Furthermore, GATT is the preferred negotiating forum for not and one which would allow the North to separate energy and other commodity issues. As a result, it seems certain that the North will make a concerted effort to develop new agreements and new rules on access in the multilateral trade negotiations. This concern with price stability and access may enable the South to negotiate effectively in multilateral trade negotiation for the first time since World War II. Developing states may be able to trade price and access commitments for such Northern assurances as a fair price for raw materials or increased access to Northern markets for Southern manufactures.

Essentially, after 1990 developing country participation in dispute settlement talks increased and their participation in multilateral trade negotiations exploded. During and after the GATT's Uruguay Round (1986-1994) more developing countries shifted their policies towards reliance on international markets for development. After creation of WTO in 1995, more countries reinforced or established their missions in Geneva. Most notably, in 1999 during preparations for the WTO's ministerial conference in Seattle, developing countries voiced concerns and injected dozens of formal proposals into the negotiation process. This participation explosion drew in many smaller trading countries that had been passive or not signatories at all prior to 1994. Many states increased their investment in training their officials for international commercial negotiations, with the help of UNCTAD, the WTO, and regional organizations. Many delegations formed or joined bargaining coalitions to defend common negotiating positions through direct coordination. Almost every member state sent its minister to Seattle and again to Doha in 2001 and Cancun in 2003. These events and developing countries' role in them became front – page news worldwide.

In international affairs, diplomatic bargaining has long been considered a useful tool for the settlement of issues of inter-state disputes, including territorial boundaries, fishing rights in territorial waters, avoiding war between states, arms control, and negotiating treaties. In the environmental sphere, sustainable development and environment, reduction of industrial pollution, including carbon monoxide and climate change, protection of wild life share of water resources, are among the areas that have today increasingly attracted the interest of global negotiations in the United Nations and

other world bodies of course, in the economic sphere, negotiations can cover that whole gamut of areas or activities, such as haggling of the market place, wage negotiations between management and workers, business to business relations, tariff negotiations, debt negotiation, import prohibit on, trade liberalization, and such other trade and trade related issues of which of course the business of negotiating EPA between ECOWAS and EU (Adekanye, 2006).

In much of the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Canada, where the field has come to be recognised as a distinct area of academic research and training, negotiation studies have come to be increasingly accepted as a useful branch of political and other social sciences and often in the context of peace and conflict studies, where the subject is taught as part of course offerings on conflict mediation, conflict management or conflicts resolution. But in a few of the universities in the countries mentioned, courses on negotiation are also sometimes referred to as studies in dispute resolution or alternative conflict resolution, as well as taught as part of law school programmes. The Harvard negotiation project was one such a programme, and happened to have been a pioneering force in the teaching of the theory and practice of negotiation in the United States. In some of Britain's institutions of higher learning, newly emergent professional schools and colleges that specialize in Masters in Business Administration and Management Studies, including some of the older established universities, have been quick to add course offerings in negotiation to their list of training programmes. One of the most well-known and prestigious examples is the programme on negotiation based at Said Business School, University of Oxford.

A useful aspect to most of those programs offering executive training courses on negotiation, particularly the Oxford University which happens also to be the best, is that they are not confined to merely formal teaching and by rote but combine the latter with interactive lectures and discussions, group meetings and tutorials, case-studies, role-play, simulations of real-world problem-solving situations, and informal seminars.

For one to succeed in any negotiation, skills in the following areas are a must: knowledge, information- and data gathering, rational decision making, persuasion, innovation, implementation and enforcement. These skills are acquired through intuition and critical thinking, by training and learning, through internship and apprenticeship, by practice on the job, from experience, from studies, drawing and applying lessons learnt.

Adekanye (2006) submitted that the skills and experience of persons who would engage in EPA negotiations on behalf of ECOWAS with the EU must:

- Possess qualification, skills, and insights for contributing towards the negotiation and building of good and sustainable economic partnership agreements (EPAs) between the Economic Community of West African states (ECOWAS), as a regional community and the European Union (EU) or for that matter any other regional groupings;
- Be able to analyse complex negotiation issues involved, including the contradictions between EPAs and development objectives, and to identify the key interests, process, and relationships;
- Possess persuasive style and convincing logical and empirical evidence for advising the ECOWAS management on the need to alter situations and reframe issues to support member states goals where necessary;
- Understand the roles and purposes that international non-governmental organization (NGOs) can and do play in this process, and why and how inputs of such organization can be useful for assessing that conduct and outcome of EPA negotiations;
- Capable of setting up a range of scenarios for benchmarking economic and development impact of any given EPA.

However, the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat has virtually no installed capacity and pool of professional expertise and technical skills for conducting and sustaining good and sustainable trade negotiations with the EU, and find it relying on a sprinkling of mostly foreign consultants and experts donated by our development partners to assist. The EU obviously does not suffer from any such structural and institutional incapacity, but has abundance of trained skills and expertise to tap

into its negotiations on EPA Adekanye, (2006). Members from ECOWAS must build up its own in-house institutional capacity and professional expertise drawn from among the regional economic community's own trained and competent personnel, including the ex-Diaspora. If member states as a group are to succeed in achieving better negotiations skills and stronger bargaining power.

**Findings:**

The research basically focused on negotiating economic partnership agreement between EU and ECOWAS, and reasons for the prolonged negotiation and the consequent implications for ECOWAS integration. Amongst these implications are that the economic agreement negotiations will facilitate integrations in trade, economic and political development for the sub region. The proposed partnership will replace the current divisions within the Francophone and the Anglophone countries in West Africa. It will also bring about common currency, reduction and unified exchange in the existing currency operative within the region. It will facilitate free movement of people, goods and services within the ECOWAS member states and between ECOWAS and EU countries. It will facilitate the vision 20: 2020 integrative initiative of the ECOWAS Commission and above all, foster the development of West African infrastructures as well as its industries.

**Conclusion on Research Problem:**

The research examined the negotiations of the Economic partnership agreement between EU and ECOWAS which was designed to achieve the following objectives: To establish an economic and trade partnership to bring about swift, sustained, job creating economic growth, reduce poverty, raise living standards, create full employment, diversify economies, increase real income and production, with the West Africa regions needs. The objectives would also foster regional integration and good economic governance. It is expected to increase intra-regional trades and foster the establishment of a unified and efficient regional market in West Africa; promote its gradual and harmonious integration into the global economy in harmony with its political choices, priorities and political development strategies and strengthen the economic and trade relations between the parties on a basis of solidarity and mutual interests. Despite these objectives and the anticipation of what it was supposed to accomplish fourteen years after, the EPA has not been sealed between the two parties involved in the negotiation- EU and ECOWAS.

The research found out that the foot dragging and the stalled in the proposed EPA is consequent upon the inherent unfavourable clauses, contradictions and ambiguities, in the proposed text of the negotiations as cited by ECOWAS Council of Ministers. The contentious clauses in the negotiation that are frustrating negotiating and sealing of the agreement are fears of loss of revenue; industrialisation and EPA text, how the fiscal/revenue loss will be recovered; On industrialisation, there was the observation of some wrong product mix in the various categories, while the issue of export taxes is not clear in the text. The region must move from exporters of raw materials to value addition. Regarding the EPA text, it was observed that the language is too loose and in some cases not binding to achieve the objectives of West Africa in growing her economy. Other concerns raised bother on ensuring that the EPA is politically and economically beneficial to ECOWAS member states.

Attempts by EU to get West Africa to hurriedly sign the EPA succeeded in breaking the ECOWAS ranks. The EU offered the interim Economic Partnership Agreements, embraced by Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, while the rest of ECOWAS remained on the full EPA. These scenarios became inevitable because of inherent problems in the clause of the proposed texts of the partnership agreement.

These clauses divided West Africa into three groups in the process of the negotiation. For example, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire on the one hand, Nigeria and the rest of West Africa on the other side of divides. The clauses which favoured Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire and the rest of West Africa except Nigeria, concern the trade liberalisation on non traditional export products which offered between sixty to eighty per cent reduction in tariffs. Although the general sales preferences also applied to Nigeria but the country is indifferent to this offer because the economy is not agriculturally driven alone as against the other West African countries.

Consequent on these disparities in the nature of the economies of the West African countries, that is, while the economies of Nigeria is majorly oil driven, that of the rest of the other states are majorly agricultural driven. Therefore the agreement stated has not been able to go full blown. The research further concluded that while Nigeria had conducted EPA market access impact research, while other West African countries have not been able to do so, the scenarios created in ECOWAS states two statuses: INTERIM EPA and FULL EPA. As a result of these two scenarios, ECOWAS and EU have not been able to seal the agreements which were expected to have been sealed as at 2006.

Lastly, concerning the development objectives initiated by the EU aimed at providing the enabling environment for the take off of the EPA, most of the agencies interviewed said they have not felt the impact particularly in Ghana. Responses from the survey indicated that the development initiative by the EU was nothing other than an attempt to further protect EU's interests. While EU is gaining, the West African sub region is losing and continues to sink deeper in under development.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the current research findings, this study makes the following recommendations:

- 1 Though national interest is critical in the issues of negotiations, notwithstanding Nigeria and other ECOWAS member states must consider the overall interest of the union in the ongoing negotiation. Therefore ECOWAS nations need to sign the agreement to allow other nations who are eager to sign in order to begin to benefit from the EPA.
- 2 The issue of distrust among member nations should be addressed, so that foreign interest and that of Nigeria would not override the interest of West African countries in the negotiations.. Also the political will on the part of the leadership of West African countries should be stirred up to pursue and implement agreed protocols because investigation has shown that even when policies are made, implementation is lacking, therefore, the institutional capacity to function effectively should be put in place.
- 3 EU should monitor the use of the funds given to respective countries and ECOWAS towards the realization of the partnership agreement.
- 4 Mobilization and sensitization as regards patronage and consumption of local products is compulsory because of the disparity in the economy status of the other West African country. While one is oil driven, the other is an agrarian dependent economy and this is affecting the sealing of the agreement.
- 5 There is need for additional safeguard clause/instrument as declaration that would become an integral part of the agreement. The current EPADP safeguard is not protective enough. The regional supplementary protection measures should be annexed to the agreement. The EPA text needs to be re-examined. For instance Article 60 on transfers is on cooperation instead of guarantee to assuage the region to compensate for loss
- 6 There must be the political will on the part of ECOWAS sub region to succeed before anything could be achieved. The way forward is leadership commitment, that is, visionary leaders who can move West Africa forward. It is when leadership is right that there could be political stability and this could be seen in Barack Obama in the United States because he was able to convince the electorate. There must be a give and take attitude in the people and the people should be more nationalistic in their thinking as against greed and self-centeredness. Leaders in Africa should spread the wealth as against monopoly, which would only add to disunity and disloyalty
- 7 That member nation is advised to conclude and seal the EPA while its review of every five years is adhered to by the parties to the agreement.
- 8 Giving the benefit to be derived by ECOWAS from this proposed agreement, the study is of the opinion that every ECOWAS member state needs to make a practical national policy that would engender strong commitment to integrative initiative and that would eliminate all protocol as well as obstacles to realising full integration in West Africa.

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