Africa's growing and suicidal trade extraversion

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PLAN

In order to better understand the impasse in the extroverted trade orientation of Africa and its major regions, it is necessary to start by analysing in depth the various components of the evolution of its total trade from 1995 to 2019, by major types of products and according to the destination and origin of trade, of which intra-African trade. This is a more rigorous approach than the systematic use of computable general equilibrium models, which are opaque because they are fiddled with by experts and which no one understands, but which the partners in bilateral or multilateral trade agreements use, claiming to give them irrefutable scientific proof.

This state of affairs illustrates the impasse of the growing extraversion of Africa's trade with the folly of the very premature African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the unrealism of an extraverted industrialisation strategy, hence the need to prioritise the sustainable development of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), of which ECOWAS, and to denounce the initialing on 15 May 2021 of the successor agreement to the Cotonou Agreement between the EU and the ACP countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, which will be based on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) extended to areas other than goods. A third part will emphasise the need for Africa to impose its economic sovereignty, in particular its food sovereignty, which will require the autonomy of monetary policy, well beyond the conclusions of the Lomé's "Etats généraux de l'ECO-Cedeao".

I - Evolution of Africa's external trade

A distinction will be made of trade between the main regions – Northern Africa (NAF: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, North Sudan), Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and West Africa (WA) – and between 5 groups of products: food, food+non-food agricultural materials, non-agricultural raw materials (metals, ores and fuels, MOF) and manufactured products (MF) according to their technological level. For the main recipients and suppliers, we limit ourselves to the EU, Africa, China, the United States (US) and India, bearing in mind that, for certain product categories, other countries may be more important in the rest of Europe, Asia and the Americas. All data are taken from UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development).

In order not to overload the analysis with too many figures, we will limit to comparing the evolution between 1995 and 2019 in 6 tables on: 1) the evolution of the share of internal trade of the continents and the EU28 in world trade; 2) the share of Africa (and its major regions) in world trade and the deficit by sector; 3) the evolution of the trade deficit per capita and by sector of Africa (and its major regions); 4) the main recipients and origins of Africa's trade; 5) the balance of Africa's (and its major regions) trade in manufactured goods according to their technological level; 6) the self-centredness of intra-REC trade on intra-African Union (AU) trade.

Africa is sinking year by year into a deficit in its external trade, with the exception of non-agricultural raw materials (metals, ores and fuels, MMC) which are the only sector in surplus.

1.1 - Share of internal trade of the continents and the EU28 from 1995 to 2019

Table 1 shows that Africa is lagging far behind the other continents in its self-centredness rate – the share of internal trade in total trade – even though this rate has increased by a third between 1995 and 2019, when it was 15.5% for exports and 14.2% for imports, compared with 68% and 66.1% respectively in Europe (including Russia) – of which 62.8% and 59.3% in the EU28 (even if the 28 were not all in the EU in 1995) –, 62.5% and 65.5% in Asia + Oceania, and 54% and 39% in the Americas.

Table 1 – Evolution of the share of internal trade of the continents and the EU28: 1995-2019

	Africa	Europe	EU28	Asia + Oceania	America
In 1995					
Exports	11.7%	67.8%	61.8%	55.2%	53.3%
Imports	10.7%	67.0%	59.8%	57.0%	44.9%
In 2019					
Exports	15.5%	68.0%	62.8%	62.5%	54.0%
Imports	14.2%	66.1%	59.3%	65.5%	39.0%
% change from 1995 to 2019					
Exports	+ 32.5%	+0.3%	+1.6%	+13.2%	+1.3%
Imports	+ 32.7%	-1.3%	-0.8%	+14.9%	-13.1%

Source: UNCTAD

1.2 - Share of Africa and its regions in world trade and sectoral deficits

Although Africa's self-centredness increased by one-third from 1995 to 2019 (above), Table 2 shows that its share declined from 2.8% to 2.2% of total world exports and from 2.8% to 2.4% of total world imports.

It also shows that Africa's deficit (exports - imports) has increased by a factor of 7.2 in total trade, of which by 9.9 in food trade and by 4.6 for in trade in manufactures, while the surplus in metals-ores-fuels (MOF) has increased by a factor of 4. The reader can see how the deficits of NAF, SSA and WA evolved. Excluding trade in coffee, cocoa, tea and spices (CCTS) – which are not basic food staples and are mainly exported outside Africa – the food trade deficit increased by 5.8 in SSA (from $2.7bn to $15.7bn) and by 30 in WA (from $0.3bn to $8.9bn).

As for the trade deficit in food products plus non-food agricultural raw materials, it has been multiplied by 28 from 1995 to 2019, going from a surplus of $600m to a deficit of $16bn, which is nevertheless 33% lower than the deficit in food products alone (including CCTS) of $21.3bn.

Table 2 – Africa's share of world trade and deficit by sector in 1995 and 2019

$ billion	Africa		NAF		SSA		WA	
	1995	2019	1995	2019	1995	2019	1995	2019
Africa' share in total world trade in 1995 and 2019								
% world X	2.8%	2.2%	0.9%	0.7%	1.9%	1.5%	0.6%	0.4%
% world M	2.8%	2.4%	1.1%	0.9%	1.8%	1.5%	0.5%	0.6%
Africa' total deficit and per sector in 1995 and 2019, in $ billion								
All trade deficit	12.8	91.6	11.6	77.5	1.2	14.1	2.9	2.3
" multiplied by		7.2		6.7		11.9		-21%
Food trade deficit	2.1	21.3	6.4	18.6	-4.3 M$	2.7	-1.4	0.3
" multiplied by		9.9		29		+37.2%		+82%
" without CCTS*	6.2	32	5.9	16.3	0.3	15.7	1.1	8.9
" multiplied by		5.2		2.8		48		8.2
Deficit in food+agri.	-0.6	16.3	7.8	21.3	-8.3	-5.1	-3.3	-3.4
" multiplied by		28		2.7		-39%		1.1
Surplus in MOF	38.9	154.3	17.2	35.4	2.2	11.9	11.2	50.5
" multiplied by		4		2.1		5.5		4.5
Deficit in MP	54.1	250.3	19.1	90.8	35	159.5	11.7	65.1
" multiplied by		4.6		4.8		4.6		5.6

Source: UNCTAD; negative deficits correspond to surpluses; * coffee-cocoa-tea-spices

However, Africa's growing food deficit does not mean that it is primarily dependent on imports for food, contrary to the claim by Paul Akiwumi, Director of UNCTAD's Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes, that "*From 2016 to 2018, Africa imported about 85% of its food from outside the continent, resulting in an annual food import bill of $35 billion, which is expected to rise to $110 billion by 2025*", a statement made in an article published on 11 August 2020 by the OECD[1] and UNCTAD[2]. The reality is that, taking into account African production, over the period 2016-18 the share of extra-Africa's food imports on food consumption was only 17.7% in Africa, of which 29.2% in NAF, 13.1% in SSA and 12.6% in WA[3].

1.3 – <u>The evolution of Africa's trade deficit per capita and per sector</u>

Table 3 shows that Africa's population increased by 82.4% from 1995 to 2019 – of which by 54.5% in NAF and by 90% in SSA and WA – from which the total and sectoral deficit in dollars per capita ($/pc) can be deduced from Table 2.

For all commodities the per capita deficit increased by a factor of 3.9 (from $18 to $70), of which by a factor of 4.3 in NAF (from $74 to $321), by a factor of 6.3 in SSA (from $2 to $13), and the WA's surplus fell by 58% (from $14.2 to $5.9). In particular, Africa's per capita food deficit in 2019 doubled from $16.3 to $32 excluding CCTS (coffee-cocoa-tea-spices) which are not basic food staples and are mainly exported outside Africa.

1 https://oecd-development-matters.org/2020/08/11/covid-19-a-threat-to-food-security-in-africa/
2 https://unctad.org/fr/node/3092
3 *UNCTAD's propagation of the myth of Africa's huge food dependence*, SOL, 18 May 2021 (https://www.sol-asso.fr/analyses-politiques-agricoles-jacques-berthelot-2021/)

Table 3 – Evolution of Africa's trade deficit per capita and per sector in 1995 and 2019.

In $ per capita	Africa		NAF		SSA		WA	
	1995	2019	1995	2019	1995	2019	1995	2019
Population in million	717	1300	157	248	561	1066	203	387
% of increase		82.4%		54.5%		90.1%		90.3%
Deficit of all trade	18	70	74	321	2	13	14	6
" multiplied by		3.9		4.3		6.3		-58%
Food trade deficit	3	16.3	41	77	-7.6	2.5	-6.9	0.7
" multiplied by		5.4		1.9		+67%		+90%
" without CCTS	6.2	32	5.9	16.3	0.3	15.7	1.1	8.9
" multiplied by		.5.2		2.8		48		8.2
Deficit in food+non food agric.	-0.6	16.3	7.8	213	-8.3	-5.1		
" multiplied by		28		2,7		-39%		
Surplus of MOF	38,9	154,3	17,2	35,4	2,2	11,9	11,2	50,5
" multiplied by		4		2,1		5,5		4,5
Deficit in MP	54,1	250,3	19,1	90,8	35	159,5	11,7	65,1
" multiplied by		4,6		4,8		4,6		5,6

Source: UNCTAD; negative deficits mean surpluses

1.4 – **The main recipients and origins of Africa's trade**

Table 4 presents the evolution from 1995 to 2019 of the value of Africa's total and sectoral exports (X) and imports (M) for the main recipients and suppliers, limiting the analysis to the EU, China, India and the United States. While the EU remains by far the largest customer and supplier in 2019 for all sectors, its share has fallen significantly since 1995, while the share of intra-African trade has increased but is overtaken by China for suppliers.

Table 4 – Africa's main trade recipients and suppliers in 1995 and 2019

	Total in $bn		% Africa		% EU		% China		% India		% USA	
	1995	2019	1995	2019	1995	2019	1995	2019	1995	2019	1995	2019
Total X	111157	477003	11.7	15,5	48,2	33,2	1,3	12,5	2,2	8,0	14,8	6,0
Total M	123933	568611	10.7	14,2	43,0	29,9	2,6	17,1	1,4	4,9	9,3	5,1
Alim X	15559	58040	14.4	22,7	57,9	35,7	0,1	3,9	1,1	3,7	4,0	4,8
" M	17709	79311	12.7	18,9	36,3	24,6	1,8	3,6	2,1	4,7	15,8	5,8
Alim+agX	21432	70837	13.3	20,2	54,9	33,5	1,5	7;8	2,1	4,3	3,7	4,3
" M	20851	87017	13.0	18,9	37,3	26,1	1,6	4,1	1,9	4,5	14,8	5,9
MMC X	51792	253171	5.7	8,9	44,2	34,1	1,1	20,3	1,8	11,2	21,7	5,7
" M	12842	98843	12.7	18,6	36,3	24,6	0,7	2,0	0,2	5,0	15,8	5,8
Manuf. X	28422	109907	23.9	29,0	45,2	41,1	1,0	2,0	2,9	2,1	8,8	6,2
" M	82510	360197	8.6	10,5	49,5	31,5	3,4	25,3	1,6	5,1	9,4	5,2

Source: UNCTAD; X: exports; M: imports; the selected countries account for only a share of world trade

II – Criticism of the extraversion of Africa's trade

This extraversion is linked to the subjugation of Africa to the neo-colonial domination of the EU, of which France[4], which has served the interests of corrupt politicians so well, in collusion with the interests of foreign multinationals, that they do not want to change. It also has a lot to do, for food and non-food agricultural products, with the massive subsidies from which EU exports have benefited and continue to benefit, combined with the very low customs duties on Africa's basic food staples.

2.1 – **The premature folly of the Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)**

The AfCFTA is a project that can be defended on the 2063 horizon, that of the 1980 Lagos Plan of Action of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)[5], provided that it is only one component of a political unification project for sustainable development in solidarity. But it was illogical

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[4] *Résistances africaines à la domination néocoloniale*, Le Croquant, mars 2021.

5 https://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/mav/141/ROBERT/53043

to put the cart before the horse in a topdown process of domestic free trade accompanied by increased extroverted growth, which can only drive Africa into the wall. The AfCFTA is part of a 'catch-up' strategy that has resulted in increasing dependence on global markets and Western neo-colonial imperialism and, increasingly, on the subaltern imperialist strategy of the large emerging countries, first and foremost China, which has become Africa's largest supplier and creditor.

Legally, the AfCFTA has existed since 29 April 2019 when 22 States ratified it and it is supposed to be implemented since January 2021 although neither the tariff offers nor the rules of origin have been finalised. The objective is to liberalise (i.e. eliminate customs duties) on 90% of the tariff lines for "non-sensitive" products within 10 years for the least developed countries (LDCs) and within 5 years for the others. For up to 7% of tariff lines in sensitive products, non-LDCs would have to liberalise within 10 years and LDCs within 13 years, and liberalisation would begin in year 6 at the latest after the start of the implementation of the AfCFTA, and the 3% of tariff lines excluded from liberalisation must represent at most 10% of the value of imports from other AU countries over 3 years (2014/16 or 2015/17).

Lower tariffs are the credo of the AfCFTA since, according to the UN Commission for Africa, the Continental Customs Union (CCU), which has not yet been adopted, "*translates into greater openness to the rest of the world than the AfCFTA in the sense that the average protection imposed by Africa on its imports from the rest of the world would decrease to... 9.8%, compared to... 13.6% with the AfCFTA alone*"[6]. As lower tariffs would facilitate imports of inputs and equipment, the report deduces that Africa will become more competitive on manufactured goods than industrialised and emerging countries such as China since labour costs are much lower in SSA. Which ignores that labour productivity in SSA is much lower than in countries where labour costs are higher, due to a set of specific constraints that will hinder development for a long time: poor transport, energy (including electricity) and water infrastructures; low technical skills; bureaucratic or even corrupt practices of many public services, of which customs, and law enforcement agencies that impose heavy levies on the circulation of products; access to credit; strong disparity in monetary policies and exchange rates, including the maintenance of the convertibility of the CFA franc, relabeled ECO, into euros; huge differences in customs duties, living standards and political regimes. If these constraints are not removed, the AfCFTA, especially if it is supplemented by the CCU, will lead to an increased loss of customs revenue and competitiveness, and therefore of jobs[7].

2.2 – <u>The unrealism of an extroverted strategy for the industrialisation of Africa</u>

The former president of Niger and then chair of the AfCFTA, Mamoudou Issoufou, declared on 27 November 2020, at the 47th session of the African Union (AU) Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, that "*Africa's ambition is to be the next global manufacturing hub*"[8].

[6] https://www.iri.edu.ar/publicaciones_iri/anuario/cd_anuario_2014/Africa/12h.pdf
[7] *The folly of the Africa's Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA)*, SOL, 4 September 2017: https://www.sol-asso.fr/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/The-folly-of-the-Africas-Continental-Free-Trade-Area-September-4-2017.pdf; https://www.sol-asso.fr/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/ARCADE-Debate-on-the-Continental-African-Free-Trade-Area.pdf
[8] https://www.niameyetles2jours.com/l-uemoa/gestion-publique/2811-6248-l-afrique-a-pour-ambition-d-etre-le-prochain-centre-manufacturier-mondial-issoufou-mahamadou

A first observation is that the share of industry in SSA's GDP has declined from 14.3% in 1995 to 11% in 2019, of which from 20% to 11.5% in Nigeria, from 19.5% to 11.5% in South Africa, from 18.9% to 14.9% in Morocco, from 34% to 23.8% in Algeria, from 19% to 14.8% in Tunisia. Similarly, the share of agriculture in GDP has fallen in SSA from 20.1% in 1995 to 14% in 2019. Of course, the decline in the share of agriculture and industry is not in itself an indicator of underdevelopment if it goes hand in hand with rising productivity and employment in services, but this is not the case in SSA, where they are developing mainly in the informal sector of underpaid jobs.

Another observation is that Africa's share of world manufactured products (MP) exports is extremely low and has declined from 1995 (0.48%) to 2019 (0.46%) as well as for SSA (as the percentage for NAF has remained almost zero), of which an increase from 0.5% to 0.6% for WA. In contrast, Africa's share of world imports increased from 1.43% to 1.70%, of which from 0.02% to 0.04% for NAF and from 1.41% to 1.66% for SSA, of which from 0.36% to 0.54% for WA.

To respond to Mamoudou Issoufou's challenge of making Africa the "*next world manufacturing centre*", it is necessary to differentiate MP trade according to its degree of processing, by distinguishing 4 categories (according to UNCTAD): labour-intensive, low-tech, medium-tech and high-tech.

Table 5 – Increased trade deficit in medium and high technology manufactured products (MP)

$ billion	Africa		NAF		SSA		WA	
	1995	2019	1995	2019	1995	2019	1995	2019
Africa's share in world trade of MP in 1995 and 2019								
Exports (X) in $bn	28422	109907	10544	50282	17878	59625	1705	5892
% of world X	0.48%	0.46%	≠0	≠0	0.48%	0.46%	0.05%	0.06%
Imports (M) in $bn	82510	360197	29601	137444	52909	216227	13367	70966
% of world M	1.43%	1.70%	0.02%	0.04%	1.41%	1.66%	0.36%	0.54%
Africa's total deficit and by level of MPs in 1995 and 2019								
Deficit of all MPs	54088	250290	19057	90772	35031	159517	11662	65074
" multiplied by		4,63		4.76		4.55		5.58
% MPs with large manpower	5	12,7	2,5	8.4	9,2	15.1	11,9	14.8
" multiplied by		2.5		3.36		1.64		1.24
% low-tech MPs	11,6	13.7	20,0	16.7	7,0	11.9	18,3	17.5
" multiplied by		1.18		0.84		1.70		0.96
% medium-tech MPs	46,7	40.2	54,5	45.8	42,5	37.0	42,2	38.0
" multiplied by		0.86		0.84		0.87		0.90
% high-tech MPs	36,6	33.4	28,0	29.0	41,3	35.9	27,6	29.7
" multiplied by		0.91		1.04		0.87		1.09

Source: UNCTAD; negative deficits mean surpluses

It can thus be seen that, for Africa, there has been no progress in the upward movement of MPs value chains, quite the contrary, since the share of the total deficit of labour-intensive and low-tech MPs has increased while that of medium-tech and high-tech MPs has decreased. The same trends were observed for SSA but for NAF and WA the evolution is more complex: a decrease in the share of low-tech MPs and an increase in the share of high-tech MPs.

In this context, one is tempted to advocate a modest industrialisation strategy for SSA that does not aim to be competitive in global value chains, as suggested by Fatou Gueye and Alimadou Aly Mbaye: "*The creation of decent jobs in Africa will rather come through the millions of (family, individual) nano-enterprises that employ almost the entire African population... More than 80% of jobs in Francophone Africa are self-employment situations... A third way could be to create ecosystems in which these nano-companies could be grouped together in the form of* *social and solidarity enterprises, in a value chain logic... in order to facilitate their gradual access to a formal status, thus promoting inclusive growth*"[9].

2.3 – Prioritising the sustainable development of Regional Economic Communities

Africa's RECs are not on the path to the continental integration programmed by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) since the share of their intra-REC (Regional Economic Community) trade in their intra-African trade has declined from 1995 to 2019 and it is therefore imperative to start by consolidating intra-REC regional integration

For all products, the self-centredness rate – the percentage of intra-REC trade in intra-AU trade – has fallen more for imports than for exports, which have even increased slightly in SSA due to a sharp rise in Southern Africa (SA). In general, across all product sectors, the self-centredness of SSA RECs is much higher than that of NAF for both exports and imports, and is the lowest in NAF for food and agricultural products. Central Africa (CA) has by far the lowest self-centring rates, especially for food and agricultural products, and they are lower for imports than for exports.

Table 6 - Self-centring rate of intra-CER trade on intra-Africa trade

Pourcentages	NAF		SSA		WA		EA		CA		SA	
	1995	2019	1995	2019	1995	2019	1995	2019	1995	2019	1995	2019
Total X	88.6	64.7	94.5	95.8	79.7	52.8	76.4	46.5	34.9	21.2	36.8	48.5
Total M	78.0	53.7	97.4	93.2	81.8	69.3	35.4	31.9	18.7	12.4	80.4	65.2
Food X	78.4	49.4	90.9	90.9	68,8	81.5	63.0	55.2	71.2	59.9	44.4	57.8
Food M	48.5	40.8	97.6	_89.4	86.3	72.4	52.7	49.6	8.0	6.5	81.9	88.3
Food+agr X	81.4	50.0	70.8	83.2	64.7	77.7	65.1	52.9	42.8	43.5	45.1	58.5
Food+agr M	38.6	39.5	97.8	89.8	85.5	70.9	51.7	49.4	10.1	6.8	75.5	87.2
MOF X	87.8	82.4	94.5	97.0	88.1	41.6	71,9	31.7	23.1	7.0	30.2	61.8
MOF M	103	97.4	95.5	97.9	86.8	90.8	44.4	22.6	14.7	13.1	52.5	22.5
MP X	90.9	61.1	98.5	98.5	79.6	82.8	89.1	60.4	51.6	46.0	36.8	43.4
MP M	97.5	49.5	98.0	90.8	72.5	48.9	28.8	24.0	18.8	13.8	91.1	90.5

For food and agricultural products, WA has the highest auto-centration rates, followed by SA and EA. For metals-ores-fuels (MOF), the auto-centration of exports has halved in WA while it has doubled in SA. Conversely, for MOF imports auto-centring increased in WA and fell sharply in SA. For manufactured goods, self-centring for WA exports is almost double that of SA in 2019 but almost twice as low for imports.

Since the proposed continental AfCFTA is unrealistic and would not be not operational in the medium term, all efforts should be refocused on deepening regional integration for at least a generation to increase intra-regional trade, starting with national integration in each State, instead of mobilising forces on premature continental integration, thinking that, through a top-down process, it would percolate down to regional integration. This is all the more required as the strengthening of regional and continental trade integration implies a prior strengthening of integration in all areas: firstly political – the will to move towards a United States of Africa and United States of each REC, based on a minimal budget solidarity through a policy of redistribution of income in favour of disadvantaged enterprises and households – and in all other areas: economic, monetary, financial, social, environmental and cultural.

[9] Fatou Gueye et Alimadou Aly Mbaye, *Obstacles à la création d'emplois décents et politiques de l'emploi en Afrique*, Afrique contemporaine, n° 266, 2018/2, p. 156-159.

2.4 - Denouncing the EPAs

While the successor agreement to the Cotonou Agreement governing relations in most areas between the EU and the ACP countries expires in November 2021, the new Agreement was initialed on 15 April 2021 in Brussels between the chief negotiators (Ministers of Economy or Trade) of the EU and of the Community of ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) States for a duration of 20 years[10].

The scandal is that the EU has succeeded in imposing on the ACP countries – in particular SSA, which represents 94% of the population of the ACPs – to base their future trade cooperation on the EPAs (Economic Partnership Agreements), which have been extended to areas other than trade in goods (services, intellectual property, public procurement, competition) and on the EU's political and financial support for the implementation of the AfCFTA: "*The parties agree that the implementation of the EPAs, the African Continental Free Trade Area and other relevant trade agreements are complementary and mutually supportive, while contributing to the deepening of the regional and continental integration process*"[11]. While EPAs are overwhelmingly rejected by civil society, including most small and medium enterprises, as they have increased the impoverishment of the vast majority of the population, despite the recurrent assertion that Africa has enjoyed one of the highest GDP growth rates in the world over the past 20 years because it has been accompanied by one of the highest rates of income inequality[12].

The imposition of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) to ACP countries, where 94% of the population is concentrated in SSA, is based on a series of 12 lies[13].

The first lie is that the Cotonou Agreement signed in June 2000 requiring the signing of EPAs before 1 January 2008 was not a WTO constraint under the pretext that the EU was condemned to transform its Lomé preferential agreements with the ACPs into free trade agreements (FTAs) on the complaint of Latin American banana-producing countries that they had to pay customs duties (CDs) on their exports to the EU while those of the ACPs were not taxed. In fact the EU chose to be condemned for imposing the opening of ACPs markets on its exports since the GATT principle of non-discrimination only applies according to the geographical origin of its members but not according to their level of development, which is attested by the EU's Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) established in 1971 granting a reduction in CDs to developing countries (DCs). Indeed the GDP per capita of Latin American banana exporting countries (especially Ecuador, Colombia, Peru) was 2.3 times higher than that of the 3 SSA countries (Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire (CI), Ghana) in 1995 and 3.9 times higher in 2016. Moreover, the United States also granted also in May 2000 a preferential agreement (AGOA) to SSA countries, renewed in 2015 for 10 years, with the consensus of WTO Members. The European Commission (EC) has also reneged on its 2001 Everything But Arms (EBA) Decision – a more favourable GSP variant for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) – by requiring them to also eliminate their CDs on 80% of their imports from the EU in regional EPAs,

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10 https://www.bilaterals.org/?l-accord-qui-succede-au-traite-ue. Note that the initialing is not the formal signature by the Heads of State. Thus Nigeria had initialed the regional EPA on 10 April 2014 but has refused to sign it formally up to now.

11 https://www.bilaterals.org/eu-acp-post-cotonou-agreement-44167-44167-44167-44167-44167-44167-44167-44167-44167-44167-44167-44167

12 https://wid.world/document/income-inequality-in-africa-1990-2017-wid-world-issue-brief-2019-06/

13 https://www.sol-asso.fr/analyses-politiques-agricoles-jacques-berthelot-2020/; J. Berthelot, *Vous avez dit LIBRE échange ? L'accord de Partenariat Economique Union européenne-Afrique de l'Ouest*, L'Harmattan, juin 2018; *Did you say FREE trade ? The Economic 'Partnership' Agreement European Union-West Africa*, Paris, L'Harmattan, September 2018.

rejecting the House of Commons' proposal to deduct from this 80% the share of imports from LDCs.

2nd lie: the European Commission (EC) refused to publish three West African (WA) EPA impact studies, which were leaked, because their conclusions were negative for WA, writing to the NGO CRIDEV that it had not commissioned them, adding that the January 2016 IFPRI report had not been made available to it, contrary to the written evidence in these reports.

3rd lie: the EC has long claimed that the EPADP (EPA support programme) would make a strong financial contribution to WA but has finally acknowledged that this is only a re-labelling of the usual EDF (European Development Fund), EIB (European Investment Bank) and Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) aid from the EU Budget, without any specific additional EPA contribution. However, a large part of the aid to WA is now diverted towards curbing migration to the EU, and the promotion of PPPs (Public Private Partnerships) which put SSA countries in long-term debt for the construction of their infrastructure by providing guarantees for these private investments ("Alliance for Sustainable Job Investment").

4th lie: bilateral and multilateral safeguards will benefit the EU much more than ACPs for which they would only come into play in case of an increase in import quantities and not in case of a drop in prices, whereas the EU benefits from the Special Safeguard of the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) providing also for falling prices. So that ECOWAS will not be able to implement its Complementary Protection Tax, which can also play in case of falling prices.

5th lie: EPAs deny the existence of EU agricultural export subsidies on the pretext that they are essentially notified to the WTO in the "green box", which is supposed to have no dumping impact, even though the WTO Appellate Body has ruled 4 times that domestic subsidies, including "decoupled" ones, contribute to dumping. Yet these EU subsidies are massive, particularly on cotton, cereals, milk powder and meat, ruining farmers and rising food deficit.

6th lie: EPAs are supposed to promote regional development but, to override Nigeria's refusal to sign the regional EPA, the EU has promoted the implementation of the interim EPAs (iEPAs) of CI and Ghana since the end of 2016, which are disintegrating ECOWAS.

7th lie: by politically and financially supporting the implementation of the AfCFTA the EU is torpedoing the integration of the Regional Economic Communities (of which ECOWAS) while contributing to further draining the budgets of the least competitive States since the first objective of the AfCFTA is to reduce CDs in intra-African trade by 90%, offering increased profits to EU multinationals and banks in a position of strength in the African market.

8th lie: the impact assessment of the WA EPA conducted by the EC in March 2016 is riddled with factual and scientific untruths. This study is unable to assess the impact of the EPA over the period 2015-35 by comparing their situation without EPA and with EPA since it considers that the baseline situation in 2015 without EPA would have been that the non-LDCs – Nigeria, CI and Ghana – would have been covered by the GSP regime while the actual situation of CI and Ghana had remained the same as that of the LDCs since independence: exports not taxed by the EU.

9th lie: the EC anticipates an increase in WA exports with the EPA "*with the largest increases in the following sectors: cereals (10.2%), other food products (9.9%), red meat (8.4%) and clothing (12.8%)*". Yet, cereals are WA's main agricultural imports, increased from $0.9bn in

2000 to $5.3bn in 2018, with the EU's share falling from 16% to 8%. Similarly, the EU did not import a single kg of beef from WA from 2000 to 2019. This ignorance on the part of the EC about the reality of WA agriculture, its main productive sector, speaks volumes about the reliability of its entire report.

10th lie: The EC claims that EPAs would not have a negative impact on agricultural products if they place them in the 20% of non-liberalised imports. In fact 37.5% of the WA's agricultural imports would be liberalized after Brexit, of which 80.4%, taxed at 5%, would be liberalised from year 5.

11th lie: the EC has hidden to WA the strong erosion of its trade preferences linked to the EU other FTAs among which most of those of Latin America (except bananas) are benefitting of the same duty free-quota free access to the EU. Moreover, the EU does not require FTA signatories to respect international conventions on human and social rights, the environment and good governance, which it requires from ACPs in order to grant them GSP+ status.

12th lie: far from promoting development and employment for the millions of young people entering the labour market every year, the lack of prospects for their future pushes them to risk their lives either by crossing the Mediterranean despite the EU will try to send them back to WA, or by joining jihadist movements to survive. But the EU is thus shooting itself in the foot because, by preventing WA from ensuring its food sovereignty and the protection of its infant industries as the EU has always done and continues to do through effective protection of its domestic market, it is depriving itself of the huge medium and long-term potential of EU exports of high value-added products and services if the EPAs were to be abolished.

The CAFTAs (Comprehensive and Deepened Free Trade Agreements) that the EU wants to impose on Tunisia and Morocco should also be denounced, but there is not enough space here for a credible critique.

III – Imposing Africa's food and monetary sovereignty

Although the EU remains the main client and supplier for the 4 main categories of products, Africa must distance itself from the EU in order to get out of its age-old subjugation to neo-colonial domination as it has served, and continues to serve, the interests of African elites. Already the EU's share has fallen significantly since 2020 as a result of the Brexit, although the UK will continue the same neo-colonial policy as the EU27 by concluding EPA-style bilateral agreements with each of the ACP countries, as it has already done with Ghana. But it may seem paradoxical to emphasise the interest that Africa may have in becoming more involved in the WTO in order to change its rules.

3.1 – The need for Africa to change WTO rules

Since Africa is the continent that has suffered the most from the EU's multi-faceted domination of its economy and other policies, it is also the continent that, paradoxically, has the greatest potential to change the WTO's unfair rules. For the WTO should not be blamed as a legal entity for the dysfunctions of its most powerful members, mainly the EU and the US, which massively violate the rules they developed face to face during the Uruguay Round[14]. Condemning the WTO as an organisation means condemning the struggle of developing countries (DCs), which

[14] https://www.sol-asso.fr/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Ne-pas-supprimer-l%E2%80%99OMC-mais-son-contr%C3%B4le-par-le-duopole-EU-UE-06-03-21.pdf

are in the majority in the WTO, to radically change its rules. For, in spite of everything, bilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) are worse than the WTO, which has a Dispute Settlement Body but whose Appellate Body judgements the EU and the US do not want to recognise when they run counter to their interests. This is the case in particular with its rulings of December 2001 and December 2002 in the Canadian Dairy Products case on the definition of dumping, which must take into account all domestic agricultural subsidies, and that of March 2005 in the US Cotton case, which also included "decoupled" subsidies.

The European Commission (EC) knows that the objective of the other WTO members is to put an end to the allegedly non-trade-distorting nature of decoupled agricultural subsidies notified in the green box and, secondarily, of those notified in the blue box because they have a ceiling. Without these subsidies notified in the WTO green box – which represented 86% of the €56.9 bn of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) budget for 2019, of which €35.5bn for decoupled direct aids and €13.5bn for rural development aids – to which must be added €4.7bn to be notified in the blue box, practically no EU farmer could survive. As agricultural exports have represented a growing percentage of production, from 19.4% in 2000 to 32.1% in 2018 – not so much in volume as in value due to increasingly processed products – agricultural export subsidies have increased from €7.8bn in 2000 to €18.4bn in 2018.

The absurdity of this system can be seen in the fact that the EU does not notify any subsidy to cotton, of which to exported cotton, since two thirds of the subsidies are notified in the green box as decoupled and one third in the blue box as capped coupled aid[15]. For EU cotton subsidies averaged $896m per year between 2010 and 2018, or $2,800 per tonne, the highest in the world (4.2 times higher than the $657 in the US), with an average dumping rate (ratio of subsidies to FOB export value) of 168% from 2016 to 2018. Although the EU does not export raw cotton to SSA, it exports more than Benin, Burkina Faso or Mali, and therefore contributes significantly to the fall in the world price of cotton.

For, despite its claims, the AfCFTA cannot influence WTO rules, especially those on dumping, since it is not a WTO member, any more than the RECs, of which ECOWAS, even though most African States are WTO individual members (notably the 15 ECOWAS States). The first thing to do is for the RECs to become WTO members, like the EU which negotiates on behalf of all its member States. For this to happen, the RECs' negotiators at the WTO must be able to denounce the demands that the WTO Secretariat, under pressure from the EU, may make in order not to facilitate their admission, which would upset its domination over Africa. But there is much to be done since the African group of WTO members has not itself understood the trade-distorting effects of green and blue box subsidies[16].

3.2 - <u>The RECs must impose their food sovereignty</u>

This must be Africa's priority objective, since two-thirds of the working population of SSA and one-third of that of NAF work in the agriculture-livestock-fisheries-forests sector, the only sector likely to create tens of millions of jobs for the additional young people who will enter the labour market each year. This implies that ECOWAS' (and other RECs') agricultural policy be based on five pillars: a radical reform of agricultural land tenure; a guarantee of sustainable

[15] https://www.sol-asso.fr/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/La-Journ%C3%A9e-mondiale-du-coton-de-lOMC-peut-elle-r%C3%A9pondre-aux-difficult%C3%A9s-des-agricuteurs-dASS-17-10-2019-1.pdf

[16] https://www.sol-asso.fr/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Unifier-les-positions-des-pays-en-d%C3%A9veloppement-sur-la-bo%C3%AEte-verte-et-la-bo%C3%AEte-bleue-SOL-13-d%C3%A9cembre-2019.pdf

remunerative agricultural prices; the promotion of agro-ecological production systems; compensation for increases in agricultural prices for consumers; and changes in their eating habits.

3.2.1 - A radical reform of agricultural land tenure

It is necessary to guarantee farmers and stockbreeders permanent access to agricultural land by distributing production rights among a large number of farmers in village communities. For land is part of the 'commons'. Even though individual appropriation of urban land has become widespread and that the land laws of most WA countries have recognised the State's eminent legal ownership of agricultural land and the use rights of village communities, the presidents of the Republic have generally arrogated to themselves the right to grant very long-term concessions to speculators in an opaque manner, mainly for the re-export of food or agrofuel products. The sociologist Denise Paulme reported in 1963 the words of a traditional Nigerien chief: "*In my opinion, land belongs to a large family, many of whose members are dead, some of whom are alive, and most of whom are still unborn*", and she added: "*In the final analysis, land rights are part of the status of people, they are an aspect of it: to be without land would be tantamount to finding oneself without parents, an inconceivable situation... Everywhere, the links between people count more than the rights to things... Sociologists, and with them many Africans, will reply that legislation driven by purely economic motives would inevitably lead to social chaos and impoverishment*"[8] .

In *Sur la crise*, Samir Amin recalled that "*China and Vietnam provide a unique example of a system of managing access to land that is based neither on private property nor on 'custom', but on a new revolutionary right, ignored elsewhere, which is that of all peasants (defined as the inhabitants of a village) to equal access to land... Ideally, the model implies the double affirmation of the rights of the state (sole owner) and the usufructuary (the peasant family). The state guarantees the equal sharing of the village land between all families. It prohibits any use other than family cultivation, such as renting. It guarantees that the product of the investments made by the usufructuary will return to him in the immediate term through his right of ownership over all the production of the farm... in the longer term through the inheritance of the usufruct for the exclusive benefit of the children who remain on the farm (the permanent emigrant loses his right of access to the land, which falls into the basket of land to be redistributed)*"[17]. It is a fact that the guarantee for Chinese peasants to find their plot of land in the village explains why they have not hesitated to go and work for a large part of the year, or even several years in a row, in the large cities, particularly in the east of the country, while being assured of finding their plot in the village.

Incidentally, I have been criticised for turning a blind eye to China's land grab in Africa, but the GRAIN Association's detailed analysis of land grabbing for food in Africa shows that China's land grab was 334,900 ha, 8 times less than the 2,661 million ha of 11 Western European countries, with the UK alone accounting for 763,468 ha, followed by France (414,699 ha), Spain (286,000 ha), the Netherlands (237,826 ha), Luxembourg (216,269 ha), Italy (189,558 ha), Germany (138,164 ha), Switzerland (108,300 ha), Portugal (71,917 ha), Sweden (23,000 ha) and Norway (13,218 ha) [18]. However, these observations do not absolve the fact

[17] Samir Amin, *Sur la crise. Sortir de la crise du capitalisme ou sortir du capitalisme en crise*, Le Temps des cerises, 2009.

[18] https://grain.org/media/W1siZiIsIjIwMTYvMDgvMzAvMTZfNDdfMDhfMzIxX0xhbmRncmFiX2RlYWxzXzI wMTVfRlJfQW5uZXhlXzFfZmluYWxfdjIucGRmIl1d

that China has become Africa's leading exporter and creditor, which is not without serious damage for the latter[19].

3.2.2 – **Ensuring sustainable remunerative agricultural prices**

Given the growing food deficit in Africa, particularly in SSA if we exclude products that are not basic foodstuffs and are mainly exported – coffee, cocoa, tea, spices, cotton, flowers – and the coming population explosion, the priority is to promote the production of basic foodstuffs, which implies guaranteeing stable and remunerative prices to producers. This can be done by applying the tools that were so effective for EU farmers before the 1992 CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) reform: variable import levies represented by the difference between the remunerative prices retained for the crop year at the wholesale stage in a representative area and the CIF (cost-insurance-freight) prices in one of the main ports (or airports or stations) of arrival on the national or regional territory. As the variable levies are set in national (or regional) currency, this provides much better protection than ad valorem duties representing a percentage of the CIF import price usually denominated in dollars or euros, given the high fluctuation of world dollar prices and exchange rates. The rebuttal to the objections to the implementation of variable levies is set out in the book Regulating Agricultural Prices[20].

Since the implementation of remunerative agricultural prices is not credible at the AU level (AfCFTA), it must be done at the level of individual RECs such as ECOWAS (or EAC in East Africa) which have a CET (common external tariff), even if it is not well respected. Raising agricultural prices to a remunerative level would be spread over a period of 5 to 10 years, in parallel with measures to protect the purchasing power of disadvantaged households.

However, all the necessary accompanying measures must be financed by the State and/or local authorities upstream and downstream production: access to agricultural credit at reasonable rates, road improvements, dissuasive sanctions against illegal levies by law enforcement agencies on the marketing of products, minimum infrastructure and monitoring of the proper functioning of local markets, aid for the constitution of village stocks of food products and monitoring of speculation by traders, etc.

3.2.3 – **Promoting agroecological production systems**

While, under the guise of doubly green agriculture, multinational agribusiness firms and the African Development Bank are trying to promote the dominant conventional model of production systems intensive in chemical fertilisers, pesticides and heavy motorisation, or even GMOs, it is essential to promote labour-intensive agroecological production systems on small farms, both to combat the greenhouse effect and to maintain biodiversity and increase yields in a sustainable way[21]. The best and cheapest way of extension is to finance exchanges of experience between farmers.

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[19] https://www.latribune.fr/opinions/tribunes/chinafrique-le-temps-des-problemes-880005.html; https://www.cadtm.org/La-politique-de-prets-chinoise-en-Afrique-subsaharienne
[20] J. Berthelot, *Réguler les prix agricoles*, L'Harmattan, 2013.
[21] Marc Dufumier et Olivier Le Naire, *L'agroécologie peut nous sauver*, Actes Sud, 2019; SOL, *Festival des solutions fertiles*, 4 et 5 juin 2021, https://www.sol-asso.fr/festival-des-solutions-fertiles/.

3.2.4 - Compensating consumers for agricultural price increases

While it is essential to increase and stabilise producer prices, this must not penalise the vast majority of consumers who have very limited purchasing power and who already spend a large part of their budget on food, especially with the COVID-19 pandemic. Otherwise, it would lead to food riots, as was seen during the food price hikes of 2008-09.

The solution to this problem involves significant international aid over a decade to fund domestic food aid programmes along the lines of policies in India, the US and Brazil (under President Lula). Households would receive vouchers for local food products available in approved shops according to their standard of living, and the availability of food products would be enhanced by helping to build up village stocks paid at minimum prices to producers, as in India, but avoiding the building up of massive stocks that are difficult to keep in good condition and involve bureaucratic management. India's National Food Security Act of 2013 provides for an allocation of 5 kg/month/person, or 60 kg/year, of basic cereals (mainly wheat and rice) for 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population, with additional allocations for certain disadvantaged groups including pregnant women and young children, and subsidised school lunches. Incidentally, India has given an extra 5 kg/person for 3 months to 80% of the population to ease the cost of COVID-19.

Using India as an example, this would mean that SSA, where 60% of the population was rural in 2018, would have to subsidise 42.5 Mt per year of local food products (cereals, beans, oil, tubers, even plantains). The dysfunctional nature of the Indian system has led to recent improvements, including the use of electronic cash cards per household (involving a bank account), which allow them to buy in approved shops, or even on the market under certain conditions. For SSA, a first approximation of the needed budget would be of about $15bn per year, as India has notified the WTO $16.3bn for its domestic food aid for 2016-17 (latest notification). This aid could be mobilised through concessional loans from IDA, a subsidiary of the World Bank, with a 35-year maturity and a 10-year grace period. This may seem very high, but it would be very cost-effective in reducing Africa's food deficit, combating the greenhouse effect and improving biodiversity, while creating tens of millions of jobs each year for young people entering the labour market. If this massive international aid is not feasible an alternative solution might come from a radical change in national monetary policies, based on the Modern Monetary Theory (see below).

3.2.5 – The need to refocus eating habits on African products

Finally, food habits must be changed by diverting them from the consumption of basic food products that the African climate does not allow to be produced sufficiently and which are therefore imported. These are mainly wheat and to a lesser extent rice. In SSA, wheat production – limited to East Africa from Eritrea to South Africa because the climate of WA and Central Africa prohibits its production – has risen from 4.5 Mt in 1999-2000 to 7.9 Mt in 2019-20, an increase of 2.70% per year and, as the population has increased by 2.62% per year (from 637 m in 2000 to 1.094 bn in 2020), per capita production has practically stagnated (+ 0.08%). On the other hand, rice production increased from 7.2 Mt to 19.2 Mt, i.e. by 4.80% per year and by 2.10% per capita/year. But wheat imports increased faster: from 7.9 Mt in 1999-2000 to 26.2 Mt in 2019-20, or 5.9% per year. Consumption (production + imports - exports) rose from 12.1 Mt to 33.1 Mt, up by 4.9% per year and per capita consumption by 2.3% per year. In total, the consumption of wheat + rice rose from 24.2 Mt to 65.5 Mt, while that of local cereals (millet +

sorghum + maize + fonio) rose from 67.8 Mt to 85.60 Mt, reflecting an increase of 64% (from 26.4% to 43.3%) in the share of wheat + rice in total cereal consumption.

This is because local cereal yields have increased very little in 20 years: by 0.14% per year for millet (from 694 kg/ha to 715 kg) and by 0.82% for sorghum (from 820 kg to 973 kg), even though they have increased by 1.18% for maize (from 1,590 kg to 2,033 kg, as it benefited from fertilisers on cotton in West Africa). As the United Nations anticipates a population of 2.2 billion in SSA in 2050, increasing by 2.22% per year since 2020, and maintaining the annual rate of increase in per capita consumption from 1999-2000 to 2019-20, wheat imports would rise to 130 Mt and rice imports to 51 Mt.

But the price of wheat will inevitably rise, since yields have been stagnant for 15 to 20 years in exporting countries – even though they were not limited in the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides – and they will fall in developed countries, especially in the EU, given the reduction in the use of these chemical inputs that the population wants and the promotion of organic farming with lower yields. As Arab and West Asian countries with arid climates do not have the alternative of consuming tropical cereals and roots and tubers like SSA, and will be able to afford higher wheat prices through their oil and gas production, SSA will face an unsustainable import bill. This is why the regional EPA in WA and the interim EPAs of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana are criminal, as they provide for a reduction in the import tariff on wheat from the EU from 5% to 0. This will foster the import of more EU-subsidised wheat and the consumption of more bread and pasta and couscous, delaying the day when consumers could no longer afford them. Current projects to introduce local cereal or cassava flour into bread are a lesser evil in the very short term as the percentage of such flour is limited to 15% (in the World Bank-CNCR project in Senegal) or at best 30% (in the AFD-SOL project in Senegal). What is absolutely necessary is to promote Latin American food models based on corn tortillas and large cassava pancakes.

3.3 – Africa's self-centred development presupposes monetary sovereignty

All these changes imply a radically innovative monetary policy. By guaranteeing the convertibility of the FCFA into euros at a fixed rate, its re-labelling into ECO following the decision of presidents Macron and Ouattara in Abidjan in December 2019 will not alter the free transfer of funds embezzled by corrupt African leaders and the profits of multinationals. As the debates at the Etats Généraux de l'ECO-Cedeao" in Lomé 26 to 28 May 2021 showed, it would not be easy to build a single or common currency at ECOWAS level to facilitate regional economic integration[22]. Since the non-WAEMU States already enjoy a monetary sovereignty, it is first up to the WAEMU States to conquer theirs, especially since they only represent 21.7% of the total GDP of ECOWAS in 2020, against 65.2% for Nigeria alone. It is certainly not this country that would agree to align itself on the WAEMU convergence criteria, even if somehow relaxed. And, as there must be close complementarity between monetary and fiscal policies with minimal redistribution of national income to disadvantaged firms and households, Nigeria cannot be expected to finance the other ECOWAS States to any great extent[23].

[22] https://telegramme228.com/une-feuille-de-route-pour-la.html
[23] https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2019/06/30/la-monnaie-unique-ouest-africaine-risque-d-etre-un-echec-cuisant_5483447_3212.html. Voir J. Berthelot "*Commentaires préliminaires à la Déclaration de Lomé (28 mai 2011)*", https://www.sol-asso.fr/analyses-politiques-agricoles-jacques-berthelot-2021/

However, as the Modern Monetary Theory (MMT) shows[24], a perennial monetary sovereignty for DCs without convertible currencies is only possible without inflation if the issuance of the national currency is not limited by the insufficiency of real national resources (equipment, intermediate inputs, finished products, skilled labour) in order to minimize indebtedness in hard currencies. As long as real national resources are sufficient, the State can issue money in an unlimited way without prior tax collection and without risk of inflation, especially if it continues to get strong currencies through a minimum of exports. An exemplary case is that of Japan with, in 2017, a debt ratio of 250% of GDP and a very low inflation rate of 0.8%.

As not all WAEMU countries will embark on this path very quickly, given the strong influence of neo-classical analysis among African economists, as we saw in Lomé, the solution will be to implement it in the countries that are ready. This could be done in Senegal, since the candidate for the next presidential election, Ousmane Sonko, committed himself to applying it in his long internet speech on 26 May in Lomé[25]. And the success of this first experiment would snowball in the rest of the WAEMU and ECOWAS.

A national monetary policy based on MMT would be particularly useful and easy to achieve food sovereignty by financing the setting-up of million jobs through money printing after training in agroecological agriculture for young people with no future prospects – other than risking their lives by trying to reach the EU, from where they will be turned back, or joining jihadist movements as a last resort –, since it does not require significant imports of equipment or intermediate inputs.

Conclusion

A detailed analysis of Africa's trade and its major regions confirms the impasse of their extroverted policy to reach the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Although its share of world population has increased from 12.5% in 1995 to 17% in 2019, its share of world exports has fallen from 2.8% to 2.2% and its share of world imports from 2.8% to 2.4%. Its trade deficit increased 7.2 times, of which a 9.9-fold increase in food trade and a 4.6-fold increase in manufactured products (MP) trade, which was not offset by a fourfold increase in the surplus on metals-ores-fuels (MOP) trade. Without trade in coffee, cocoa, tea and spices (CCTS) – not basic foodstuffs – the food deficit in sub-Saharan Africa increased 5.8 times. But when African production is taken into account, the share of extra-African Union (AU) imports in food consumption in 2016-18 was only 17.7%, belying UNCTAD's claim that it was 85%.

While the EU remains by far the largest customer and supplier to Africa in 2019 across all sectors, its share has fallen sharply since 1995 while that of intra-Africa trade has risen and China's share has soared but remains 2.7 times lower than the EU's for total exports to Africa and 1.7 times lower for its total imports. Dramatically, although SSA has suffered enormously from the EPAs imposed by the EU on the basis of lies, the AU would suffer much more under the successor agreement to Cotonou as the EPAs will be extended to new areas and the EU will be more supportive of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which will greatly benefit its multinationals. The ambition to make Africa the "*next global manufacturing hub*" is totally unrealistic as its share of global manufactured exports (MPs) is only 0.46% in 2019 and

[24] https://zoom.us/rec/share/-SbU7U7IWoRrcT5nw8JoLd2XsV3lVZBqia2eOEdIMt7nMquCb8gAsLse5ikpef3g.SIQZztzebyGcAiF1 (Code secret : gjFvC?5y)
[25] https://fb.watch/5K5hxFkgFk/

imports of medium and high-tech MPs are 2.5 times higher than those of labour-intensive and low-tech MPs and the deficit of the former was 2.8 times that of the latter.

As intra-African trade is essentially limited to intra-REC (Regional Economic Community) trade and is very low with the rest of Africa, all efforts should be focused on strengthening their integration and aiming at political unification with income redistribution for less competitive firms and households. And, since Africa is the continent that has suffered most from the EU's multi-faceted dominance, it has the greatest potential to change the unfair rules of the WTO, which implies that the RECs and then the AU should become members of the WTO. This will facilitate the priority objective of food sovereignty, since two-thirds of the workforce in SSA and one-third in NAF is in the agriculture-livestock-fisheries-forests sector, the only sector that can create tens of millions of jobs for young people. This implies re-founding the agricultural policy of the RECs on five pillars: radical reform of agricultural land tenure; guaranteeing sustainably remunerative agricultural prices; promoting agro-ecological production systems; compensating consumers for increases in agricultural prices and changing their eating habits. Which implies also a radical change in monetary policy to finance all these objectives without indebtedness in hard currencies.