

## **Africa in the Wake of Globalisation**

*By: Kingsley Y. Amoako*

*Since 1995, Kingsley Yeboah Amoako has been Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, the regional arm of the United Nations in Africa, as an Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations. Dr. Amoako also serves as the co-Chair of the UN's Special Initiative for Africa, an effort designed to harmonise the UN's work in Africa; member of the Global Information and Infrastructure Commission; and member of the World Health Organisation's high-level Commission on Macroeconomics and Health.*

*Prior to ECA, he was in the World Bank for several years, in senior positions including: Director of the Education and Social Policy Department with responsibility for providing strategic leadership for the Bank's programmes on poverty reduction and human resource development (1993-1995); Director/Chief of the Human Resources Operations for Brazil, Venezuela and Peru (1990-1992); and Division Chief for Country Operations for six countries in Eastern Africa (1985-1990).*

*He has published the "Balance of Payments Problems and Exchange Rate Policy: The Ghanaian Experience". In addition, he supervised the preparation of major World Bank reports and policy papers including: Higher Education: The Lessons of Experience (1993); Enhancing Women's Participation in Economic Development (1994); and Advancing Social Development: A Contribution to the Social Summit (1995). A recently published book, "Perspectives on Africa's Development", contains the texts of Amoako's 40 major speeches on the region's challenges.*

*K. Y. Amoako who holds a B. A. (Hons) in Economics from the University of Ghana in Legon, an M. A. and a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of California at Berkeley in the United States in this exclusive interview held in his Addis Ababa office, bares his mind on the major developmental challenges facing the continent, the role of the ECA in forging greater understanding between Africa and its development partners, his perspectives on globalisation as it affects the continent and the multilateral trade system among others.*

*Amoako spoke to Africa Forum's Editor, **Kunle Somorin**. Excerpts:*

***Coming from your background as a World Bank chief to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, what were the major leadership challenges that you faced and how did you grapple with them?***

I think I came into the job with a clear sense of mission. And that mission is to turn this institution to a centre of excellence. To put that more succinctly, I intended to ensure that we respond more pragmatically to Africa's development challenges as we go into the 21st century. When I came, I set in motion a process of consultation with the staff, with our development partners, with African institutions, with leaders in different countries to reflect on the key challenges facing Africa and look for viable solutions. That process was comprehensive and in doing so, I was able to streamline and focus the work of the commission along strategic areas, with a view to mobilising the resources of the commission to meet these key challenges.

My background at the World Bank was also very useful to me. As you are probably aware, I've worked in many parts of the world, in Latin America, in Asia and also in Africa. I had increased responsibilities in the bank before I came here. When I came here, I was armed with a lot of experience which came in handy in resolving or helping to resolve some of the problems at hand. Most importantly, being an African myself, I understand the need to give an African perspective to the myriad of problems facing our continent.

***Taking that into perspective, would you say, sir, that the ECA has been able to actualise the mandate that informed its formation?***

As you know, the ECA was formed in 1958. The mission of the commission or the mandate, as you put it, is to support the socio-economic development of the continent, which is obviously broad. But as times changed, the work of the commission and priorities have to change with the times. If you look at the history of the commission, it has been instrumental in achieving certain key objectives of the new states that emerged after 1958; ECA was in existence before most African countries gained independence. And in the early stages of independence, not many African countries had the institutional capacity to develop framework for economic and social reformation. In most cases, the ECA was called upon to assist, which we did. ECA provided the technical backstopping that led to the setting up of ECOWAS, COMESA and ADB. We set up institutions across these new independent countries. We provided advisory services to our member countries. Over the years, ECA had set up landmark programmes of actions; for instance, the Lagos Plan of Action, the Abuja treaty and more recently the Cairo Plan of Action. And during the past couple of years, we have had to work with African leaders like Obasanjo, Mbeki, Boutefilka etc. on the NEPAD. We have a lot of things with other UN agencies. We are the regional arm, co-ordinating all the UN agencies in Africa. So we have immensely contributed in preparing African countries for Copenhagen, in preparing for Doha where we set the African agenda and provided a common position for Africa on key developmental issues. I think by and large, we have been able to do the work that we have been asked to do.

***You said you have work extensively with leaders in Africa to achieve development. People have often attributed Africa's under-development to poor leadership. Having worked with these leaders, what is your assessment of leadership in the continent and if there are areas of deficit, how can their capacity to deliver be built?***

Leadership to me permeates all areas and exists at all levels. For example, let's take the issue of HIV/AIDS. That's what leadership means, because for me that's one of the biggest leadership challenges that this continent faces. Last year, we had the Africa Development Forum and the basic issue was leadership for the fight against HIV/AIDS. You need political leadership; that is paramount; you need leadership of the civil society; you need leadership of parliamentarians and you need leadership at the community levels. So leadership encompasses all these. But to me, in Africa, political leadership is the bane, it is critical. And that is the whole idea behind our development paradigm called governance. Good governance, that, I articulate to mean stable, capable states. When you look at the definition of capable states, we mean the states that work, which function, where human rights are respected, where democratic principles are endorsed and practised, where different segments of society play and are allowed to participate actively in society.

So political leadership has to pave the way for that. So that's why I think in Africa we have to keep emphasising these. Various states have had their histories of poor governance; poor leadership has therefore been an issue. But at the same time, we have had quite outstanding leaders in this continent. I think the other aspect of leadership is how we empower our women. Leadership in this continent has been lopsided against the womenfolk. We have to empower our women. We need to get them involved in all aspects of our works. Another area of leadership, is that if you look at many of our populations in Africa, an overwhelming majority, 50 – 60% are under the age of 25; they are the youths. How do we generate and inculcate a sense of leadership in the youths and empower them also? These are some of the issues.

***Sir, that leads to another question that agitate my mind. As someone involved in development, that understands that the youths are central to development, what is ECA doing to groom the successor generation of African leaders and ensure that they benefit from the paradigms of development you are setting up?***

What we do is that we involve them by opening up the processes of participation to all stakeholders. For example, I mentioned the African Development Forum, which we want to make the Davos of Africa and we set this up three years ago, we take up an issue, each year and bring all the stakeholders to focus on those issues, to agree on background, highlights, strategies and plans of actions. Here, we listen to the voices of the people so that we can articulate the issues. The first one is on Information and Communication Technology in Globalisation; the second one was on HIV/AIDS; this year, we are going to have another on Regional Integration and the Africa Union. In each of these, there were about a thousand people drawn from all walks of life, all level of leadership. For the youths they are represented. Last year, the one on HIV/AIDS, the youths were the most dynamic and we had a lot of discussion. Indeed, you would be surprised the way they

take on, the heads of states. They asked a lot of questions. I think a lot of good things have stated happening in Africa because of democratization, which opened up the process of pluralistic forces, generated through the civil society and the media which are peopled by dynamic youths of Africa. So we have programmes, we do a lot of networking with research institutions across Africa. We are setting up a database, for example, of experts within Africa and in the diaspora, in all areas, so that we can generate debate on some of these issues.

***All these works you are doing, are they all emanating from your office here in Addis or do you have outposts where implementations are carried out? It would also interest me to know your relationship with individual countries of Africa?***

Okay, the bulk of our staff are here, but as part of the reforms that I started in 1995, we have offices in the five sub-regions of Africa. We have an office in Morocco (North Africa), Lusaka (East Africa), Niamey (West Africa), Kigali (Southern Africa) and Yaounde (Central Africa). We have actually decentralise 25 per cent of the professional workforce. With this arrangement, we are in a position to work together with COMESA, SADC, and ECOWAS and also with some other institutions within the region. We don't have offices at the country levels. We also have very strong links with the civil society and governments of all the countries.

***We have talked about ICT, information communication and e-commerce; these are areas where the battle of globalisation would be fought, what in your opinion is Africa's position in the entire process because most Africans have not seen computers?***

I'm going to surprise you with my answer. I'm positive. I agree most people in Africa have not seen computers, television, telephone and all that; that's an area of key challenge to us in the ECA. We have a division here, devoted fully to developing ICT and Information for Development and we have worked with all nations of Africa to form what we called Africa Information Society to tackle how Africa can use information and ICT, in partnership with other development agencies, in order to bring this into fruition. When we started three or four years ago, how many countries in Africa were connected to the Internet? Just six. Today it, has shot up most rapidly. Today, you know how many African countries are connected? Almost every country is linked one way or the other. If you look at the growth in telecommunication, with privatisation, with cellular phones, mobile phones, satellite phones, there are a lot of examples, even in rural areas where our people are using ICT. So I think in this areas, some countries are showing the leadership and are making a lot of progress, but I think a lot more needs to be done. There are some other challenges for Africa, to use ICT more, in terms of business, for health, education. It is well demonstrated, so that we can be part of e-commerce, e-government, and all the "ees". Africa can really take advantage of the "ees". Really, some countries in Africa are doing better than the rest, but some of the fundamental things that each country needs to do will be to have a vision, clear, well-articulated strategy and ICT policy; that has to do with regulatory framework, institutional back up, capacity and content building etc. I have to mention that some African countries like South Africa, Mozambique, Senegal,

Rwanda, Tunisia, and Morocco are great examples of where things are happening even within Africa.

***Do you think, sir, that globalisation is to the utmost advantage of this continent?***

Well, Africa has no choice about globalisation. Well it is true that some African towns have not seen computers, but Africa has no alternative, other than to embrace globalisation. If you look at globalisation, to me what it means is integrating into the world economy, through trade, financial pool, ICT... There is clear evidence and recent research has confirmed that, but what we need really is ethical globalisation that ensures equity, social stability, justice, and fairness. If you group developing countries into two; those that have embraced globalisation have expanded their trade, they have increased life expectancy and increased schooling among various indicators. Their growth rates have improved to between 5 – 7 percent per annum. Those who haven't embraced it, have all these indicators going downward.

***How do we move from this miserable state to a stage where we could go to a negotiation table with these Western nations and be able to extract our worth on whatever we are going to discuss and on equal basis?***

***I'm an optimist. There are certain challenges we have to define and tackle. By and large, there are a few things we need to do, some of the key priorities are: number one, we have to wage war against poverty; the issue of governance, capable state, empowering our women and the youths, the ICT challenge and how to meet it. We also need to give greater emphasis to our agricultural sector. We need to move more toward scientific agriculture, embrace technology, regional integration. We need a United Africa; with the African Union and the Abuja treaty, we have done a study here, on what has worked and what hasn't worked. Regional integration is important and I think to be able to compete effectively in the world economy and transform our economies, build our capacity, it is important.***

***So, what would you say has changed since WTO took over from GATT?***

The establishment of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) marked the culmination of years of trade negotiations under the Uruguay Rounds and indeed what has changed since the GATT has been the establishment of an institution (the WTO) to oversee multilateral trade negotiations. When the Bretton Woods institutions (the World Bank and the IMF) were being established in 1945, it was then envisaged that a third international organisation should be established to oversee international trade. Consensus on establishing a full-fledged organisation could not be reached and hence the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade was created to serve as an interim arrangement, which lasted until 1994. The WTO, established on 1 January 1995, is a global international organisation dealing with the rules of trade between nations. At the heart of the system-known as the multilateral trading system- are the WTO agreements, negotiated and signed by the bulk of the world's trading nations and ratified by their parliaments. These

agreements are the legal ground-rules for international commerce. Essentially, they are contracts, guaranteeing member countries important trade rights, but also binding governments to keep their trade policies within agreed limits to everybody's benefit.

***What is the place of Africa in globalisation?***

Africa remains at the peripheral of the global economy and the multilateral trading system. Indeed, the forces of globalisation and liberalisation have marginalized the continent. As an economic entity, Africa contains 53 countries, population of 778 million, a GDP of \$535 billion, and GDP per capita of \$688 in 1998. Nonetheless, Africa's GDP as a group is slightly less than that of Spain, a country of only 39 million inhabitants. Africa today accounts for less than 2 percent of global GDP, and for Sub-Saharan Africa, barely 1 percent of global GDP. Today Africa produces only about 1 percent of global value added in manufacturing.

Closer integration into the world economy has been one of the distinguishing features of successful developing countries over the past twenty to thirty years, but not in the case of Africa. Since the 1960, the ratio of world trade to GDP has doubled with rising shares of manufactured goods and trade in services, in which Africa's participation is marginal. As a result of below average growth, Africa's share of global exports has fallen steadily over the past 30 years to only 2 percent at the end of the 1990s.

***Most African countries entered the WTO without understanding the basic implications of what they are signing. Do you subscribe to this? What can ECA do to rectify this problem?***

Indeed most African countries lacked capacity to effectively participate in the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations that took place between 1986 and 1994, which culminated with the signing of the Marrakech Agreement. Most African countries have acknowledged this aspect and concerted efforts are being made to provide trade-related technical assistance to these countries. ECA, in collaboration with other UN agencies, such as UNCTAD, and the World Trade Organisation as well as African Research Institutes, such as the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC).

African countries went to Doha (Qatar) far much better prepared than they were for the Third WTO Ministerial Conference held in Seattle (U.S.A) in 1999. They went to Doha with a Ministerial Declaration adopted in Abuja on the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference as well as a document, which clearly spelt out Africa's Negotiating Objectives. ECA played a significant role in the development of these important documents.

***An Assistant Secretary General of the UN, Angela King, described globalisation as not being of ultimate advantage to women. What do you think of this assessment of King?***

The issue of women participation in the global trade has to be positioned in the context of women's participation in the individual country's economy as well as the global economy. Indeed, in many economies of the world, women are marginalised. We at ECA believe that the process of enhancing the participation of women in the global economy and trade has to start with empowering women to participate in the decision-making process on economic and social issues both at the country, regional and international levels. Women should also be provided with the means for effective participation in the production of goods and services, as well their distribution and marketing. ECA is currently, extensively, involved in trying to mainstream gender issues in what we call Poverty Reduction Strategies Papers (PRSPs) of African countries. We also have a very strong African Centre for Women, which deals with gender issues on a day-to-day basis.

***What is the assurance that Africa would positively benefit from the multilateral trading system on the long run?***

Globalisation not only offers opportunities for faster economic growth but also significantly raises the risks of marginalisation for those countries that fail to integrate into the global economy. Those firms and countries that cannot control and manipulate knowledge and potential opportunities to their advantage risk being marginalised. The growth in economic prosperity in Asia and Latin America, in spite of the recent difficulties, is largely attributable to the integration of their economies into the global economy. The recent crisis in Asia has made it clear that it is not enough merely to open economies. Sound and fully transparent macroeconomic policies, solid and well supervised financial systems, and good governance are also essential in order to avoid serious problems and to benefit fully and durably from access to globalised markets.

Globalisation offers many potential benefits to Africa. Changes in the way production has historically been organised and the increased mobility in the factors of production have created new products and new markets. In addition, the rapid development of and continuous innovations in technologies present Africa with the prospects of leapfrogging inefficient and obsolete production systems and can provide the systems for making rapid movements in health and education and in reducing poverty. However, there are no assurances that a particular country will benefit from the forces of globalisation and liberalisation. It all depends on how a country responds to the challenges generated by globalisation.

***People have also said repeatedly that there are difficulties in implementing the Uruguay Round Agreements. Are there no ways of modifying them instead of having a new round?***

The WTO Ministerial Conference at Doha went some ways in trying to resolve some of the anomalies that exist in the Uruguay Round and WTO Agreements and the difficulties some countries have experienced in implementing such Agreements. Indeed, there is broad acknowledgement that some of the agreements would need to be revisited in order to remove such anomalies and others would need to be clarified. The new round of multilateral trade negotiations is expected to achieve some of these objectives. The WTO

Ministerial Conference in Doha adopted on 14 December 2001 a decision on “Implementation-related Issues and Concerns” which delineates modalities for negotiating on various elements and refinements to the Uruguay Round and WTO Agreements.

***Do you think the Western nations have been faithful to the terms and clauses of the Uruguay Rounds, especially as it relates to subsidies, because it has been established that there have been increases in budgetary allocation to subsidies, especially in the OECD countries in the last five years. Why?***

Indeed, the issue of trade subsidies by developed countries, especially on agriculture, was one of the most contentious issues at the Doha. However, some broad agreement was reached that these issues would be discussed during this new round of multilateral trade negotiations. Negotiations at Doha on agriculture proved extremely difficult as the Cairns Group, and most developing countries were pushing for some form of agreement on elimination of agricultural export subsidies and domestic support measures in developed countries. The EU was against this aspect but in the end agreed to accept a modified text agreement. Included in the comprehensive agricultural negotiation mandate are “reductions of, with a view to phasing out, all forms of export subsidies”. The other features of the agricultural mandate are “substantial improvements in market access” for commodities of developing countries; and substantial reductions in trade-distorting domestic support measures.

Developing countries demanded at Doha the creation of a “development box” in the Agreement on Agriculture. Although this was not agreed upon in Doha, it remains possible in the course of the post-Doha agriculture talks, as the Ministerial Declaration agrees that “special and differential treatment” for developing countries shall be an integral part of the negotiations.

***Developed countries are believed to be insisting on the “new comprehensive round”, in order to take advantage of the enforcement system of the WTO. Do you think this fear is misplaced, and, how, in your opinion can developing nations be protected from the alleged tyranny of their developed counterparts?***

African countries eloquently presented their positions at Doha and provided strong arguments on certain issues, which they felt should not be included on the agenda for the new round of multilateral trade negotiations. However, trade negotiations are about “give and take” and accordingly what emerged at Doha was a consensus that was painstakingly agreed to by all members. It is not helpful for Africa to look at other members of the WTO as tyrants. In the wisdom of President Mbeki of South Africa, which I also subscribe to: “Africa had little choice but to embrace globalisation, but it should do so in pursuit of an ethical economy capable of creating equity, security and sustainable development”.

***In Seattle, there were violent protests, and the difference along the North and South divides became more pronounced. What influence does ECA hope to bring to bear on the WTO to bridge the gap and resolve the issues raised in the violent protests that put a bold question mark on Seattle?***

Developments at Seattle brought to the forefront the imbalances and inequities that exist in the Uruguay round agreements and the need to create a more transparent and equitable multilateral trading system. The events also highlighted the importance of bringing on board in trade negotiations other stakeholders, especially the private sector, non-governmental organisations and civil society. The call of most NGOs at the Doha WTO Ministerial Conference was for the Fourth Session to launch a “development round” that placed sustainable development and poverty reduction goals at the centre of the multilateral trading system; and for the negotiating process to be more transparent and all-inclusive.

Notable efforts were made at Doha to address some of these concerns. However, the extent to which the new round of multilateral trade negotiations will address these concerns will depend on the final outcome to be agreed upon in 2005. Developing countries will be in a better position to negotiate concessions from developed countries in the new round if they can maintain their energy, unity and clarity as they go into a complex set of negotiations. They also need to fully engage the private sector, NGOs and civil society to avoid the pitfalls of Seattle. ECA will provide technical assistance where needed.

***It has been argued that new issues like investment, environment, government procurement, competition and transparency billed for the next round of negotiations are non-trade issues and that could be treated at other international organisations. Do you agree and why?***

On some of these issues African nations have made their position clear and the question of whether to launch a new comprehensive round was really an issue at Doha.

Regarding the new issues, also called the Singapore and other issues, the WTO members agreed in Doha that the study process underway in the WTO since the Singapore Ministerial Conference on investment and competition policy rules, transparency in government procurement and trade facilitation should continue until the Fifth Session of the WTO Ministerial Conference (2003). The members agreed that negotiations on all these issues “will take place after the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference on a basis of a decision to be taken, by explicit consensus, at that Session on modalities for negotiations”. According to the Chair of the Negotiations at Doha, the Trade Minister of Qatar, *this would give each member the right to take a position on modalities that would prevent negotiations from proceeding after the Fifth Session of the Ministerial*

*Conference until that member is prepared to join in an explicit consensus". The legal status of the Chair's clarification is unclear as to whether countries will be allowed to opt out of negotiations on these issues at the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference.*

On trade and environment, the WTO members agreed to launch negotiations immediately on three environmental issues: the relationship between WTO rules and specific trade obligations set out in multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs); procedures for regular information exchange between MEA secretariats and the relevant WTO Committees, and the criteria for the granting of observer status; and the reduction or, as appropriate, elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers to environmental goods and services. However, the Ministerial Declaration states that the negotiations "shall not add or diminish the rights and obligations of members under existing WTO Agreements" and that the negotiations "shall not prejudice the WTO rights of any members that is not a party to the MEA in question".

***Still on extra-trade elements and the new round, investment is said to be traditionally regulated by countries with freedom and right to regulate the entry and conditions of establishment and operation. Putting investment under the WTO agenda, it has been argued, would make big corporations from the West have undue advantage. Do you agree? It is believed to be an aberration, and indeed, a distortion to the trade system. How do you react to that?***

Many developing countries, including those in Africa, have argued for the right to regulate investment in order to influence the content and quality of the development process in their countries. The Doha WTO Ministerial Declaration acknowledges this aspect. The Declaration states that "we recognise the needs of developing and least-developed countries for enhanced support for technical assistance and capacity building in this area, including policy analysis and development so that they may better evaluate the implications of closer multilateral co-operation for their development policies and objectives, and human and institutional development". Accordingly any framework should reflect in a balanced manner the interests of home and host countries, and take due account of the development policies and objectives of host governments as well as their right to regulate in the public interest. The special development, trade and financial needs of developing and least-developed countries should be taken into account as an integral part of any framework, which should enable members to undertake obligations and commitments commensurate with their individual needs and circumstances. Due regard should be paid to other relevant WTO provisions. Account should be taken, as appropriate, of existing bilateral and regional arrangements on investment.

***Another argument by the development experts in developing nations is that introducing these subjects would lead step by step to market access issues, and people are concerned that it would have spiral effect. Such experts contend that the concerns for this have to be absolutely allayed first, for there to be reasonable degree of comfort to discuss transparency, for instance. What are the ways in which these concerns can be allayed to Africa's full satisfaction?***

Developing countries recognise that the fundamental arguments for introducing the new issues is market access and accordingly have been on guard whenever these issues are discussed. As regards transparency in government procurement, developing countries demanded that market access should not form part of any multilateral framework on this issue. The Doha WTO Ministerial Conference makes it clear that “negotiations shall be limited to the transparency aspects and therefore will not restrict the scope for countries to give preferences to domestic supplies and suppliers. We commit ourselves to ensuring adequate technical assistance and support for capacity building both during the negotiations and after their conclusion”.

***In concrete terms, what are the benefits that you think initiatives like the negotiation on agriculture and trade in service, technical co-operation programmes would have on duties of manufactured goods imported into Africa?***

The negotiations on agriculture and trade in services if successfully concluded could yield the most tangible benefits to African countries from the multilateral trading system. Removal of export subsidies and agricultural domestic support measures could significantly open up markets in developed countries for agricultural exports of African countries. This is on the assumption that developed countries do not impose non-tariff barriers. Similarly, negotiations on trade in services could also yield benefits for African countries if conducted on the basis of informed knowledge of the potential existing in individual African countries to effectively compete in supplying services.

***How do you react to the notion that the industrial tariff issue discussed in Doha would lead to further “de-industrialisation” of African countries that have been experiencing local industries and enterprises closure as a result of rival imported goods?***

As regards negotiations on industrial tariff, WTO members agreed in Doha to launch negotiations on industrial tariffs, despite strong opposition from developing countries, who clearly stated that they were not prepared to take on further liberalisation in trade in goods before studies had been conducted on its impact on their economies. These concerns were not reflected in the final Ministerial Declaration, although promises have been made that negotiations would aim to reduce or as appropriate to eliminate not only tariffs, but also tariff peaks, tariff escalation, as well as non-tariff barriers, “in particular on products of export interest to developing countries”. However, many developing countries, including African countries, remain concerned about the impact on their economies, especially industries as well as government revenues, of further tariff reductions. Many argue that this will lead to further de-industrialisation of African economies.

Aren't there other fora for discussing some of these issues?

Certain things like labour issues, I think can be taken to I.L.O. But what came out of Doha is that we are moving towards a new comprehensive round. It's inevitable; it's been

agree upon. The issue now is how do we engage the rest of the world on these issues, so that our interests are best protected. What we need to do and what we will be doing is a lot of technical studies on competition, labour, government procurement, investment, all these issues we need to go prepared.

***What is ECA doing to ensure that Africa's fear about globalisation is replaced with hope?***

This is an assignment we have imposed on ourselves. We can be an interlocutor between Africa and our development partners. We have certain processes in place where we try to influence agenda on behalf of Africa. In WTO, for example, what we did before Seattle was that we worked with African negotiators, member – states with missions in Geneva. We also worked with the OAU and ADB in preparing Africa's position. I remember myself that I made a speech in Seattle where I put all of these issues on the table. Even in Doha, we provided technical support to some of our member-states.

The first issue is to understand the issues, decide what is in our best interest and agree on our strategies. That is paramount, because you cannot go into this debate if you have not done your homework. That is what we in ECA, working with other African institutions like OAU, ADB are trying to do and there is a lot more work to be done, especially as we move into negotiating the new comprehensive round. Simultaneously, we need to advocate Africa's position to get the other side to better understand what is in Africa's best interest. We need market access for our agricultural products.

We are under-represented at the WTO and Geneva because we lack the corps of negotiators, how can the ECA intervene in building this capacity at the country level in Africa?

Trade capacity building is important and if you look at negotiations during the Uruguay round, it was clear that Africa didn't have the capacity and negotiators, even up till Seattle, we had to supplement. We had to send some of our experts to Geneva for one whole year. Next year too, we are bringing some experts to work with us on key issues, but I think individual countries need to consciously develop this capacity. In Geneva that's a real issue, because if you compare the strength of African negotiators, it's nothing to write home about. That's why WTO and other agencies are trying to do quite a bit to help strengthen Africa's capacity.

But there's a more fundamental issue, which is domestic, even in our individual countries, the issues of trade, finance and development are not fully appreciated amongst us. You need to get your trade and finance ministers to understand the enormity of their jobs. It's not just negotiation in Geneva. Trade and finance issues are as important as

death. So they have to generate policies that impact meaningfully on the lives of their people.

***Recently, Prof. Jagdish Bhawati, former Adviser to GATT's Director General, Arthur Dunkel, wrote in the Financial Times of London that it was a great mistake to have introduced intellectual property into the WTO, as it is not a trade issue, and that it has distorted the trade system, against the interests of developing countries. What is your response on this?***

Implementation of the Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement in the WTO has proved to be the most difficult and controversial aspect of the work of the WTO. The experience of a number of developing countries with implementation of the TRIPS Agreement and affordable medicines has left a sour taste as to the fairness of the multilateral trading system. Nonetheless, some of these issues were discussed at Doha and further work is expected to take place in Geneva in this area.

**Sir, we have all manners of treaties, blueprints, agreements and policies, but what they amount to are mere paper tigers, don't you think we need 'enforcement' and 'sanction' to make our development policies work?**

I think it is broad. We have ECOWAS, COMESA, OAU, and SADC, where we have protocols, agreements, on certain actions, invariably what we lack is that of enforceability. Hopefully, as we move towards the African Union and as we design the institutions and instruments, the issue of enforceability in the whole supra-nationality and against the individual countries and decision-making processes would be looked into. Commitment is important, ensuring that we abide by what we agree on. But when you talk about sanctions, countries are by and large sovereign entities and you can have sanctions. Take the European Union, for example, they have sanctions. Under the EU, there is what they call Military and Stability Act, if you didn't meet certain targets, you are going to be sanctioned. You don't meet your target on deficit on the GDP ratio, you are going to be fired. Germany for example, this year is facing the real prospects of being penalised for undermining the Euro. That is within the EU framework. Now are we African countries ready for that kind of arrangement when we talk about African Union, common currency, for it to be meaningful? If you take ECOWAS, for example, on these criteria, they are moving towards common currency, the fast track between Ghana and Nigeria, I think that's in the right direction. If countries have agreed on certain standard practices, I think, we must work towards actualising them, no matter what it takes. It takes a lot of political will and institutional capacity to be able to meet these aspirations, goals and objectives.

***And, do you think the present generations of African leaders have the political will to push through that?***

It is in the best interest of their people. With the commitment of the resources into these protocols and treaties, I don't see why a decent leader should be there when he is not representing the interest of the people. If a leader does not uphold good governance and transparency, it is a democratic principle to get him out. So we need to move from a stage where leaders who cannot perform or meet the aspirations of their people or abide by what he has assented to would remain. The ultimate sanction in my view, would be their removal from power. So if there are leaders, that have reneged on treaties signed, there are processes all over the continent, I think, they should be replaced.

***You have harped on regional integration, and Africa Union is here with us, how does the ECA hope to reposition for the new challenges and what are the implications of this to you?***

We will be looking at the major performance indicators. We will be conducting research into fiscal and monetary policies and harmonise at the Regional Economic Communities. We will examine what has worked, what hasn't worked, where we have not made progress, we will be thinking of accelerating progress. We will invite all the major stakeholders who are interested in regional integration to discuss the problems and prospects with a view to preparing for the challenges ahead.

The issue, sir, is with all these regional initiatives – CSSDCA, AU, NEPAD, where does ECA come in?

We have to come in, we are the regional arm of the United Nations. That's what we are set up to do, to provide the needed insight into development. We are working very closely with the OAU. ECA is very much involved as far as regional integration is concerned. Now NEPAD, we have been in it from the very beginning. When it was MAP, we have shared thoughts with Presidents Obasanjo, Thabo Mbeki, Bouteflika, all of them, before it became NEPAD. We have had workshops, expert meetings, even with G8 representatives. And for CSSDCA, when it started, we went with Obasanjo to Kampala. All the negotiation meetings so far, including the last one in Pretoria, we were there.

***You have spoken of Civil Society as being of great importance in the development enterprise. Sir how does civil society and you interact?***

If you look at our policy directives, clearly they are a force to reckon with. You remember the whole issue about popular participation, the concept and Arusha declaration, was about civil society. Last year, we provided a forum for civil society organisations to interact with us on all facets of development. We're currently conducting

a survey on CSOs in Africa, their performance index etc because they are exerting a lot of influence and we consider them critical to development.

***Being an economist, one would like to know your view on the admission of Western nations into ADB. Would you say as an African Bank, foreigners should not be allowed to invest in it?***

I don't know of any West. I know development partners. We are behind the West and East. That ended in 1991. I think, may be, it was a wise decision, the shareholders and member states had all their facts before making a decision to open up shares for subscription, before bringing them on board. So I think that was a wise decision.

***Finally, sir, the issue of debt burden has been hanging on our neck; some say it is dehumanising to ask for debt forgiveness when indeed we owe, while many think it is the right thing to do. Where do you stand?***

I see debt forgiveness as inevitable. We need to see debt as a part of the trinity of aid, trade and debt. Debt forgiveness is important for the majority of the African people. Some progress has been made on this issue, more needs to be done and in my millennium lecture I came up with some specific recommendations to push forward on the debt issue. And the fact that people have paid so much interests and for debt servicing, leaving the social services to suffer. I think however, that debt forgiveness is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. We should be careful not to think that once our debt is forgiven, our problems will disappear. We need "a sufficient condition", which is to plan and manage ourselves better and get integrated into the global trade. I strongly believe in trade. The fact that we are marginalised in the world economy, the fact that we've been losing market share make this imperative. Take your country, Nigeria; for example, when we were growing up, you know how Nigeria was famous for agricultural exports – coffee, cocoa, groundnuts etc. where are they now? We've lost everything to Malaysia. So when we are forgiven our debt, we should think of benefits of globalisation and what we intend to do. So that is the answer. I believe in debt- forgiveness. That's what we need to do, we should push for more, but we should not see it as a panacea to all our woes.