

# **African Renaissance in the United States of Africa: A Historical and Political Approach of a Pan Africanist Vision of Africa**

by

Johanna Menda'a Tadadjeu

johan\_tmotaz@yahoo.com

Researcher in History- International Relations

/Centre of National Education/Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation,  
Yaounde, Cameroon

&

Nzino Munongo Victorine Ghislaine

victorineghislaine.nzinomunong@gmail.com

Researcher in the Department of Legal and Political Studies

Centre of National Education/Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation,  
Yaounde, Cameroon

## **Abstract**

The focus of this study is to bring out an appropriate methodology and present the function of universities in discussing the need for a collective and institutional portage of the United States of Africa and African Renaissance offers a social, cultural and economic vision of Africa, whereas, the United States of Africa presents an essentially political view of Africa. We insist that be a vision, because of its remote nature from the daily masses concerns, needs specific treatment to gradually take root in the collective memory and serve as a compass for the future. Second, we place particular emphasis on the function of the historical African communities scattered around the world with Africa as their original geographic base. Thus we argue that a collective portage of the binomial concept of African Renaissance-United States of Africa should stimulate the large constitutive movement for African people eager to live together as one, although scattered throughout the world.

**Keywords:** Diaspora, Pan-Africanism, Integration, Homeland, Collective Memory, Institutional Portage.

## Introduction

If there is a general statement which is made about Africa, it is that of the decadence that today characterizes African states, particularly in Africa south of the Sahara. In the early 1960s, the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) gave rise to optimism as to the future prosperity of the continent. Indeed, between the 1960s and late 1970s the global Gross Domestic Product of African countries has roughly tripled to about US\$86 billion (in constant prices), which represents an average annual growth of 5.6%. Their per capita income rose from an average of US\$113 in 1960 to US\$243 in 1980<sup>1</sup>. However, this progress must not be a source of illusion, because the per capita income of Africa represented at the end of the 1970s, only 7.6% of that of all industrialized countries which amounted to US\$9 684<sup>2</sup>. So this progress only makes sense when it is compared to the colonial period. However, the latter will experience a considerable fall at the end of the 1970s; a period called the despair era by Jean Tabi Manga<sup>3</sup>. During this period, Africa lost control of its economic destiny; and thus was subjected to Structural Adjustment Programs (economic policies for developing countries promoted by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund since the early 1980s via conditional loans). The newly developed Lagos Action Plan was swapped against the Berg Report (a World Bank report titled "Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Plan for Action," written by Elliot Berg in 1981 written in response to a 1979 request from the African Governors of the World Bank for a paper analyzing the development problems facing African countries. It also responds to a set of policies determined by the African Chiefs of State in 1980, called the Lagos Plan of Action) which according to Edem Kodjo<sup>4</sup> was the exact antonym of the Lagos Action plan (an Organization of African Unity backed plan to increase self-sufficiency in Africa). While the Lagos Plan endorsed inward-looking policies of African self-reliance, the Berg report advocated for outward-looking policies of increased international trade.

This began for Africa an endless debt cycle with US\$284.5 billion in 2000<sup>5</sup>. This situation will severely affect African development and lead to a disastrous economy state; leading African people to the initiation of a new development plan during the year 2000: NEPAD (New Partnership for African Development). However, the effective functioning of the program is heavily compromised.

At the political level, the situation in Africa is neither better and could be pictured through the words of Abdoulaye Wade (2000-2012 President of Senegal): if one were to assess the first thirty years of independence, one could say that Africa spent nearly two-thirds of its time in disputes about the sharing of power. In the absence of a consensus on the rules of access to power, the use of force was erected in rule. Thus, Africa spent a lot of effort, resources and time for the conquest of power, instead of adopting democratic rules of play and directing all these resources towards development<sup>6</sup>. The 2000s was marked as the period of constitutional amendments guaranteeing the settling in power of African rulers and a dynastic devolution. Thus, in a context of breach of the said universal values such as democracy, human rights and good governance, Africa has become a laboratory of foreign interference in the name of the defence of such ideals. And the social situation of the continent is neither enviable, in the last fifty years, the unemployment rate is quasi-stagnant; poverty is coupled to the persistence of illiteracy, and the mortality rate is relatively high.

At the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, *Pan Africanism* highlights the need in Africa, not only of a political independence, regional integration and an improvement of the living standard of populations, but also the need to break the chains of economic slavery and the current stagnation state of the democratic system that have halted the long-time prosperity known after independence. This would be possible by defining a new economic chessboard and the development of new forms of partnership in which Africa would figure as a partner and would negotiate with the rest of the world, while providing a fierce defence of its own priorities.

The focus of this work is to highlight the complementary nature of the binomial concept based on African Renaissance-United States of Africa. The United States of Africa serving as a containing policy to the Africa renaissance notion. According to Thabo Mbeki, African Renaissance offers a social, cultural and economic view of Africa's future; driven by the late Muhammad Qaddafi, of the United States of Africa concept which offers an essentially political vision of Africa. Thus, this study has an interest in bringing out an appropriate methodology supporting such an argumentation involving universities and the historical African communities scattered around the world, with Africa as a geographic base.

## **Background of Study**

In this exploratory work, one is struck by the relevance it by many authors, among other Cheikh Anta Diop, Kwame Nkrumah, Edem Kodjo, etc.

Cheikh Anta Diop<sup>7</sup> is the first to address the issue openly in his article '*Quand pourra-t-on parler d'une renaissance africaine?*'. According to him, African Renaissance is synonymous with cultural renaissance. Indeed, he raises the problem of the African renaissance viewed through the prism of the development of African languages; because according to him, to meet the scientific challenge, African people in Africa must dabble in the main languages of their country, with all inventive facilities and their spirit of initiative. For the scientist, it is about developing the outlines of cultural renovation that passes through a genuine psychological awareness revolution. However, the cultural struggle remains inseparable from the political and scientific battle.

However, for Kwame Nkrumah<sup>8</sup>, the African Renaissance is a philosophical concept in which history occupies an important place. Thus in his book '*le consciencisme*', he largely underlines the second European renaissance and shows that even if this second movement, in its philosophical expression liberated the thought from certain obstacles, especially religious, it was balanced with capitalism. The lesson he draws is the benefit of putting back philosophy in the intellectual historical context to which it belongs and the milieu where it was born. Therefore, according to the author, our history must be written as the history of our society, not as the history of European adventurers. African society must be regarded as enjoying its own integrity. Its history should be a reflection of itself.

The Renaissance in which Nkrumah believes therefore passes through the consolidation of the independence and the establishment of a *socialism* that seeks to relate the egalitarian and humanitarian past of African people, who in return seeks how to use even the results of colonialism while adapting it to the interest of the people. However, the writings of the *Pan Africanist* are purely theoretical, and do not give a practical approach as to the implementation of an African Renaissance.

The authors José Do-Nascimento, Diouf Makhtar, Marc Favero<sup>9</sup>, facing the general bankruptcy of most of the development models imposed on Africa, have made the choice to explore the hypothesis of an African Renaissance as an alternative paradigm. In their book '*La renaissance africaine comme alternative au développement: Les termes du choix politique en Afrique*' they outline that this paradigm prompts the question of modernity in postcolonial Africa, not in terms of development (diachronic and linear maturation process of the social fabric) but in terms of historical renaissance (Refoundation process of the social fabric). Such a process involves policies of access to modernity in the form of adequate social fabric policies and repossession of the fields of historicity. These policies are intended to be effective, considering that they are based on a real basis (convincing sources of African history), meanwhile development is based on historical fiction (the evolutionary interpretation of history of societies). As such, the African renaissance boils down to the analysis of the modalities of a renaissance of African societies to historicity. However, the present research stands out of the above findings in that the point at stake is about giving a policy frame to African societies.

Edem Kodjo<sup>10</sup> in his book '*Pan Africanisme et renaissance africaine*' initiates the reflection by highlighting the importance and the practical usefulness of the unity of the continent in order to heal its large wounds and elaborate its multifaceted development. For the author, we cannot do without the contribution of the African Diaspora in this process of rebirth, at least by moral duty towards the founders of *Pan Africanism*. The political elite just as the younger generation must adopt this dual theme for a better future of Africa. However, the question in its entirety remains, how can African Renaissance be achieved through *Pan Africanism*?

Ibrahima Sow gives<sup>11</sup> an answer to the above question in his article '*Des Etats-unis d'Afrique à la renaissance africaine*'. For the author, the reality of African Renaissance would be illusory without the United States of Africa and vice versa. In his work the author asks the double question of what to think and what to do with the concept of Renaissance, considering that political actors and scholars have significant differences regarding the appropriate will and vision to attribute to the Renaissance. Analysis of the author focuses on various obstructions that occurred against the *Pan African* project through the theories of Nkrumah and Léopold Sédar Senghor<sup>12</sup>. Finally he concludes on the relevance of the work of Cheikh Anta Diop who, according to him, is fundamental to understanding the concept; because it brings out its axiological, historical, epistemological, and theoretical basis. However, beyond the presentation of the discrepancies that have served as obstructions to the process of the political integration of the continent, this study also focuses on presenting a draft constitution that could serve as basis for the construction of a unitary State.

If we want to be in phase, both with the *Pan Africanist* ideology and the modern, scientific and political will to give Africa its true place in order to allow activity on a more positive, efficient and significant role in global governance, there is a need to think and rethink Africa, including the African person through a genuine African renaissance<sup>13</sup>. However, is it possible to arrive at a genuine African Renaissance outside the United States of Africa? And conversely, is it possible to achieve the creation of the United States of Africa, without an African Renaissance?

Considering that hypothesis by definition it is a provisional response to a question<sup>14</sup>, at the end of our analysis, thus, we hope to show convincingly that it is in the process of creation of the United States of Africa and that African Renaissance may take a specific embodiment that is a collective portage of the binomial concept of African Renaissance - United States of Africa, that has to stimulate the large dynamics of an 'African people', now eager to live together as a single people, although scattered on the surface of the Earth.

## **Material and Methods**

The issue of *Pan Africanism* and the African Renaissance whose logical outcome should be the construction of the United States of Africa is multifaceted and will not be addressed by a single theoretical approach. As a result, three approaches will be referred to in this study: constructivism, the political conception of integration of Nkrumah, and finally, the theory of the historical cycles by James Africanus Beale Horton.

Micheal Barnett et al.<sup>15</sup> describe Constructivism as the theory that deals with the manner in which the international structure defines the interests and identities of States and how the actors reproduce this structure by the idea that they have of the latter. Hence, the international reality is socially constructed by cognitive structures that give meaning to the material world. Constructivism in its ontological aspect considers that there is no static reality<sup>16</sup>. Thus, all reality is subject to constant change depending on the perceptions of the actors involved. As an explanatory theory that gives an answer to the questions "how?" this dimension of the approach will bring us to understand how the United States of Africa and African Renaissance are built on each other. Thus, the political conception of integration on its part is a result of the noted inadequacy of the Functionalist model to realize integration in Africa. According to this approach, the economy does not function on its own<sup>17</sup>. Thus, Kwame Nkrumah sees the need for the power of a central political authority to have the economy work. Political integration is defined according to Nkrumah on three factors: a global economic planning; a unified defence and military strategy; and a foreign policy and a unified diplomacy. Hence, for Nkrumah, all these factors should be coordinated by a continental government, because the economic development can only be the work of a political unit. Thus, integration in Africa will be possible only if Africa can unite politically through the United States of Africa.

The theory of historical cycles of James Africanus Beale Horton<sup>18</sup> (Horton was an African nationalist writer and an esteemed Medical Surgeon in the British Army from Freetown, Sierra Leone. He was also a scientist, and a political thinker who worked toward African independence a century before it occurred.

In his varied career, he served as a physician, an officer in the British Army, a banker, and a mining entrepreneur) takes into account the work of the first writers of Africa (Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, St. Augustine), which specifies that no condition is permanent and unchanging, there is a natural law of evolution and dissolution, civilizations are born, they grow and fall into decline, sinking into barbarism, then after a certain time are reborn. This assumes that one can hope the rehabilitation of a continent that has had to produce works of great spirituality, high-tech and that has hosted great empires.

The method used for this work is essentially documentary and an empirical observation of social fact. It involves the collection of data available in documentation centres. It is basically about secondary and primary sources such as archives, literature on *Pan Africanism*, specialised studies on the United States of Africa and African Renaissance, scientific articles and academic dissertations. The analysis of this work is made through two methods: the historical method considered as the establishment of facts in time to enrich the interpretation of a period for a better understanding. This method permits us to highlight the historical perspective of the *Pan Africanist Movement*. And finally, the Geopolitical method will help in defining the complementary relationships existing between the two concepts of the African Renaissance and the United States of Africa.

## **Results and Discussion**

Our intention is to contribute to the effort of the collective and institutional portage of these two complementary visions for a best possible future for Africa. In this way, we will briefly remind the essential contents of the two concepts before highlighting the natural relationship that unites them. We will then examine the current collective portage requirements needed, insisting on the fact of vision, because it is remote from the daily masses concerns, and needs specific treatment to gradually take root in the collective memory of the people; and serve as a compass for the future.

Throughout our discussion, we argue that Africa today cannot dispense with this double vision without which its development operations would be fanned out and weakened by centrifugal forces. We will also put particular emphasis on the role of the African Diaspora. It is important that the African continent presents this double vision to its world vision as a unifying project in which they have a specific role to play.

## **A Capture of the African Renaissance Concept**

The concept of 'African Renaissance' is seen for the first time in the slogans of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), founded by Marcus Garvey, a global leader and staunch advocate of Black Nationalism, African independence and Pan Africanism. The UNIA was a movement for the return of descendants of the enslaved in the Americas, who after the abolition of slavery, were facing racism and racial discrimination in the United States perpetrated by several negative social forces, including the anti-black and racist Ku-Klux-Klan outfit.

Thus, in its Convention on August 1<sup>st</sup> 1920, in Harlem, New York, Black people chanted such slogans as ‘*Wake up Ethiopia, awake Africa!*’, ‘*Africa for the Africans in Africa and elsewhere*’, ‘*Revival of the black race*’. This movement, which in 1923 claimed nearly 6 million members, broke up in 1925 in financial scandals. But its architect, Marcus Garvey, who died fifteen years later in 1940 in London, remained forever a visionary who has given inspiration to people of African descent everywhere in his struggle uplift African people from the degradation that centuries of slavery and enslavement had caused<sup>19</sup>.

The expression ‘African Renaissance’ such as advanced later by Cheikh Anta Diop<sup>20</sup> is addressed for the first time in 1948 in a question: when can we speak of an African Renaissance? In several of his publications, Diop committed himself to the restoration of the historical truth (the restoration of the place of Africa and African people) in the evolutionary history of the world, both at the level of the origin of humanity in the recognition of the differentiation of people and civilizations, with the *pharaonic Egypt*, the oldest civilization as a center of focus for the human populations in Africa.

The work of Cheikh Anta Diop shows that the five centuries of slavery and colonization of Africa are only a detail in terms of duration in the history of African people as a whole which starting point is that of the history of humanity. And as such, the content of this astonishing period of humiliation and dehumanization can in no way violate the collective conscience of the African people, the builders of pyramids, instructors to the scholars of ancient Greece and the Western world whose roots are anchored in all African civilizations<sup>21</sup>, and thus, it was time that they to be recognized, restored and clearly delivered to the masses today.

The Renaissance concept is present in the history of peoples at different times, and has always been a dynamic of renewal and regeneration. Like the European and South-East Asian Renaissance, the African Renaissance fits in line with the will of the people to forge a destiny worthy of their legitimate aspirations<sup>22</sup>. Hence, it is especially a change of paradigm, which translates Africa from death to life, from a place of despair to a place of all expectations. African Renaissance is also about the reconstruction of the African being. Hence, the African person has to begin by *Being*, existing, being aware of existence as an African, and no longer being something other than African that can maintain his/her being, and asset culture and civilization according to the capacity of natural physics, thus, a way of building Africa through the acceptance of African people everywhere.

The recent revival of the ‘African Renaissance’ concept in South Africa started in the form of slogans, and progressively in successive political speeches by former South Africa president Thabo Mbeki through which its content was outlined. In 1998, a first Conference on the African Renaissance was organized in Johannesburg in the presence of several African scholars and a second involving more intellectuals and personalities in Africa was organized in October 1999, with the support of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The accession to power of Thabo Mbeki, its promoter, contributed to the popularization of the African Renaissance concept.

Thus, at the continental level, the New Millennium of the African Renaissance Program (MAP plan) served as the backbone of reflection on the African Renaissance. It was developed with the help of other African countries such as Nigeria and Algeria, before being merged with the Omega plan of Aboulaye Wade, a merged program validated in Abuja, Nigeria during the 38<sup>th</sup> Summit of the OAU under the denomination of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)<sup>23</sup>.

But it should be taken into consideration that the *Mbekian* conception defines the African Renaissance as a revival of Africa in terms of democracy and economic and cultural development<sup>24</sup>. According to Mbeki, the African renaissance seeks to build a new African world of democracy, peace, stability, sustainable development and of better living conditions for the people. However, it must also be recognized that behind this continental ideal, Thabo Mbeki, as the president of South Africa at the time, sought above all to legitimize the South African post-apartheid regime and to anchor South Africa in Africa as the leading country in order to strengthen the status of Pretoria on the international scene. Unfortunately the xenophobic movements of April 2015 in South Africa questioned this position; and the growing *national chauvinism* has surrendered its place to the legendary of African solidarity and hospitality. Considering the above facts, one can be entitled to ask the question of where has the African Renaissance Mbeki speech today in South Africa, been kept<sup>25</sup>?

In this study, African Renaissance is considered as the previewed picture of the specific future that African people has for itself. An African people dispersed in the four corners of the Earth, whose homeland was fragmented, whose freedom has been snatched and dignity flawed for centuries; an African people that wants to connect with its roots and be reconciled with. The concept of African people as a specific and identifiable human entity is at the centre of the African Renaissance concept. It is about a people whose intention is to forge a new united, peaceful and prosperous Africa. That is why the process of creation of the United States of Africa appears as a constitutive of the content of this African Renaissance. In other words, it is in the creation process of the United States of Africa that the African Renaissance specifically takes shape. But before examining this content, let's have a glance at the *Pan African* dimension of the African Renaissance.



Fig.1: African Renaissance Monument in Dakar-Senegal<sup>26</sup>

## The Pan African Dimension of African Renaissance

The definition of the *Pan African* renaissance concept includes the following aspects:

- All African people worldwide should have access to internal and external resources of Africa, including a share of the resources generated by African people scattered around the world with Africa as their original geographic base.
- The construction, with the participation of African people in the world of a geopolitical and continental entity capable of arising against all present and potential forms of external domination.
- The construction of an African single market, open to all African people in the Diaspora.
- The granting of African citizenship to all African people in the Diaspora who so request, in order to enable them to settle anywhere they want in Africa, and hence contribute to its development as a fundamental civic duty.

It should be noted that there are several scenarios where the adjective '*Pan African*' is used to translate Africa as a whole. It is just a simple semantic reduction of the concept. However, there is no harm to also extend the African concept to the *Pan African* sense, if only it expresses the relationship between Africa and its Diaspora. The ideal therefore would be to use the two concepts of African Renaissance and *Pan African* renaissance interchangeably as synonyms.

The term 'African people' in this work, refers to an integral component incorporating the global situation of people of African descent everywhere. On one hand, we have the descendants of the former enslaved deported from Africa and on the other hand, we have African originated peoples of different nationalities recently and permanently settled outside Africa. But, in the context of this work, our focus is on the first category on the Diaspora, the African communities scattered around the world with Africa as their original geographic base. Hence, the aim is to highlight the *Pan African* dimension of the African Renaissance concept.

The restoration of the fundamental values of Africa is the primary objective of the African Renaissance concept. One of the consequences of the transatlantic enslavement was the dispersion of the sons and daughters of Africa around the world, without any possibility for them to maintain a link or even share common values on a permanent basis with their native continent. However, actual evidence is made of the significant contribution of the African Diaspora to the construction of the Western world, although little gratitude is shown in return by Western countries. Indeed, there is no positive and official recognition of the contribution of African peoples in the development of the Western world. In Latin America, in the United States of America, Canada and Europe, the African Diaspora remains largely marginalized. They are only very few integrated into the political and economic decision-making sphere and African people in Africa, on their part do not contribute significantly to the recognition of the historical contribution of the African Diaspora to the development of Western countries.

Nevertheless, the African Diaspora is in position to bring back a significant part of political and economic force that they have been able to wrest from their host countries to Africa. In return, we are in a position to help the socio-cultural picture as they find an appropriate place in their countries of adoption. This assumes the establishment of a gradual ascending relationship between Africa and the African Diaspora. Laudable efforts are already made in this direction, but they remain largely insufficient.

The *Pan African* renaissance concept understood as Africa's new birth is gradually set in place, not only on the African continent, but worldwide. This concept promotes the accession of all the sons and daughters of Africa to a positive and international recognition despite the geographical location where the history of the five hundred years of enslavement and colonization have led them. The process of *Pan African* renaissance will allow them to say in the eyes of the world that they are a people, that they are part of the great African people; with the latter they will now live as one; acknowledging that Africa is their common ground, they will now, together, love this earth, cherish it, develop it and bring it to an international status of power similar to that of ancient times. All the sons and daughters of Africa, regardless of the place where they are, must now contribute a portion of their daily efforts to the development of Africa. They must be interested enough to invest in one aspect or another in the affairs of Africa.

Through the *Pan African* renaissance process, Africa as a whole must formally become the homeland of all people of African descent around the world. This is the *Pan African* dimension of the African Renaissance concept, which should be materialized through an path to establishing African citizenship to all African people in the world, who so desire. Thus, the two concepts of *Pan African* renaissance and African Renaissance must be combined into a single concept, and represent the same content.

## **The Civic Duty of African People in the Process of African Renaissance**

Civic duty is a natural duty in a specific national or geopolitical framework. It is an obligation that results from the very nature of every individual, group of individuals or institutions, which is calling to seek a feeling of satisfaction of a duty accomplished. It is a duty resulting from the sharing by such persons and/or institutions of the same identity. The term 'African' refers here to this shared identity and this implies a common civic duty towards Africa, the homeland. This duty must in turn lead naturally a certain right to look at the management of the affairs of the continent. The commitment to make of Africa a geographical entity that is united, peaceful and prosperous. Thus, the details of this participation must be defined in the creation process of the United States of Africa.

In regards to the allocation of the African citizenship to African people in the Diaspora who have formally expressed as desire, we say quite simply that the acquisition by them of the passport of the African Union (AU), or any other document which can be used as such, could confer unto them, African citizen status. This would allow them, among other benefits, to visit any African country and feel at home. To illustrate our idea, we will use the African and African American relationship. Here, the African American community serves as an illustration for the whole of the African community in the Diaspora. This relationship could be characterized as *inter alia*, by the following features:

- A specific participation of African-Americans to the development of Africa would no more be considered and organized as foreign aid, but rather designed as a type of specific self-development. If NEPAD could become a real transnational programme of the African Union (AU), it would constitute the legal framework for this type of networking.
- African people living in Africa and specifically those living temporarily in the United States of America could now develop strategies to "connect" African-Americans to the continent as 'citizens' in order to work together for the development of Africa.
- African people in Africa and African-Americans could consider various strategies to establish convergence at the levels of cooperation policies. In other words, through diplomacy, trade, business, culture and other fields, the latter would strive to unify the interests of America and Africa.

- Finally, the two communities would strive to organize a system of development of people-to-people who would strengthen the links between individuals and groups of individuals or institutions. In plain language, it is about an organization system of civil society which would clearly be distinguished from the relationships between States. This would be based on a natural communion between individuals and between groups of individuals.

It should be noted that the concept of civic duty shown here is an integral part of the definition of the *Pan African* renaissance concept. Specifically, every African in Africa and those scattered around the world have to participate individually or collectively to the development of the continent as a civic duty. In other words, African people in Africa must commit as a single national framework in their respective States and commit themselves to develop programs in regards to the continental development for the benefit of the continent. Similarly, the African Diaspora should develop participation programmes in view of a continental development, not as part of an external assistance programmes, but as an integral part of in-house programs for the self-development of the continent.

The two communities, namely African people on the continent and in the Diaspora must, as one people, implement joint programmes in which each partner contributes in appropriate proportions. This does not imply necessarily to establish new programmes but rather a new approach, or new solutions to existing problems. Each active member of this large community should give the best in order to flourish in a sense of accomplishment from civic duties towards the homeland, Africa.

It is important to clarify that the fundamental relationship between the two communities (Continental and Diaspora) should absolutely be horizontal, and not vertical.

## **The Project of the United States of Africa**

The term United States of Africa dates back to the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, shortly before 1919. It was introduced by the first *Pan Africanists* W. E. B. Du Bois. His inspiration is drawn from the model of the United States of America and later of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). But the United States of Africa cannot be considered as a slavish imitation of the United States of America, or represented as a point of arrival; it is at least a new point of departure towards a genuinely more united, peaceful and prosperous Africa, responding to the needs of African people and those of future generations.

The African Union on July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007 in Accra, Ghana, at the end of its debate on the Government of the Union of the United States of Africa adopted a resolution making the United States of Africa the ultimate goal of the African Union. To achieve this goal, the AU first had to set up a Union Government which would be, in the order of the European Union, hence, a continental executive replacing the present Commission of the AU.

Since then, the AU marked a certain setback concerning the transitional objective of the Government of the Union. It has instead adopted the formula of an Authority of the Union which would be a kind of semi executive power. It should be noted that the AU made this stand in the absence of an official and consensual definition of the United States of Africa concept.

There is, however a document entitled '*Third version of the draft Constitution of United Africa (United States of Africa)*'<sup>27</sup> which precisely, can fill the current initial conceptual vacuum of a precise vision of the United States of Africa concept. This African constitution proposed by African civil society was adopted on May 25<sup>Th</sup> 2005, in Yaounde, Cameroon, in a 3<sup>rd</sup> civil society forum organized for this purpose by the Organization of the African Civil Society (OACS). It is a document that is the result of a collective work which started in September 1999. It was preceded by two other drafts of which the first was adopted in January 2000, and the second in May 2003.

The current version incorporates relevant provisions of the Charter of the OAU of 1963, the Abuja Treaty of 1991, establishing the African Economic Community, and the Constitutive Act of the African Union of 2000 and its amendments of 2003. The new provisions not contained in the previous texts of the OAU or the AU constitute about one-third of the content of this draft Constitution. It is currently under popularization by a unit of civil society that proposals for amendments for its improvement. In a collective reflection on the subject, this document's relevance can be perceived in the following functions:

- be a simple bibliographical references serving as sources of ideas for collective reflection;
- a working document for the preparation by official bodies of the AU of the Constitution of the United States of Africa project; and submit the latter as a last resort for the approval by referendum to the African people;
- being officially recognized as a Constitution Draft of the United States of Africa, open to appropriate amendments, and as an instrument used and that will continue to serve as the basis of commitment expected of African people wishing to contribute its actual construction.

The very nature of this document clearly indicates its current usefulness with regard to the potential progress it offers. First, the presentation is in two parts preceded by a detailed explanatory statement and method focused on the history of the document. By its style, this text can be primarily defined as an endorsement by the African people of the existing texts that it extends. So the preamble begins with 'Nous, peuple Africain ('We, the African people'). In addition, a number of more authentic designations were selected to appoint both the future supranational geographic entity and some of its organs and institutions. Thus, for example, the future single African currency would be called *Afri*.

Considering the importance of this document, below are additional relevant aspects attached to it. The first part deals with the political integration of the continent:

- (1) the Associate member status granted to local or state communities of the African Diaspora that request for it (Section 3);
- (2) the settlement of natural, material and financial resources appropriate for the overall development of the African continent and its five Continental Regions (Chapter 6);
- (3) the settlement of a *Pan African* army from the current initiative of establishment of an African Standby Force, to establish and maintain a permanent peace on the whole continent (Chapter 8);
- (4) the integration of the participation of political groups as a major component to the building work of the United States of Africa;
- (5) the reconfiguration of the portfolios of the Executive Body and their extension from ten to fifteen.

The second part focused on integrating economically, socially and culturally in Africa which t draws its substance in the Abuja Treaty establishing the African economic community. The major contributions of this part are:

- (1) the reorientation and the incorporation of the relevant provisions of the Abuja Treaty;
- (2) the reinterpretation of the provisions less appropriate in a constitution as part of a protocol;
- (3) the guidelines on the civil society's participation in the construction of the United Africa (Chapter 12);
- (4) the guidelines on the control of the urbanization process in Africa (Chapter 20);
- (5) the promotion of African languages (Section 94);
- (6) the mobilization of new human resources and the popularization of the ideals of the United Africa (Sections 97 and 98);
- (7) the protection of democratic African Governments against coups; (Section 113)
- (8) the guidelines on the popular outbreak for removal process (Section 114).

Several other milestones, often relevant by their contents, are incorporated into the text's sections and can be detected only through an analytical reading. The text contains 130 articles grouped into 31 chapters. Although almost the same bodies and institutions are found in both documents, those of the draft Constitution have in a global view, more extensive powers and broad autonomy than those of the AU Constitutive Act. The subsidiarity principle (that is complementarity) governs the relationships between organs and other institutions at continental, regional and national levels.

A comparison made between this document and proposals made by the African Union Commission in 2006 on the Government of the Union show remarkable convergences and natural complementarity positions. For example, considering the content of the Report on the modalities of the implementation of a Government of the African Union, the following features are noted:

- (1) the Government of the Union shares with the AU Constitutive Act important points as the Executive function of the Commission, the Co-legislative function of the *Pan African* Parliament;
- (2) both documents reveal striking similarities in the reconfiguration and expansion of the portfolios number of the Executive Body and of specialised technical committees (STC);
- (3) the Government of the Union has some progress with respect to the draft Constitution, namely the creation of a new institution for the function of President of the Union occupied full-time by a former head of State.

It is appropriate to note that in the reading of this draft Constitution and more than half a dozen documents focused on the Government of the Union of the United States of Africa, we have the impression that the first has, in one way or another, positively influenced the latter. The name of the future African currency, *Afri*, and the reconfiguration and extension of the Executive Body and the STC portfolios, reinforce this impression.

## **The Collective and Institutional Portage**

We said at the beginning of this presentation that our intention is to contribute to the effort of the collective and institutional portage of two complementary visions, having as an aim the best of future possible for African people, namely the African Renaissance and the United States of Africa concepts. Indeed, this intention falls in straight line with the resolutions of the first symposium organized in Dakar, Senegal in July 2009 on the United States of Africa. One of the resolutions of the symposium was to make of the United States of Africa project an object of research, being taught in African universities as well as in research institutions of science and technology in Africa.

Therefore, the task is now for academics and other African researchers, in their different disciplines to initiate individual and collective research projects on specific aspects of this major *Pan African* project that constitute the United States of Africa. In doing so, their work will serve as vanguard in the collective portage process. The scientific research and academic institutions have the specific responsibility to mobilize at their level of human, material and financial resources to encourage a critical dynamic in the process of the United States of Africa's establishment.

The empowerment of African civil society's participation in this great work requires the involvement of African scholars on the continent and in the Diaspora. To this end, the Dakar Symposium was an important indicator of the availability of scholars to engage in partnerships of all kinds, all to promote the United States of Africa.

## **Conclusion**

Considering the major socio-political developments waving Africa, it is necessary to assert with force that without an intellectual mastery of the vision on the combination of African Renaissance - United States of Africa concepts, the actions of development of the continent, like NEPAD, would continue to be dispersed, and would always be weakened by centrifugal forces. Also, a particular emphasis should be put on the role of African communities scattered around the world that have Africa as their original geographic base. It is important that African people presents this double vision to its African world community, as a unifying project in which they have a specific role to play.

Clearly then, in a vision outside the United States of Africa, it would be difficult to envisage a true materialization of the African renaissance process because it is in the creation process of the United States of Africa and African Renaissance that it will specifically take shape. Similarly, it is the collective portage of the binomial African Renaissance-United States of Africa concepts which will stimulate the large constitutive dynamic of an "African people", now wanting to live together as one, although dispersed on the surface of Earth.

## **Declaration of Conflicting Interests and Funding**

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this papere. The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or the publishing of this paper, and the authors paid no fee to be published in this publication.

## **Notes**

1. Ziguele Martin, *L'Afrique 50 ans après les indépendances. Bilan et perspectives*, (Paris : Fondation Jean Jaurès 2010, pp. 19-20).
2. Ibid.
3. Jean TABI MANGA, « Le temps du monde, le temps de l'Afrique ou propos sur l'émergence africaine », remarks held during a Conference at the International Relations Institue Cameroon, July 20<sup>th</sup> 2011, in Yaounde.
4. Kodjo Edem, *Lettre ouverte à l'Afrique cinquantenaire*, (Paris : Editions Gallimard, 2010, p. 68).
5. UNECA, *Economic Report on Africa*, Addis Ababa: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, (2010), p.101.

6. Tcharimi Ahmat Moussa, 'La Création Des Etats Unis d'Afrique', MA thesis, International Relations Institute of Cameroon, (2012), p.20.
7. Diop Cheikh Anta, 'Quand pourra t- on parler d'une Renaissance Africaine ?' *le Musée Vivant (1948)*, 36-37 : 57-65.
8. Nkrumah Kwamé, *le consciencisme*, (Paris : Présence africaine, 1976).
9. Do-Nascimento, José, Makhtar, Diouf and Favero, Marc, *La renaissance africaine comme alternative au développement : Les termes du choix politique en Afrique*, (Paris : L'Harmattan, 2008).
10. Kodjo Edem, *Pan Africanisme et Renaissance africaine*, (Togo : Graines de pensées, 2013).
11. Sow, Ibrahima, (2014) 'Des Etats-Unis d'Afrique à la Renaissance africaine', *Ethiopique* 92 (1) [http://ethiopiennes.refer.sn/spip.php?page=imprimer-article&id\\_article=1908](http://ethiopiennes.refer.sn/spip.php?page=imprimer-article&id_article=1908), accessed 01<sup>st</sup> June 2015.
12. Boubakar Diop, La Renaissance africaine selon Cheikh Anta Diop, Nasser et Nkrumah, jusqu'à Mbeki, <http://www.peuplesawa.com/fr/bnlogik2.php?bnid=532&bnk=163&bnrub=1>, accessed 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015.
13. Sow, Ibrahima, (2014) 'Des Etats-Unis d'Afrique à la Renaissance africaine', *Ethiopique* 92 (1) [http://ethiopiennes.refer.sn/spip.php?page=imprimer-article&id\\_article=1908](http://ethiopiennes.refer.sn/spip.php?page=imprimer-article&id_article=1908), accessed 01<sup>st</sup> June 2015.
14. Quivy Raymond and Van Campenhoudt Luc, *Manuel de recherche en sciences sociales*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Paris : Dunod, 1995, p.119).
15. Barnett, Michael and Duvall Raymond , Power in International Politics, *International Organization*, (2005), 59 (1):39-75.
16. Cabanis, André, Crouzatier, Jean-Marie, Ruxandra, Ivan, and Soppelsa Jacques, *Méthodologie de la recherche en droit international, géopolitique et relations internationales*, (Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, 2010, pp. 51-52).
17. Moukoko Mbonjo Pierre, The political thought of Kwame Nkrumah. A comprehensive presentation (Lagos: University of Lagos, 1998).
18. James Africanus Beale Horton, West African countries and peoples, British and Native: And a vindication of the African race (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
19. Ndong Ndiaye, Théories sur la Renaissance Africaine : ensemble changeons l'Afrique, (Paris : Menaibuc, 2006, p.12).
20. Cheikh Anta Diop, Quand pourra t- on parler d'une Renaissance Africaine ? (1948) *le Musée Vivant* 36-37, pp. 57-65.
21. Ndong Ndiaye, Théories sur la Renaissance Africaine : ensemble changeons l'Afrique, (Paris : Menaibuc, 2006).
22. Ibid., p.12.
23. Ibid., p.13.
24. Inauguration speech of Thabo Mbeki as President of South Africa in 1999.
25. Mbembe Achille, 'Afrique du Sud. Xénophobie : Mandela réveille-toi ton peuple devient fou !' (2015), [http : //lebanco.net/banconet/bco25351.htm](http://lebanco.net/banconet/bco25351.htm), accessed 01 June 2015.

26. Picture taken by Hans Sterkendries, on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2010, <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/64090407>, accessed 28<sup>th</sup> May 2015.
27. Available at [www.foscam.org/Troisi\\_me\\_mouture\\_francais\\_a4.doc](http://www.foscam.org/Troisi_me_mouture_francais_a4.doc) , accessed 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015.
28. Organisation de la Société civile africaine (2000) *Troisième Mouture du Projet de Constitution de l’Afrique-Unie (Etats-Unis d’Afrique)*, Douala : Cédila.