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# **Obasanjo's leadership role as chairman of NEPAD's HSGIC**

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In extant literature the role of the individual has been disregarded as a potent force driving and moderating international relations. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is one agency of international relations, being an international organization in the African continent. In the studies so far on the NEPAD as an agency of international relations concerning Africa, the role of individuals has also hardly been touched, thus leaving a vacuum in the analysis and understanding of the African affairs. NEPAD has been criticized by scholars who are either skeptical of its prospects or see its leaders as lacking vision and bereft of political will. Some scholars have viewed the entire NEPAD framework as a failure, moreover. However, the works on NEPAD have failed to underscore the influence and contributions of individuals and personalities in the organization at realizing its objectives (or otherwise), as an agency of international relations. Taking an analytical bent, this study particularly focuses on the role of Olusegun Obasanjo as NEPAD's Head of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) between 2001 and 2003. Drawing from the various leadership theories and perspectives in the available literature, the research particularly adopts Michael Schechter's model for analyzing leadership in international organizations, a model stressing the systemic, organizational and personality factors. In the conclusion, Obasanjo is found to have made significantly acclaimed contributions at realizing NEPAD's policy goals.

**Key words:** Obasanjo's leadership, African Union, Committee of Heads of State and Government, NEPAD.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The formation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in 2001 has been largely attributed to the effort by four heads of states: former President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, former President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria and President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal. The increasing poverty rate in the continent Africa, the debt accumulation, the economic degradation, and its relative marginalization motivated the formation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

The primary objective of NEPAD is to eradicate poverty in Africa, to place African countries both individually and

collectively on a path of sustainable growth and development, and ensure Africa's integration and halt the marginalization of the continent in the global economy. At the core of the NEPAD formation is its African ownership, which must be retained and strongly promoted, so as to meet the legitimate aspirations of the African people. While the principle of partnership with the rest of the world is equally vital to realizing NEPAD's cardinal objective, such partnership must be based on mutual respect, dignity, shared responsibility and mutual accountability (Nadudere, 2002). In this study, while duly referring to South African Thabo Mbeki's role, the actual

focus is on the Nigerian colleague Olusegun Obasanjo and his most significant roles in NEPAD, serving as the chairman of the NEPAD's Head of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) between 2001 and 2003.

Thabo Mbeki's role during his leadership tenure in the organization was significant. Indeed, as the founding founder Mbeki played a more exceptional role. Mbeki has been a long advocate of African integration, an association of the states in Africa for the promotion of their development. To show his commitment to oneness and strength of Africa and his desire for Africa's prosperity, Mbeki identified like-minded individuals that included Obasanjo.

Obasanjo has long played a crucial and exemplary role in Africa's development. His exemplary part in Africa's transformation was apparent in 1976 when he became the first military head of state to hand over power to a democratically elected civilian government. Obasanjo has been described as having a "challenger personality" (Ajedumobi et al., 2011), considering his overall performance in NEPAD and during his chairmanship in the regional organization. Besides his acclaimed contribution in NEPAD, the Nigerian former president Obasanjo had a robust record in piloting the regeneration and repositioning of the African Union, through the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). He served as Chairman of the Group of 77, Chairman of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, and Chairman of the African Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee of NEPAD. In other specific cases, former President Obasanjo was also involved in international mediation efforts in Namibia, Angola, South Africa, Mozambique and Burundi. In 2008, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed him as Special Envoy on the Great Lakes Region. And currently, Obasanjo is involved in the mediation effort in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (Dagne, 2011).

Given the influence and contributions of Thabo Mbeki (Perry, 2007) and Olusegun Obasanjo in international relations, in the African context, it can be inferred that the study and understanding of international organizations necessarily demand recognition and account for the impact of individuals in the organizations. The impact of Olusegun Obasanjo on African regional organizations, among which NEPAD was one, has necessitated the question: Can it be argued that the impact of individual leaders provides a necessary frame work in the study and understanding of international organizations? Does leadership attributes impact on the pattern of behavior of international organizations? Scholarly analyses have rather glossed over the importance and relevance of individuals on NEPAD as an organization. Hence, it is the task in this study to examine the impact of Obasanjo's leadership qualities, personalities and roles in NEPAD.

Adopting Schechter's model of analyzing international organization, paying attention specifically to the systemic, organizational, and personality levels of analysis, this study examines the influence of President Obasanjo within NEPAD. The study considers the interactions of the heads of states constituting the committees as well as their general contributions. In particular, the organizational level of analysis in Schechter's model will be employed to account for Obasanjo's control and the power relations within the organization, NEPAD. The personality level emphasizes Obasanjo's style of leadership, in addition.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK

There has been a paucity of scholarly works on the role of individual personalities as a driving force in Africa's political and economic development, and particularly the role in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) of notable personalities. Ijeoma (2008), in her comparative analysis of NEPAD's leadership, focusing on Nigeria and South Africa's contribution, made no mention of the personal impact of the nations' leaders as prerequisite to understanding international relations in the African context. Also, the majority of the scholarly analyses on the New Partnership for Africa's Development have criticized the initiative and the leadership deficit. Mukamunana Rachael<sup>8</sup> viewed NEPAD as a waste of time and effort, considering the fact that Africa lacked the viable democratic institutions to transform its policy objectives into reality, referring in particular to the Peer Review Mechanism.

Michael Schechter appears to provide the most appealing approach to analyzing leadership at the international level. Schechter examined the factors leading to effective leadership in different organizations and different systems. For Schechter, organizational growth and decline is not a consequence of the level of institutionalization. He distinguished among three levels of analysis of international organization: the systemic level, the organizational level, and the personality level. Adopting this model, Schechter studied international organizations such as UNESCO, the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Specific leadership changes identified in the organizations such as the World Bank from under the president Robert McNamara to the president A. W. Tom Clausen, the UNESCO under Director-General Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, and the UNDP under administrator Bradford Morse pointed to the role of individual leaders in the growth in international organizations. Schechter observed that the characteristics of leaders were necessary as they shape the extent of their influence in organizations as well as in larger systemic levels.

In particular, at the systemic level altered systemic

**Table 1.** NEPAD leadership assessment.

Levels of assessment	Leadership indicator
Systemic	Obasanjo's roles, ideas and efforts towards the integration of NEPAD into the G8, his trade negotiation efforts, and his debt relief efforts for Africa.
Organizational	Obasanjo's efforts as the HOSGIC Chairman and the AU-NEPAD relationship.
Personality	A challenger personality

Note: The diagram is adapted from "A Diagrammatic Representation of Schechter's Leadership Assessment Levels in International Organizations". \* See also Ryan C. Hendrickson's "NATO's Secretary General and the Use of Force: Willy Claes and the Air Strikes in Bosnia".

conditions or global power arrangement influenced or shaped leaderships in these organizations, Schechter further elaborated. At the organizational level, Schechter examined the structure of the organization as well as the nature of power relations within the organization. How much power was vested on the executive leader and how independent or unilateral was his or her actions within the organization were the salient questions Schechter raised, on the organizational level.

Schechter's model of analysis of international organization will be adopted to account for Olusegun Obasanjo's role and impact in the international organization NEPAD, as well as to explain leadership in the NEPAD context. For Schechter model of analysis, see Table 1.

Using Michael Schechter's leadership model, this research adopts a systematic, descriptive analytical approach. The data are collected from sources including existing literature, biographies, speeches, debates, conferences, summits, government periodicals, and audio and video interviews. The study will draw largely from these mentioned sources due to the paucity of scholarly works on NEPAD's leadership. Also, the study will entail content analysis.

### NEPAD: The systemic level

Prior to the establishment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in 2001, there were other similar initiatives by the African leaders. In the list of such policy initiatives were the Lagos Plan of Action for Economic Development of Africa (1980-2000); the Final Act of Lagos (1980); Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER) (1986-1990); The African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP) (1989); a Three-Years Priority Programme for Survival, Rehabilitation of African Economies (1986-1989); the African Charter for Popular Participation for Development (1990) and the Compact for African Recovery Dani (2002). Despite the host of developmental

policies and frameworks, Africa still faced threatening economic, social security and political problems. For instance, sub-Saharan Africa's debts rose significantly from 60 to 206 billion dollars from the 1980s to the 1990s. The failure of so many structural adjustment programmes in the continent Africa prompted the formation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

In July 2001, the inaugural meeting of the African Union in Lusaka provided the opportunity for a continent-wide leadership endorsement of the idea of NEPAD. At the meeting, Mbeki's plan merged with the "Omega Plan" offered by the neo-liberal Senegalese president, Abdoulaye Wade, and birthed the new African initiative – NEPAD. Again, while so reckoning with Thabo Mbeki's effort as the major initiator of NEPAD and as it has been loudly praised in literature, the emphasis of this paper will be to examine the constructive roles of the Obasanjo as the NEPAD's pioneer chairperson of the Head of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) between 2001 and 2003.

Adopting for the analysis Schechter's model systemic level, it is recalled that leadership within international organizations are shaped by the nature of interaction between the organization and the wider international system, according to Schechter (ibid). Thus, Obasanjo's leadership roles within NEPAD as the Chairperson, Head of State and Government Implementation Committee regarding the interaction of NEPAD and the United Nations, and specifically the G8 will be analyzed. In ascertaining the influence of Obasanjo's impact in the interaction between the African regional organization and the larger world, the question will be asked: Was there a vacuum in terms of relationship between Africa and the larger world before this period? Moreover, what was the general financial and economic situation in the region? On the other hand, did the HSGIC, a principal organ of NEPAD, under the chairmanship of Obasanjo make a significant impact in respect of Africa's integration and financial restoration, in terms of debt relief, flexible trade policies and partnership, economic integration, and others?

As earlier mentioned, previous efforts at integrating

Africa into the larger world, as well as at reducing its economic burden, had proved abortive. Prior to 2001, Africa was highly in indebted; the World Bank had so many African countries in its list of debtors. The openness of economic relations was limited largely due to the high debt rate and skepticism of international partners to trade with the continent. However, under Obasanjo's chairmanship in NEPAD's HODSIC there were bilateral and multilateral efforts to ensure debt reliefs. According to Sidika (2004), those efforts at debt relief engaged three main strategies:

- (1) Official Development Assistance Initiative (ODAI);
- (2) Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC); and
- (3) The African Partnership Forum (APF)

#### **Official Development Assistance Initiative – A Review**

The endemic corruption in Africa resulted in a relative neglect of contributions from international donors outside the continent in the 1990s. The developed states' developmental contributions suffered a significant decline. In partnership with the G8, NEPAD's HOSGOC under the chairmanship of Obasanjo adopted western standards to increase western donations to African states. The negotiation for the western standard took place in 2002 during the Monterrey Summit, where the G8 committed itself to significant increase in financial development assistance with considerable conditionalities attached. Scholars such as Burke (2004) have objected to this initiative as essentially anti-African, an extension of neocolonialism, and as an exploitation of African states, however. Yet, given the mass poverty rate in the African nations, the Obasanjo-led initiative at the Monterrey Summit was laudable; to a large extent, the official development assistance initiative was followed – after many years of the neglect of Africa – by significant increases in external developmental assistance announced. Also, the private sector has taken a keen interest in the African economy. Africa now features prominently in high-level investor conferences, not merely featuring on television only as a centre of conflicts, natural disasters and human misery. In fact, the issue presently is for leaders of African states to properly manage the resources made available to them. Tackling corruption which has constituted a menace to the continent's development is now the germane concern, not necessarily lack of commitment by the NEPAD leadership.

#### **Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) – A Review**

Africa had in twenty years of structural adjustment faced

the massive escalation in external debt: from US\$60.6 billion in 1980 to US\$206.1 billion in 2000. This prompted the African leaders to devise a new mechanism of reducing the debts incurred. The idea of debt relief is closely linked to the Official Development Assistance Initiative (Sidika, *ibid.*). The negotiation and relief of Africa's piling debts was of strategic importance to NEPAD, and the HOSGIC headed by Obasanjo, in 2001. In pursuit of this objective, Obasanjo flew round the world, convincing global leaders and the Bretton Woods institution on the need for a debt relief to guarantee Africa's economic transformation, the core of NEPAD's mission. In one of the summits of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Obasanjo argued that in order to cut the number of Africans living below the poverty line by half in 2015, "Africa would need \$64 billion annually for NEPAD projects" (Akande, 2002), and for him that made the issue of debt cancellation important for consideration.

Indeed, Obasanjo's involvement with the idea of debt relief dated back to the 1980s. In his inaugural address at the African Leadership Forum, he stated that:

The debt question is probably the gravest problem yet to face Africa since the onset of independence. It is a conundrum. Repudiation is of course out of the question; yet repayment is becoming increasingly impossible. Last year, servicing our debt obligations cost some US\$27 billion. This year, it is projected to cost US\$45 billion when our export earnings are unlikely to exceed US\$32 billion. In the meantime, the debt issue has brought the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund into Africa in a manner unparalleled anywhere else in the post-World War. Over 30 African countries have embarked on structural adjustment programmes with the support of the Bretton Woods Institutions (Obasanjo, 1988).

This same desire for debt relief for African nations was expressed in Olusegun Obasanjo's transition to a democratically elected president in Nigeria's fourth republic. This goes a long way to show that he had the desire to see Africa free from debt burden so as to foster faster economic recovery in the states. Ensuing series of consultations led to some relevant achievements for the African countries. As of December 2011, the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative had identified 39 countries (33 of which are in sub-Saharan Africa) as being potentially eligible to receive debt relief. The case of Cameroon has been exceptional so far. For instance the debt relief for Cameroon under HIPC was approximately US\$1.267bn, after the additional relief under MDRI by IDA and the ADF which amounted to US\$721m and US\$190m in 2006. In line with the conditionalities entailed by the Official Development Assistance Initiative, Cameroon met the requirements of macroeconomic stability, commitment to poverty reduction strategy and infrastructural reforms, among others.

## The African Partnership Forum – A Review

To Obasanjo, Africa needed to be part of the changing trend in global politics. Obasanjo has for long being a foremost advocate of Africa's integration and the enhancement of Africa's partnership. Thus, he raised challenging and motivating questions at the inauguration of the African Leadership Forum in 1988.

*Why, you may well, ask, have I taken you on this world tour? I have done so for two reasons. First to remind you of what is taking place in the rest of the world in order to set out this discussion in the proper context; but more importantly, to define Africa's relative position in this changing world. I have dwelt at some length on developments in East Asia because, as I said earlier, most of the countries of that region, especially ASEAN, can be legitimately compared with many African countries. Their achievements therefore provide a fair yardstick by which we can measure the achievements or lack of achievements of our countries. Where then does Africa stand in all this? After nearly thirty years of sovereign independence what is the state of affairs in Africa today? What has become the reality of our independence and what is our weight in international politics as a result? (Obasanjo, *ibid.*)*

It is not surprising that this same optimism demonstrated by Obasanjo in 1988 was still evident in the 21st century. The Evian Summit in 2003 laid the foundation for Africa's renewed relationship with the larger world states. The consensus between African leaders and the G8 renamed, repositioned and expanded the partnership of African countries with the larger world. The African Forum comprises the 20 countries participating in the governing structures of NEPAD, the commission of the African Union, the NEPAD secretariat, REC's, the G8 member countries, 11 OECD countries (the most significant donors in the zone), the World Bank, IMF, and the United Nations. The African partnership forum promoted African interests in areas such as market access and trade relations, through trade negotiations and aid in terms of security and infrastructural development.

## The Commitment of the G8 to NEPAD's Agenda

In assessing the challenges of leadership at the systemic level we will examine the G8 commitment to NEPAD's agenda. There are two basic challenges NEPAD faced after the much glorified pacts with the western world such as June 2002 G-8 Summit in Kananaskis where the western nations declared their support for the NEPAD agenda. These challenges include a dichotomy between promise and delivery on the part of western powers; and a clear unwillingness to engage in mutual accountability;

a process through which both Africans and industrialized powers will have to live up to commitments made. When considering the G-8-Africa Action Plan that was adopted at the Kananaskis Summit, the G-8 merely stated that they would be 'looking for ways' to help Africa resolve conflicts; offer technical and financial assistance to sub-regional organizations for capacity development; assist in combating illicit weapons; assist to help combat corruption and embezzlement; help to bridge the digital divide and the use of technology for socio-economic and political development; support access for African agricultural products; etc.

The G-8 countries were deliberately vague in the commitments they made. They were particularly non-committal on issues pertaining to debt cancellation, market access, and infrastructural development and improved ODA. There was low support for the important idea of a Peer Review Mechanism an initiative by the Obasanjo's administration which would help African countries become more accountable to deliver on the promises and agreement made. In expression of his disgust for G8's support for Africa's development, a notable scholar opposed to the NEPAD initiative Burke held that:

*The glacial pace of progress in sub-Saharan Africa is quite naturally caused by much frustration and confusion in Western diplomatic circles as well as for endless conferences, seminars, meetings and reports. No wonder, since more than \$450 billion has been pumped into Africa since 1960, with little to show for it except crumbling buildings and scores of failed and failing states. Yet none of this Western hand-wringing is ever turned inward to examine why a succession of Western nostrums from import substitution to technology transfer to infrastructure-first policies and more have not worked. Were such introspection to take place, an uncomfortable fact would be uncovered: The problem is not with Western medicines as such; it is that Western development doctors have not bothered to find out anything about their patients. (Burke, *ibid.*)*

In the context of the global economic system, the idea that Economic Partnership between Africa and the Western world will facilitate export diversification, economic integration, competition has remained a mirage and highly illusive. Even the existing schemes such as the Arms deals and the Cotonou agreement have not had a major impact on export diversification in most Africa countries. For instance the economic partnership between the European Union and African countries has been highly compromised. Though the new agreement as regards to trade discussed earlier led to changes in such areas such as in export of textiles, and clothing, fish and fish products and certain tariff of few agricultural products, but the restrictions and onerous administrative

requirements do little to foster regional production of similar commodities within Africa and makes it easier to increase regional dependence on foreign products.

The point we are trying to make here is that Obasanjo and Mbeki's quest for the restoration of hope in Africa through debt relief, additional assistance in terms of finance for development projects and economic partnership was welcomed by the developed world, however, rather than reflecting such commitment beyond policy negotiation, to actual transformation, the G8 expressed a lackluster attitude in the later regards. By implication leadership goals and plans became highly compromised.

### **NEPAD: Organizational Level**

On the organizational level of analyzing international organizations, Schecter held that in understanding the influence of leaders within international organizations, the structure and institutional processes of such organization must be put into consideration. Schecter emphasized that organizational budgets, membership roles, organizational ideologies and a change in the structure and composition of organizations affects the leadership system in international organizations. For the benefit of this paper our emphasis will be on the structural composition of NEPAD as an organization including its financial strength, its prominent decisions, and the relationship between its financial strength and its ability to make decisions. One important feature of the NEPAD structure is its democratic structure allowing for equality, collectivity and consensus in decision making. The structure of NEPAD makes it easier for ideas that will promote Africa's well being to be initiated. It therefore implies that Obasanjo was able to have a significant influence in NEPAD and on her agenda, given the organizational structure that encouraged a democratic process necessary for organizational growth. The 37th OAU Summit in Lusaka, Zambia, adopted the New Partnership for Africa's Development as the integrated and comprehensive socio-economic development programme.

There was the creation of the NEPAD's Head of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) in 2002. There was also the adoption of the NEPAD Steering Committee. In 2010, NEPAD's structure principally consisted of the HSGIC, while the Steering Committee was integrated into the larger AU mechanism. The reason for this integration was essentially to ensure that NEPAD was not independent of the African people. The AU which represents the commonwealth of African states played the role of extending the idea of NEPAD to all African leaders through its meetings. The Chairperson, HSGIC had exclusive supervisory authority over NEPAD, while the HSGIC is composed of the heads of states and representatives of 20 African member states (NEPAD, 2002). The committee consists of five founding members

of NEPAD including the chairperson heading it, although decisions were made based on consensus. The five founding members and the chairman of the committee must receive the approval of the 15 members of the HSGIC General Assembly before policies are made.

The primary function of the HSGIC is to initiate policies, strategies and set agenda towards the realization of NEPAD's objectives. To achieve this target, each head of state or government in the HSGIC appoints representatives who serve in the NEPAD Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is more or less an intermediary between the HSGIC and the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency. The NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency also is an advisory council appointed by the heads of states and they also participated in the review of NEPAD's objectives. In the administrative structure, below the NEPAD's principal officials is the African Court of Justice. The African Court of Justice had the jurisdiction to make rules regarding any disputes submitted for its attention, regarding the interpretation of the charters and of any other related disputes within the NEPAD organization. The court of justice may also receive and examine petitions by the African Commission, a state party to the protocol, or any organization within the NEPAD-AU structure (NEPAD, 2002). According to Schecter's model, the task of studying international organizations must take into cognizance the organizational realities, such as structural processes, power arrangement, finance, as well as the decision making process. Below is a diagrammatic representation of the structural arrangement and relationship between NEPAD and AU. Before considering the leadership challenges within NEPAD, the pattern of relationship between NEPAD and AU has to be understood. NEPAD at its inception was seen as an association of like-minded African leaders committed to a reform objective. It was essentially a very loose association. On the other hand, OAU which transformed to the AU made decisions based on consensus, ensuring that the decision making process takes into consideration the opinions of the members of the assembly (Akpoperi, 2004). Disregarding this significant dichotomy in the Lusaka Summit in 2001, NEPAD was transformed into an organ of the African Union – the social and economic sector, specifically. By implication, though NEPAD was led by a small minority of African countries (that is, the twenty states constituting the HSGIC), the regional organization now has had to table their reports and decisions before the AU chairperson and the AU General Assembly for final consideration (Akokpari, *ibid.*).

The inadequate definition of the autonomy of NEPAD remains a potential source of conflict. In the Maputo Summit in 2003 the executive council of the AU specifically met in order to define the relationship between the two organizations, NEPAD and AU. The agreement was that NEPAD secretariat would continue to

be stationed in South Africa. With an AU structure based in Ethiopia, the need for a proper integration of the NEPAD framework into the AU's became imperative, therefore. However, the decision by the AU executive council that member states of NEPAD should have at least five members at the NEPAD secretariat, with an additional number of at least 13 members, depending on individual states' contributions to NEPAD and AU.

Nevertheless, the implication of those decisions was a plot to see the continued domination of the five founding member states of NEPAD, which included Obasanjo who was the chairperson of the HSGIC, and Thabo Mbeki, the AU chairperson. This structural deficit translated to a virtual total neglect of other non-founding members of the organizations. Similarly, a state's position or ranking within NEPAD structure is highly dependent on its financial position. The state of dilemma was engendered by the inadequate definition of the roles of other African states and the modus operandi of the structure of NEPAD, as well as its working relationship with the AU, and this led to the heads of states meeting in Durban in 2002. At the 2002 Durban Summit, an agreement was reached which calmed the rising tension between the organizations. Yet, NEPAD's organizational capacity to achieve its objective was largely limited by finance.

### **The G8 financial largesse and Obasanjo/Mbeki's suspension of Zimbabwe**

The extent of its financial autonomy could shape the nature of decisions made within an international organization. An organization's leadership and decisions is a consequence of its degree of financial freedom. The idea of expelling Mugabe's Zimbabwe from the AU-NEPAD organization was not only influenced by the much assumed disrespect of AU-NEPAD democratic value, which demands democratic behavior among the African leaders, but the expulsion was a concerted effort to ensure that the NEPAD, AU and G8 relationships were not jeopardized (Bond, 2002). At the inception of NEPAD, earlier mentioned, in their strategic developmental initiatives conditionalities were placed on the African member states by the developed nations. Obasanjo's address in Moputo Conference stressed the financial limitation of the NEPAD initiatives:

*Funding remains one of our greatest challenges. It is essential that in order to retain African ownership and leadership of NEPAD and all its processes, core funding should essentially come from Africa. Funding from our external partners, although welcomed, should mainly be utilized for augmenting and complementing our own efforts, especially in the areas of implementation of NEPAD programmes and capacity building (Obasanjo, 2004).*

While stressing reducing the dependence of Africa on external funding, in reality, the whole NEPAD agenda lacked the necessary funding to actualize the objective. The agreement signed by the founding fathers of NEPAD, outside existing structures of the OAU or the AEC, was the outcome of the G8 meeting in Okinawa, Japan in July 2000. Presidents Bouteflika, Obasanjo and Mbeki had met with the G8 leaders on the NEPAD agenda for African countries in particular. And the G8 had demanded for a "workable plan as the basis of the compact". On the basis of this, Mugabe's land reforms was seen as asymmetrically opposing western interest, which could in turn hamper Obasanjo and Mbeki's earlier plea for debt relief and for the development assistance that is at the core of NEPAD-AU agenda.

Mugabe's actions have been loudly debated by the anti-western scholars praising his actions as protecting Africans from western hegemony. On the other hand, Obasanjo and Mbeki's reactions resulting in the suspension of Zimbabwe from AU have been analyzed as essentially anti-African, indirectly promoting western hegemony and neo-colonialist agenda (Bond, 2002). In fact it will be recalled that after the suspension there were some tensions between South Africa and Nigeria over Zimbabwe during the Commonwealth summit in Abuja in 2003. Mbeki had sought to ensure Mugabe's invitation to the summit, but Obasanjo, under pressure from Britain, Canada and Australia, did not want to disrupt the summit he was hosting by admitting the Zimbabwean president. The point in this study is that the organizational incompetence of NEPAD, in terms of incapability to finance actualizing the NEPAD objectives, directly influenced the nature of decisions made by the HOSGIC under the chairmanship of Olusegun Obasanjo.

### **NEPAD: Personality Level**

The personality level of the analysis of NEPAD's international relations refers to the individual styles of leadership in the organization. The personal achievements, humanistic contribution and style of affiliation of the former President Olusegun Obasanjo in NEPAD will be considered, in this respect. Concerning his personal achievements, the aim is to understand the individual leader's motivation towards organizational success. What was Obasanjo's perception of the need to attain high quality results in projects and tasks? This question implies his inclination to setting realistic goals and personal determination to achieve the goals. In respect of the humanistic contribution, to be emphasized is Obasanjo's interest in the growth and the development of people. This will be shown in his involvement in peace-keeping missions, which is part of the broad-base plans of NEPAD. And concerning the style of affiliation, this refers to Obasanjo's interest in the development of

relationships with other leaders and their peoples, as well as his interest in forming organizations that projected the broad-base interest of NEPAD.

While Obasanjo was the chairperson of NEPAD's HOGSIC, he played a prominent role, with the summits and the strategies to better the lots of Africans. Notwithstanding, determining Obasanjo's personality is quiet a difficult task. Scholars such as Ajetunmobi et al. (2011) have described the Nigerian ex-military leader as having "a challenger personality". People of this personality are essentially unwilling to be controlled by others or by the circumstances they find themselves; they are fully made to be masters of their fate (Ajetunmobi et al., 2011).

A challenger personality is a strong willed, decisive, practical, tough minded and energetic person. This type of personality also tends to be domineering. Their unwillingness to be controlled by others frequently manifests in the need to control others instead. The individuals with a challenger personality possess a strong instinct and an enormous desire for what they do without any feeling of guilt. This type of personality, as described by Ajetunmobi et al. (2011), wants to explore life and is prepared to go out from his place of convenience to try what others have thought of but are unwilling to try. As a challenger personality, Olusegun Obasanjo projected himself to be a tough leader, fearless and stood up to challenge Africa and African leaders on the need for greater integration, competition which will place Africa on the global map.

Despite enormous criticisms, the question could be posed, with the exception of Thabo Mbeki, which other contemporary African leader has taken up the responsibility to challenge and confront the IMF and World Bank as well as the United Nations leadership towards better economic policies for Africa? Obasanjo's bravery and challenging personality was first seeing in his childhood days. Born in a native African community in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria, Obasanjo was from a very poor background. However, this state of poverty did not restrain him from conquering the challenges of life by rising from nothing to eminence. Obasanjo's formative years, though roughed by poverty but during which he demonstrated the traits which underscored his subsequent rise to the esteemed niche of an Army General and his glorious role as a principal actor in the termination of the Nigeria's historic Civil war. Naturally equipped with intellect and coupled with industry, he went through Military training in two reputable institutions; one in Teshie, Ghana and the other in Aldershot, United Kingdom, and by personal innovativeness acquired a professional certificate in Engineering and rose to become a unit corp head in that speciality. Another salient feature of bravery displayed by Obasanjo in his formative years was the stoicism and confidence with which he parried the trauma of the death of his mother and its destabilizing threat to his family as a whole. More also, in

1999, Obasanjo triumphantly became the president of the country, Nigeria, moving from a prison to the presidential residents. This demonstrates again that Obasanjo's challenges did not limit his success as various life challenges and background did not stop him from aiming for the top.

Andrew Young (formal US Ambassador to the United Nations) had this to say about Obasanjo:

*Greatness is visionary and courageous and it reminds more cautions and cowardly men to look for something to criticize rather than face their own lack of bravery and insight. Great men, somehow, forget themselves and worry about the needs of others. I first noticed this about Olusegun Obasanjo while he was in prison. For the past 50 years, there have been almost no African issues or conflict in which Obasanjo has not become major factor – often behind the scenes but always in the midst of the action (Omotayo, 2012).*

But few remember that it was Obasanjo that acted fearlessly against Britain's military and economic power with Nigeria's moral power by enforcing a threatened boycott of British products and contracts, including expelling Conoco Oil for shipping Nigeria's oil to South Africa in contravention of UN and OAU sanctions.

In NEPAD Obasanjo's bravery was of enormous advantage to African countries. The Challenger personality was demonstrated in Obasanjo's fearless approach to the world leaders on the issue of debt relief in particular and African development in general. He has also played a dominant role in the area of peace keeping, African conflict mediation, African leadership projects (such as the Africa's Peer Review Mechanism, an idea to promote collective review of all democratic process in all African countries and provide advice to countries operating below the expected standard). His desire for Africa's upliftment has gone unnoticed, of course. For instance, former President Bush in a meeting with Obasanjo made the following remarks about him:

*Every time I meet with Obasanjo he brings a fresh perspective about the politics, conflict, leadership and the general situation in Africa. This shows that he has the passion for Africa. He has been instrumental in the progress of Africa. I appreciate the decision he made regarding Charles Taylor. It is a signal of his deep desire for peace in his neighborhood (Bush, 2006).*

Obasanjo has also demonstrated his willingness to support the entrenchment of democratic ethos in Africa dating back to the 1970's when he peacefully handed over to a democratically elected government, as a military ruler in an era when the military capitalized on the small chances of civilian misrule to seize power in the African countries.

Despite Obasanjo's reputation within the Nigerian state which is outside the scope of this study, we contend that



Obasanjo has a challenger personality given his rough background where he demonstrated that his personal circumstances cannot hinder his success. More also his efforts towards Africa's debt relief, and economic integration, demonstrates his desire for Africa's development and Transformation.

## Conclusion

This study has been able to examine Obasanjo's leadership roles as the NEPAD's HSGIC chairperson in 2001. It adopted Schechter's model in the analysis and explanation of leadership in NEPAD, by examining its interaction with the G8 and how individual leadership styles influence certain strategic steps taken at the time. In particular, the paper looked into the organizational constraint of NEPAD under the chairmanship of Obasanjo as its HSGIC, specifically financial limitations and organizational decisions. In the same vein, his challenger personality was evident in his strategic roles internationally which were motivated by a concern for the continent's development and integration in the global economy. Given the nature of Obasanjo's role as the chairperson of NEPAD's Head of State and Government Implementation Committee, Schechter's model provides an adequate analytical standpoint for understanding leadership roles in international organizations. Certainly, while determining personality-leadership relationship may be complex, Schechter theorizes correctly that actions and inactions of leaders in international organizations can be categorized and analyzed at the systemic, organizational and personality levels.

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