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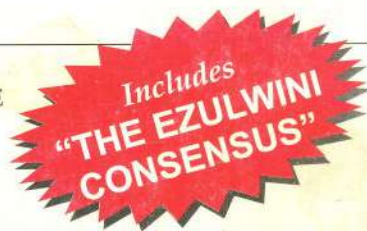
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THE AFRICAN INFORMATION SOCIETY INITIATIVE (AISI): OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

ANABA ALEMNA*

ABSTRACT

The paper discusses the concept of the African Information Society Initiative (AISI) in relation to the emerging Information and Communication Technology revolution that is sweeping through the world. Benefits to be derived from the AISI are highlighted. These include improvements in Agriculture; Health and Medicine; Trade and Commerce; Education and Training; Socio-Economic; Culture and Tourism; Libraries and Information Provision; and Disaster Management. Challenges in the implementation of the AISI include the lack of governments' appreciation of the importance of the AISI; the monopoly of telecommunication networks in Africa; the poor ICT infrastructure and the lack of capital resources for investment in ICT. Suggested remedies include the need to restructure, expand and liberalise the telecommunication system in Africa; and the development of legal frameworks to support the AISI in all African countries.

Background

Africa continues to be at the periphery of the global information revolution. While available electronic services or multimedia services offer opportunities for information to travel across global networks, Africa does not seem to have the infrastructure and the knowledge and skills required to develop relevant content for them. There is a limited presence of modern

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REFLECTIONS ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY IN WEST AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Due to colonialisation, West Africa has been divided, according to the official languages of the colonizing countries into Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone with different administrative and regulatory systems. There have been attempts to integrate the sub-region through the Economic Community of West African States. Some of the attempts have been frustrated by conflict and military coups, and economic and customs unions involving sub-groups in the sub-region.

Production in West Africa is basically primary commodities. Currently intra-West African trade is minimal with the major trading partners of many countries being in Europe and North America. Apart from Nigeria, each of the countries in West Africa is not large enough to create an optimal market size for rapid industrialisation. It is therefore imperative that the economies of West African countries are integrated for the economic development of the sub-region.

Whereas UEMOA, involving largely the Francophone countries, seems to have macroeconomic stability, the newly created WAMZ whose goal is to establish a second currency in West Africa, is struggling to achieve macroeconomic convergence for the countries in the Zone. Although a single currency may not be a panacea for West Africa's slow economic development, it may provide the discipline needed to ensure macroeconomic stability which is a necessary condition for economic growth. Cooperation in other spheres of economic endeavour would produce the economies of scale that would spearhead economic development in the participating countries.

It is unlikely that the apostles of doom for West Africa would have their way. There are pointers to cooperation in West Africa as exemplified in the West Africa Gas Pipeline project involving Benin, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo. West Africa has to do more to accelerate regional integration so that this optimism can result in discernible improvements in the lives of the people of the sub-region within the shortest possible time.

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PICKING UP THE PIECES: ISSUES OF THE PRISON SYSTEM IN A POST-CONFLICT SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

Post-conflict societies face daunting challenges in the reconstruction of all facets of society. Irrespective of the nature of the violence, the legacies of mistrust, suspicion and destruction of relationships are the same everywhere and create challenges that the society must confront during peacemaking and peace building. One of the major challenges in a post-conflict society is the restoration of law and order and the rule of law. In the enterprise of establishing the rule of law, the questions that have been seen as requiring answers revolve around how to restore a functioning police system and a court system. Scant regard has been paid to the prison system which is the logical end of the work of the police and the courts. Prisons are a necessary, but often forgotten, part of the system of law enforcement, even though imprisonment remains the most potent of weapons in the arsenal of the criminal justice system.

As the UN is revising its strategy for achieving normalcy in post-conflict societies to include issues of rule of law, the concept has been broadened to include the prison system. Until the scandal in Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, the potential of prisons for undermining a mission claiming the moral high ground had not been appreciated. However, now, the need for intellectual discourse on peace-building to also focus on issues pertaining to the proper functioning of prisons, is beyond argument. This paper seeks to contribute to that discourse so as to raise awareness as to the issues that must engage the attention of those who have to rebuild, or manage prisons as part of a reconstruction mandate.

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THE LECIA FRENCH PROFICIENCY PROGRAMME: METHODOLOGICAL OPTIONS AND CHALLENGES

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Introduction

Since the inception of the Legon Centre for International Affairs (LECIA) 1989, French has featured prominently in its language proficiency programmes. The reasons for this privileged position are not far-fetched. It is no secret that France wields considerable diplomatic and cultural influence on the international scene, hence the extensive use of French in the world and as one of the main languages of the United Nations. In the past, France was also a strong colonial power, second only to the British. It is well known that the Francophone-Anglophone cleavage is a potent factor in international diplomacy. Today, Africa alone accounts for more than 70% (our own estimation) of the linguistic dimension of La Francophonie¹, with a larger concentration in West Africa, where Ghana is situated. The foregoing are some of the global and sub-regional justifications for the inclusion of French in the curriculum of an institution like LECIA which has an international focus. However, to design a syllabus for such a programme, a basic question needs to be addressed: what kind of French for LECIA?

Attractions of the French Language

To answer the above question, one must first bear in mind that the French language offers numerous attractions. Some love the language for its world-acclaimed "romanticism", probably on account of its sheer euphony (ie. those who do not even understand or speak it) or its ability to express

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CHILD-LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY AND WAGES: A CASE STUDY OF COASTAL FISHING AND LOCAL RESTAURANTS IN GHANA

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E. NKETIAH-AMPONSAH*

ABSTRACT

Child labour is a pervasive problem throughout the world, especially in developing countries. Notwithstanding the many excellent programmes and comprehensive legislations directed at curbing all forms of child labour, a significant preponderance of child labour prevails in Ghana. This phenomenon has debilitating effect on the county's future human capital development. This study explores the demand side factors driving the use of children in paid employment within the Ghanaian economy. Consequently, it analyzes child labour wages and productivity in two sub-sectors namely, local restaurants (popularly referred to as chop-bars) within the services sector and coastal fishing under the fisheries sub-sector within the agricultural sector. The findings of the study show that children in the fishery sub-sector are better remunerated than their counterparts in the restaurants, although children's earnings are consistently lower than those of adults in the performance of same tasks. This is against the backdrop that over 50 percent of children interviewed work the same number of hours as adults. Although employers perceived that 17 percent of the children were equally productive as their adult counterparts, only 19 percent of the children who were equally productive as their adult counterparts earned the same wages. This finding underscores the exploitative nature of child-labour. Enterprise owners in the restaurants perceived that only 14 percent of child-labourers were equally productive as their adult counterparts; however there was a weak correlation between children's wages and productivity 0, though on average, children's wages repre-

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