

UNIVERSITE DE OUAGADOUGOU
Office du Baccalauréat

Séries G1-G2-H

Année 2015
Session Normale
Epreuve du 1^{er} tour
Durée : 2 heures
Coefficient : 2

EPREUVE ECRITE D'ANGLAIS

Cette épreuve comporte deux (2) pages

The Predatory State

Classical obstacles to Africa's development in the 1960s (illiteracy, low savings, low investment) still remain. Today, however, they have been overtaken by a far more insidious set of constraints, including political instability, inefficient markets, corruption and capital flight.

After independence, African governments assumed the primary role in economic development. Colonial rule was considered "evil and exploitative" and, because the colonialists were capitalists, capitalism too was to be avoided. This kind of syllogistic reasoning characterized the pronouncements of several African leaders, who viewed free markets, free trade, private enterprise and the parliamentary system of democracy as western capitalist instructions that should be rejected.

Centralized planning established itself across Africa under the premise that markets were so unreliable and underdeveloped that they could not possibly serve as a guide to investment decisions. The state alone could gather the resources needed to undertake large-scale development projects.

Where the state emerged as the dominant player, the people were forced to abandon industry, trade and commerce. Price controls and legislation were adopted by some governments which systematically exploited the peasants. Prices of agricultural products were dictated by government to make food cheap for the urban consumers, but not determined by market forces, in accordance with African traditions. Bargaining remains the rule in village markets even today.

The state, of course, has a role to play in development, serving as a catalyst to boost productive activity. But the role ascribed to the state in Africa was debauched by the ruling elites. Much of the development that followed in post-colonial Africa can be described as "development by imitation". Grandiose projects and schemes were copied abroad and transplanted into Africa. American farmers use tractors and chemical fertilizers, so too must agriculturalists in Africa. New-York has skyscrapers, so too must Africa, in the middle of nowhere. Rome has a basilica, so too must we in Africa, and the list is endless.

Adapted from UNDP News, August 1994, p. 5 .

A. Guided Commentary

- 1) From the text, which main problems did Africa face in the 1960s, as far as its development was concerned? (3 points)
- 2) According to the text, what are the difficulties to Africa's development today? (3 points)
- 3) Referring to the text, what happened when the state became the only decision maker in the economic development of a country? (4 points)
- 4) Relying on the text, say what role African States should play in their development? (4 points)

B. Essay:

In your opinion, is "development by the imitation" of developed countries an appropriate way for a developing country like yours? Justify your opinion (6 points).
