

Economic Partnership Agreement A Tool to Perpetuate Colonial Dominance

News:

On Tuesday, 9 March 2021 Kenya's Parliament ratified the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the United Kingdom. The trade deal will give UK goods 25 years of tax free entry into Kenya. (*Daily Nation*)

Comment:

Kenya's ratification follows that of UK's House of Lords debate that took place on Tuesday, 2 March 2021. (*Business Daily*, 09/03/2021). However, Kenya's Parliament endorsed the trade pact with some doubts. The reservations earlier led to the postponement of debate on the treaty after not receiving the annexure containing goods due for tax exemption! Members of Parliament (MPs) were angered by a clause in the EPA Act that stipulates no amendments during ratification of the agreement. (*The Star*, 26/02/2021). In addition, the Parliamentary Finance committee alleged that it was not involved in the negotiation process despite being in charge of handling tax issues. (*Daily Nation*, 26/02/2021).

Eventually, the Kenyan Parliament ratified the deal with hope that some clauses in the EPA give power to the Kenyan Cabinet Secretary to withdraw from the deal and can make some amendments during its implementation. Furthermore, some MPs promised to amend the Treaty Act so that the parliament can be involved in future negotiations from the start. Hence, this brings an end to a process that began with the signing of the trade deal on Tuesday, 8 December 2020 in London between the International Trade Minister Ranil Jayawardena and Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Trade, Minister Betty Maina on behalf of the East African Community (EAC), despite the fact that Kenya Small-Scale Farmer Forum and Econews Africa moved to court to stop ratification of the agreement citing failure to widely consult stakeholders on the same!

It is disheartening to witness the signing and ratification of the deal. On the face value, it looks supportive of our nation economically. It is alleged that we can export our products/goods into UK on a no-tariff, no-quota basis once the deal is ratified. The truth is explicit that our nation to-date remains an extension of the former colonial master's farm whose policies and regulations are subject to the interests of the master. It is in the public domain that those exporting products/goods to the UK are just a small cabal of elites that hold power on behalf of the Western colonialists. Some of them own and stranglehold crucial local sectors such as tea, coffee, fresh flower produce etc. Hence, it is they who will continue to enjoy the fruits of the said deal. On the other hand, it will condemn the majority who are struggling to fend for themselves into further misery since there will be flooding of UK products/goods. Hence, our economy will continue to be shackled to UK.

Indeed, these are the latest maneuvers of the desperate UK whose fortunes keep dwindling across the globe before and after exiting European Union. Reaching out to its former colonies is just part of a grand scheme to prop up its image abroad. In realizing its goal, it exploits its colonial agent rulers to pass through heinous legislations, and in turn exposing our so called independent institutions such as parliament to public ridicule by being just rubber stamping authorities as they are pushed over by the executive!

Western colonialists continue to poison and dominate using their secular capitalist ideology and its venomous systems. They continue to wreak havoc in our lives to an extent people prefer death than living, since they are pillaging our resources and tightening economic nooses via unbearable taxation policies that promote poverty and wealth accumulation to a few. Hence, rich-poor gap is soaring. In conclusion, the EPA seems to be good on paper but catastrophic in implementation. As exposed by the explanation given by the Cabinet Secretary for Ministry of Industry, Trade and Enterprise Development via a memorandum accompanying the EPA, which was tabled in Parliament on 22 December 2020, for ratification. "Kenya is offering to open 82.6 per cent value of total trade to the UK over an extended transition period (up to 25 years with a seven- year moratorium) constituting of mainly raw materials, capital goods, intermediate products and all other essential goods." (*Daily Nation*, 22/02/2021).

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