INTERROGATING ISSUES IN GOVERNANCE AND THE CRISIS OF DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

This is paper argues that, African states have been experiencing a deepening crisis of development and this is easily linked to the absence of good governance in a continent that is highly blessed with natural and human resources. It thus appears as if African's plethora of problems like poverty, hunger, diseases, political upheavals, deprivations, etc are irredeemable given the nature of governance that is characterize b poor leadership, corruption and mismanagement of resources. To resolve this problematic of leadership that is destroying the development process in Africa, the paper recommends leadership re-orientation, introduction of African unified anti-corruption policy; a reform of the political system and efficient management of resources of engender good governance and development on the African continent.

INTRODUCTION

African enters the 21st century confronted with monumental crises of development: For most African states, the post-independence period has been marked by a disappointing development record, especially in the area of providing for the basic needs of the people. No wonder then that African today is easily termed as a place where the number of people living in absolute poverty has reached close halve of the population and the figure continue to rise (Kabbaj, 2003:1). Right from the beginning, we must realize that the tragedy of most African states is situated in the context of bad governance, which has tended to arrest the course of development and made the people to lose faith in the ability of the state top transform their lives. Governance in Africa has therefore become a critical issue of discourse on Africa's development aspirations. The political economy of development in Africa has been anchored or characterized by rising poverty, huge external debt overhang, collapse of social infrastructures, pervasive conflicts, corruption, human rights abuses, deprivations and more fundamentally, leadership malice that have disconnected the people from the governance process. It is against the foregoing that this paper examines the validity of the infrastructure of governance to the development agenda in Africa and the nature of the crisis of development in the continent. The paper also wraps up with policy options on how African state can move forward in the March towards qualitative development in the 21st century.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT
Governance

The concept of governance has gained currency in recent times in development literature, especially on African Development. For instance, the World Bank (1989) study linked the crisis of development in contemporary Africa to the framework of governance that is characterized by extensive personalization of power, widespread corruption and denial of the fundamental human rights. To start with, governance has to do with policy making

and policy implementation regulated by systems of laws and guidelines which are segregated into specific operations to achieve specific goals or objectives. It involves the use of political authority and the exercise of control over a society and the management of its resources for social and economic development (Landell-Mills and Serageldin, 1991; Dethier, 1999). The World Bank Report (1992) captures this more lucidly as it states that governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development. Samson (2004) contends that governance is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented. From the above conceptualization, it is clear that governance refers to the good process of leading the society with the capacity for efficient problem solving, conflict resolution as well as a conscious and deliberate efforts aimed at improving the wellbeing of the people.

Governance therefore has its basic tenets or elements. According to Jega (1994:101-102) these basic tenets or elements of governance are as follows:
  i.   Responsibility and responsiveness in leadership and the public service;
  ii.   Accountability and transparency in the mobilization of resources;
  iii. Discipline, effectiveness and efficiency in handling public (as well as personal) affairs;
  iv.   Selflessness and impartial services to the people; and
  v.   Popular participation and involvement of the people 111 the conduct and management of their affairs.
      Hyden and Braton (1992) have therefore, pointed out that these elements have much to do with authority, reciprocity and trust. They maintain that when these elements are jointly present the greater is the likelihood of good governance and the opposite is bad governance when they are weak or absent.Elaborating further Odock (2006:3-5) aver that good governance refers to:

> *A system of government based on good leadership, respect for the rue of law and due process, the accountability of the political leadership to the electorate as well as transparency in the operations of government.*

What can be deduced from the foregoing contextualization IS that governance encompasses the state institutional and structural arrangements, decision-making process and its implementation capacity that is geared towards uplifting the living conditions of the people. It has links with participatory development and it also concerns with creating an enabling political environment for economic growth and equitable distribution of resources as well as adherence to protecting the fundamental rights of the people.

Development
The concept of development, like others in social discourse, eludes a universally acceptable definition. It is however necessary to see development as a process that involves the progress of people in the society. Since people live within some form of social framework consisting of social, economic and political structures, development involves changes or transformation of these structures (Burkey, 1996). Development is therefore a multi-dimensional and comprehensive transformation of the society. From the above conceptualization, we can consider development as primarily concerning itself with the

improvement in the living conditions of the people. In other words, development in this sense has to begin from the individual. This is the human conception of development, which looks at social and economic welfare of the people. It embraces a whole gamut of elements that have to change in the quest for development i.e. technical, economic and political changes all geared towards enhancing the welfare of the people. The point here is that the absence of basics like food, shelter, clothing, and good health is tantamount to poverty which is the ugly manifestation of underdevelopment.

GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT: A DYNAMIC LINKAGE

Governance and development are separate concepts, yet in practice they have a close linkage. They have a causal relationship. This is to say that one affects the other. Development as a process is highly correlated to the quality of governance (Afeikhena, 2004). Understandably, it is governance that stimulates development. In effect when there is governance failure, development will run into crisis as has been the case in Africa. The links between elements of good government and development are quire obvious. Clear laws predictably enforced reliable information, provision and effective maintenance of infrastructure and basic services, and absence of corruption and fraudulent practices are growth promoting while their opposite clearly hampers development (Nelson, 1990 and Boneninger, 1994).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Governance is an activity concerning leadership. In a bid to fashion out the best way to govern, scholars and philosophers have come up with several approaches. In line with this, several theories have been postulated to help in understanding how the society operates as it relates to governance. In this paper, we adopt the elite theory as a framework of analysis. The elite theory is rooted in the philosophical idea that every society is divided into two major groups - the elite and none elite; the rulers and the ruled; the governing and the non-governing etc. Major proponents of the elite theory include three classical elite theorists of the early twentieth century: Wilfred Pareto (1848-1923); Gaetano Mosca (1857-1941); and Roberto Mitchels (1976-1936). Essentially, elite theory posits that the society is divided into two: the few who are drawn disproportionately from the upper socio-economic state of the society, they share a consensus on the basic values of the social system and on the consequent need for its preservation, they have power actually govern and authoritatively allocate values of the society. On the other hand, is a group of the majority - the masses who are governed; they lack power to make authoritative decisions (Gauba 2003; Heywood, 1997 and Varma, 1975).

The elite theory contends that every society is ruled by a minority that possesses the qualities necessary for its accession to full social and political power. Generally, elite consist of those successful persons who rise to the toy in every occupation and stratum of society. In effect, there exist different elites within the society such as the intellectual elites, professional elite's political elites, etc. Political elites strive to offer political direction and qualitative leadership. A political leader is thus expected to posses certain qualities necessary for moving the society forward. Among others, the person must be capable to provide direction, offer inspiration, show team spirit, display courage and ready to lead exemplary life by living above board. A leader is supposed to be in control. To this extent,

the person requires basic experience over the issue of governance. It is believed that political elites, based on their level of political enlightenment, should posses these qualities. When those that emerge into leadership position lack these qualities, the society will suffer. As we reflect on the issues of governance and development in Africa, the elite theory will act as a guide in assessing the kind of people that have taken political control within the continent. In trying to understand the problems facing Africa and her peoples, there is the need to ascertain whether the continent has the right caliber of people that can offer the right political direction toward development. This is because when this is lacking the African continent will continue to experience problems of underdevelopment.

INTERROGATING THE CAUSAL ISSUES IN AFRICA DEVELOPMENT CRISIS

It has been suggested that no meaningful characterization of African crisis can be done outside the contemporary history of the continent's relations with the outside world, particularly Europe and North America (Rodney, 1981; Onimode, 1981; and Ofiong, 1980). Although there is no need for replication here; however, a few basic issues should be emphasized. The first issue is that the continent and her peoples were at the receiving end of the global power dynamics, which has manifested in the trajectories of imperialism. Through this process the phenomenon of imperialism transformed Africa, once reputed to be the cradle of human civilization, into an unenviable image of pillage, oppression, exploitation and waste (Okpeh, 2005). The second issue is that the African crisis relates to the phenomenon of neocolonialism. This translates into several issues; as noted by Onimode (1987:32).

> ... *it replicates into the failure of Africa's policy makers to properly assimilate the notion of development; the bankruptcy of her ruling elites (both civilian and military); the predatory, oppressive and fascistic character of the state and the vulnerability of the continent to the WB, IMF and their conspiratorial strategies of development.*

Okpeh (2005) also contends that the unrelenting pauperization and marginalization of Africa in the global system is partly associated with the above. Under this notion African crisis is best explained by the preponderance of the structures of dependence, which came about as a result of the wreckage of African economies by colonialism the perpetration of new colonial domination after independence and the systematic control of economic activities by the advanced. The third issue in understanding the causative factors of African crisis associates it with the absence of an enabling environment for meaningful development. The man contention here is that, arising from the issues examined above, Africa's inability to extricate itself from the web of social, economic and political contradictions has compounded the developmental problems and hundred all attempts to remedy the ugly trends, understandably, the prevalence of dependency and underdevelopment, social decay political instability, rural poverty, etc have denied the continent the opportunity of developing. Thus Africa appears to be trapped in a cycle of crisis whose internal manifestations and implications have continued to encumber the development potential of the continent and her peoples (Okpeh, 2005:13). In what follows, we examine the nature and manifestations the crises of development in Africa.

The Socio-Economic Crisis of Development in Africa

Africa has become the most wretched with millions of her peoples wallowing in the vortex of starvation, ignorance and diseases. The continent harbours the world's worst human tragedies. From malaria scourge to cholera epidemic, from HIV/AIDS pandemic to boundary crisis, from inter-ethnic conflicts to wards and refugee crisis, from food crisis to external debts overhang and insecurity of lives. All these are manifestations of poverty. According to Alimeka (2001:3) the phenomena of poverty in Africa has various manifestations. These include:

> ... *lack of income and the productive resource sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihood, ill-health limited or lack of access to education and other basic services, increase morbidity and mortality from illness, homelessness and inadequate housing, unsafe environment, social discriminations and exclusion, it also characterized by a lack of participation in decision-making and civil and socio-cultural life.*

The above scenario clearly points to the fact that Africa is horribly trapped in the web of poverty and declining productivity which does not promote the development process. Added to the above is Africa's deformed economic system. From Marxist perspective, economic substructure is the basis for any form of development. However, African economies are characterized by low level of development of productive forces, especially science and technology and industrialization. Understandably this has created the circumstances of the inability of the state in Africa to cater or the widespread basic needs of the people. It simply explains why the development needs and aspirations of the people are neglected. The recent UNDP Human Development Report (2002) ranks African countries very low as compared to their counterparts in Western Europe and North America. Table 1 below has clearly shown that life expectancy in Nigeria for instance is only 51.7 while combined gross school en is an atrocious 45 percent. Comparatively, United States of America has a life expectancy of 77.0 percent and school enrolment of 95 percent.

Country	HDI Rank	Life Expectancy at birth (Years)	Adult literacy Rae age 15 and above (5)	Primary Secondary and Tertiary Gross Enrolment (%)	GDP per capital (PPPU$$)	Life Expectancy Index	Education Index	Human Development Index (HDT) Value	GDP Per Capital (PPPU$$) Minus Rank
United State	6	77.0	99.0	95	34.142	0.87	0.98	0.939	-4
United Kingdom	13	77.7	99.0	106	23509	0.88	0.99	0.928	6
France	12	78.6	99.0	94	24223	0.89	0.97	0.925	-14
Germany	17	77.7	99.0	94	25103	0.88	0.99	0.928	7
S/Africa	107	52.1	85.3	93	9401	0.45	0.88	0.695	-56
Egypt	115	67.3	55.3	76	3635	0.70	0.62	0.642	-10
Morocco	123	67.6	48.9	52	3546	0.71	0.50	0.602	-16
Ghana	129	56.8	71.5	42	1964	0.53	0.62	0.548	1
Uganda	150	44.0	67.1	45	1208	0.32	0.60	0.444	-1
Cote d'Ivore	156	47.8	46.8	38	1630	0.38	0.44	0.428	-17
Indonesia	110	66.2	86.9	65	3043	0.69	0.79	0.684	1
Nigeria	148	51.7	63.9	45	896	0.44	0.58	0.462	9

Table 1: Human Development Index for Selected Countries

Source: **UNDP**   **(2002)**

GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION CRISIS IN AFRICA

Across the Africa continent, there is a problem of political instability, corruption and public mal-administration (Mimiko, 1999). Political instability in African manifests itself in vices such as political violence, unpredictability of change of regime types, electoral malpractice like rigging of elections, falsification of election results, arson, Uhuggery, Kidnapping and ultimately the killing of political opponents and other innocent helpless people. Political instability and authoritarianism in Africa limits competitive politics, pressure groups roles are limited dictatorship is therefore entrenched. The consequence of this is that there are high levels of readership irresponsibility in governance. The effect of this leadership deficit on the society is that, the social and economic freedoms of the people are at best crushed and this negates the core values of democracy and development. The character of the political leadership in Africa has been eloquently captured by Tsuwa and Gaavson (2008: 14) when they argue that:

> *The political leadership in Africa since independence has been one that lacks vision, commitment, accountability, discipline and mental resourcefulness. Most African leaders have in the past and especially the contemporary times lacked these virtues and this is mainly due to their culture of intolerance, corruption, mismanagement of resources and ineptness (Tsuwa and Gaavson, 2008).*

Onimode (2000:244) supports the above view and states lucidly that:

> *Most African governments become mere 'clique in power' with neither transparency in governance nor accountability to the people ... a truly nationalistic, visionary and committed political leadership has failed to emerge in African states.*

THE CRISIS OF FOREIGN POWER INFLUENCE

The influence of external factors continue to affect Africa's already disarticulated economy and politics to the extent that while the opportunity exists for African leaders to define the course of African development, they have been unable to detach themselves from the clutches of international machination. For instance, the romance of African leaders with the G.8 countries (a group of 8 highly industrialized capitalist powers) snowballed into the formation of the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD). With the formation of NEPAD it is expected that a new horizon of development has been charted for Africa; that is to say that all the horrendous past experiences of Africa would given way to meaningful socio-economic growth and development. Unfortunately, the NEPAD framework has appeared as yet another neo-liberal ageda with renewed emphasis on worn out development strategies like foreign Aid. Going by African experience with aid, attainment of good governance through NEP AD is not only problematic but unrealistic. The realization of good governance here is predicated on its fulfillment as aid conditionality from Western donor states. In other words, if donor countries refuse to grant aid to Africa, the continent's leaders are under no obligation to promote good governance in Africa (Genyi, et all 2005). To this end, when these acts are extended, the capture on the policies of African countries intensifies with its attendants conservers. A development of African indigenous plan of development that will concentrate on taking Africa out of the development crisis therefore becomes a mirage.

There is also a conspiracy between African leaders and Western countries to suck dry the resources of these African countries through capital plight, corruption etc. Most of African leaders maintain robust bank accounts, houses and businesses in these countries. When national treasuries experience growth, they are siphoned to Western countries; when Western countries give aids, 50% of such is taken back to them as stolen monies. Externally stimulated political conflicts have also become a major causality factor in African's underdevelopment crisis. In a bid to keep African societies vulnerable for exploitation, external forces have continued to supply arms and sponsor not only autocratic leadership like the former President of Zaire Mobutu Sese Seko but also leaders like Paul Biya of Cameroon etc. In a bid to extract raw materials they have kept countries life Angola, Congo, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique continues in conflicts. The consequence of this is that, the rich resources of these countries have become a curse on the developmental process of the nation, while the external forces are selling arms and exploiting these resources at the expense of the indigenes.

It is pertinent to note that, the above are not the only causality factors of Africa's development crisis. Other issues like African traditional practices that are anti-development like excess consumption, extended family life or economy of affection and what Cheng (2008:5) calls kicking away the ladder are also factors in the development crisis of the African continent. From the aforementioned, we can deduce that Africa is entangled in a web of antidevelopment challenges which some are internal and others eternal. This combination of factors has even in the 21st century continued to cripple the developmental process of the African continent. On the whole, bad governance has assume prominence in Africa with its concomitant effects - despicable political leadership, stunted economic growth, hunger, famine, unemployment, diseases, poverty and other terrible scourges that have made life meaningless for Africa peoples. Here lies the challenge to African leaders in pursing a deliberate policy that will engender development in the continent.

EMANCIPATING AFRICA FROM THE DEVELOPMENT CRISIS: SOME STRATEGIC OPTIONS
Improved Systems of Governance
A key requirement for creating an enabling environment to encourage higher levels of economic growth and development in Africa is to focus on improving the systems of governance. This has to do with the efficiency and effectiveness of government institutions and public administration the institutional capacity building is a critical factor in improving systems of governance. What this suggests is that a reform of the civil services and other institutions of government are necessary to infuse it with a new spirit of public service.

Human Capital Investment
Human capital development must occupy the front position in effort to bring about social and economic change in African countries. It is now well established that functional education that equips recipients with essential literacy and other skills is an indispensable artery of development.

Realistic Reform of the Political System

Undoubtedly, the political system in Africa is faulty. This explains why its leadership hardly has the capacity to address the development needs of society. African states therefore has a change to embark on realistic reforms of the political system by entrenching social democracy and to allow for the evolution of a credible leadership that is a leadership that must be disciplined, focused, mentally resourceful and has the undiluted commitment and will to ensure good governance through which the pace of development in Africa would receive meaningful acceleration.

Efficient Management of Resources

The overall purpose of this strategy is to secure accountability, probity and prudence in the use of public funds and other resources by those leaders placed in positions of trust. To achieve this aim, the political and administrative leadership in Africa must govern by examples of control, responsibility, responsiveness and transparency. This way, the implementation of development policies to improve the lives of the masses of the people will no longer be relegated to the background.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

This discourse has shown that development involves changes in the social, economic, political and other spheres of society. But more fundamentally, development is now seen as not just a transformation of these facets of society but indeed how such changes have meaningfully touched on the lives of the ordinary people. As revealed in this discourse, such development is attainable through the infrastructure of governance. Unfortunately, since the attainment of political independence, Africa and her peoples has hardly has the evidence of good governance. In other words, development has eluded the people of Africa due largely to bad governance. Our contention in this essay is that, deliberate strategies has to be taken, especially in the areas of human capital development and improved systems of governance to engender socio-economic development in Africa.

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