

African Solutions to African Development Challenges: Key to Inclusive Sustainable Development

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Abstract

This paper focused on the theme: African Solutions to African Development Challenges: Key to Inclusive sustainable Development. The following areas were highlighted, the obstacles militating against the full implementation of the laudable ideas surrounding African development have been listed and discussed. The common characteristic of developing countries, the concept of development, the objective of development are charted. The current challenges and strategic options. Finally threshold recommendations are made. The paper finally appealed for a spirit of international solidarity in which there is mutual respect for all human beings, irrespective of religious affiliation, political persuasion, colour, race, sex or status.

Keyword: *Solutions, Solidarity, Challenges, Obstacles, Sustainable Development, Africa*

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Background to the Study

We can classify these common characteristics of African development into six broad categories

1. Low levels of living
2. Low levels of productivity
3. High rates of population growth and dependency burdens
4. High and rising levels of unemployment and under employment
5. Significant dependence on agricultural production and primary product exports
6. Dominance/dependence and vulnerability in international relations

Objective of the Study

African solutions to African development are Africa's and plan for prosperity. It is the African people's way of letting the government know what kind of Africa they wish to live in, now and in the future. It is the government's ways of letting the African people know how it plans to overcome the deep and pervasive obstacles to progress that the government and the people have identified. It is also a way of letting the international community know where Africa stands in the region and in the world-and how it wishes to be supported.

The Concept of Development

Economic development has in the past been typically seen in terms of the planned alteration of the structure of production and employment so that agriculture's share of both declines, whereas that of the manufacturing and service increases. Development strategies therefore, have usually focused on rapid urban industrialization, often at the expense of agricultural and rural development. Finally, the principal economic measures of development were often supplemented by casual reference to and general acceptance of non-economic social indicators gains in literacy schooling, health conditions and services, provision of housing etc.

The New Economic View of Development

Economic development was redefined in terms of the reduction or elimination of poverty, inequality and unemployment within the context of a growing economy. Redistribution from growth became a common slogan.

Research Questions

The questions to ask about a country's development are therefore

1. What has been happening to poverty?
2. What has been happening to unemployment?
3. What has been happening to inequality?

If all three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would, be strange to call the result 'development' even if per capita income doubled. Furthermore, development must

therefore be conceived as a multi-dimensional process involving changes in structures, attitudes and institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty. In essence, development must represent the entire gamut of changes by which an entire social system, tuned to the diverse basic needs and desires of individuals and social groups within that system, moves away from a condition of life widely perceived as unsatisfactory and towards a situation of condition of life regarded as materially and spiritually 'better'.

The Three Objectives of Development

We may conclude that development is both a physical reality and a state of mind in which society has through some combination of social economic and institutional processes, secured the means of obtaining a better life.

The following are the objectives of development

1. To increase the availability and widen the distribution of basic life-sustaining goods such as food, shelter, health and protection to all members of society.
2. To raise level of living including in addition to higher incomes the provision of more jobs, better education and more attention of cultural and humanistic values. These all serve not only to enhance material well-being but also generate greater individual and national self-esteem.
3. To expand the range of economic and social choice to individuals and nations by freeing them from servitude and dependence not only in relation to other people and nation – states but also to the forces of ignorance and human misery.

Discussion

Three core values of development

Three basic components or core values that serve as a conceptual basis and practical guideline for understanding the inner meaning of development.

The core values are:

- (i) Life-sustenance
- (ii) Self-esteem and
- (iii) Freedom, representing common, goals sought by all individuals and societies

i. Life – Sustenance: The Ability to Provide Human Needs

All people have certain basic human needs without which life would be impossible. These life-sustaining needs include, indisputably, food, shelter, health and protection. Where any of these is absent or in critically short supply we may state without a reservation, that condition of absolute under development exists. A basic function of all economic activity is to provide as many as possible with the means of overcoming the helplessness and misery arising from a lack of food, shelter, health and protection. To this extent, we may claim that economic development is a necessary condition for the improvement in the quality of life which is 'development'. Without sustained and continuous economic progress at the individual as well as the societal level, the realization of the human potential would not be possible. Clearly one has to have enough in order to be more.

Rising per capita incomes, the elimination of absolute poverty greater employment opportunities, and lessening income inequalities, therefore, constitute the necessary, but not the only, conditions for development

(ii) Self-esteem: to be a Person

A second universal component of the good life is self esteem: a sense of worth and self-respect, of not being used as a tool by others for their own ends. All peoples and societies seek some form of self-esteem, although dignity, respect, honest or recognition. The nature and form of this self-esteem may vary from society to society and from one culture to another. However, with the proliferation of the modernizing values of developed nations, many societies in the 3rd world countries may have possessed a profound sense of their own worth suffer from serious cultural confusion when they come in contact with economically and technologically advanced societies. This is because national prosperity has become an almost universal measure of worth. Because of the significance attached to material values in 'developed' nations, high value and esteem are nowadays increasingly conferred only on those countries who possess economic wealth and technological power those who have 'developed'. Again, the relevant point is that under-development is the lot of the majority of the world's population. As long as esteem or respect was dispensed on grounds other than materials achievement. It was possible to resign oneself to poverty without feeling disdained. Conversely, once the prevailing image of the better life includes material welfare as one of its essential ingredients, it becomes difficult for the materially 'underdeveloped' to feel respected or esteemed. ... Nowadays the 3rd world seeks development in order to gain the esteem which is denied to societies living in a state of disgraceful, 'underdevelopment is legitimized as a goal because it is an important, perhaps even an indispensable way of gaining esteem...

(iii) Freedom from servitude: to be able to choose

A third final universal core value is the concept of freedom. Freedom here is not to be understood in the political or ideological sense (e.g the 'free world'), but in the more fundamental senses of freedom or emancipation from alienating material conditions of life and freedom from the social servitudes of men to nature, ignorance, other men, misery, institutions and dogmatic beliefs. Freedom involves the expanded range of choices for societies and their members, together with the minimization of external constraint in the pursuit of some social goal which we call 'development'.

The relationship between economic growth and freedom from servitudes the advantage of economic growth is not that wealth increases happiness but it increases the range of human choice. Wealth can enable man to gain greater control over nature and his physical environment (e.g through the production of food, clothes and shelter), than if he remain poor. It also gives the freedom to choose greater leisure to have more goods and services or to deny the importance of these material wants and live a life of spiritual contemplation.

Challenges facing African Development

What Prevents progress in African Development?

Despite, great natural wealth, some African countries are very poor and social development is limited. If present trends continue, the African countries are not likely to meet the millennium development goals. The following problems hamper progress in African countries.

Not all our people enjoy the same chance of prosperity. Past government in Africa, instead of focusing on delivering essential public services, assumed control of major sources of national income. In the process, corruption thrived in public service and gained a strong foothold in society. Although the environment for private enterprise in Africa is improving, there are still many challenges.

1. Poverty and Inequality

The effects of these events are legion. Everywhere in our sub-region, we see misery and wretchedness. Poverty reigns, disease is rampant women rights are either not fully recognized or simply trampled upon. The youth are losing their identity and turning into criminals in the face of unemployment that has gripped our societies. For survival many West Africans are fleeing their countries where a good number become criminals, drug trafficking and so on. In this way, they negate the excellent and honest worth that some of our people engages in abroad and drag the name of our Africa countries into the mud. Right of parents to send their children to schools of their own choice are denied them; family values are being mercilessly eroded and destroyed. Prostitution, hedonism, contraception and abortion are now part and parcel of life of our sub-region. Alcoholism, drug addiction and drug trafficking no longer cause the embarrassment they did in the past, the pandemic AIDs is pouncing on us with the velocity and ferocity of a starved lion.

Obviously, the plan for prosperity in African countries must address a startling paradox; about two-third, of the Africa people are poor; despite living in an African continent with vast potential wealth. Poverty levels vary across African countries why are so many of our African people poor? Poverty is dynamic and has many dimensions. People may move in and out of poverty as a result of natural disasters or health problems, lack of access to credit, or the lack of natural resources. Poor people are more likely to live in rural areas be less educated and have larger families than the rest of the population.

Poverty has many causes, all of which reinforce one another. One source of poverty is the lack of basic services such as clean water, education and health care. Another is lack of assets, such as land, tools, credit and supportive networks of friends and friendly. A third is lack of income, including food, shelter, clothing and empowerment (political power, confidence, dignity). Some of these factors directly affect poverty. Others contributions indirectly by producing inequality by stifling the political power of certain sectors of the populations, for example, or denying them their dignity or human rights. All of these factors are affected by the environment in which people live. Discrimination on the

grounds of gender race, disability, age or ill-health increases vulnerability to poverty. So do natural or human caused shocks droughts, floods, market collapse or conflicts.

In a nutshell the following are the reasons why poverty is escalating in African countries

1. The role of globalization in poverty
2. Escalation – no decent jobs for the teeming population
3. Disparity in peoples income and unemployment
4. Health and education disparities
5. Inequalities in power
6. Neglect of agriculture
7. Poor infrastructural base
7. Macro-economic mis-management on the part of successive military and civilian governments
8. Corruption and misuse of oil windfalls

2. Weak and Inappropriate Public Sector in some African Countries

Africa's legacy of management and corrupt governance has-encouraged many people to seek ways of sharing the national cake instead of helping to bake it. By 1999, corruption was practically institutionalized in Africa, Government was widely regarded as a provider of large contracts, distributed by officers in power to people wealthy enough to buy their influence. This was particularly so in the care of the oil industry. Overtime, the judiciaries became intimidated as the rich and powerful manipulate laws and regulations to their advantage instead of engaging in productive activities that would help the African Economy grow, people chose instead to peddle their influence and pocitp. The legitimacy and stability of the African state suffered as people began to devise way to survival that lay outside the law.

3. Poor Economic Management

Perhaps the greatest hindrance in progress has been the boom and bust mode of economic management, encouraged by the dominance of oil in the economy. Past governments allowed oil income to influence spending; when income was high, spending was high, while in oil prices were treated as temporary. Together with poor coordination between Federal and state governments in budgeting and expenditure this practice led to spiraling debt. Today all tiers of government spend far more than they earn; Africa has lost decades of development as a result of slow economic growth

4. Hostile Environment for Private Sector Growth

Over dependence on oil and traditional sectors, such as agriculture and services is partly due to the hostile business environment. Businesses wishing to operate in Africa face many constraints, including poor infrastructure, particularly road networks and electricity supply inadequate physical security; corruption, weak enforcement of contracts and the high cost of finance. These factors have deterred foreign entrepreneurs from investing in Africa and induced many African to take their money and skills abroad.

How we can find Solutions to African Development Goals

We can realize this vision by focusing on four key strategies: the orienting values, reducing poverty, creating wealth and generating employment. It is based on the notion that these goals can be achieved only by creation an environment in which business can thrive, government is redirected to providing basic services and people are empowered to take advantage of the new livelihood opportunities this idea will stimulate.

Public reforms should be set up that will make clear that corruption and graft will be punished. The national orientation Agency will be strengthened to lead a campaign to re-instill the virtues of honesty, hard work, selfless service, moral rectitude, and patriotism. To help the proportions of people whose income is less than one dollar a day and who suffer from hunger thrust

6% annual growth of GAS as a result of widespread reforms

1. Develop public private partnerships to stimulate rapid infrastructure development, including the provision of water for domestic and commercial use.
2. Drawing up a social charter or contract between government and electorate to ensure the voices of the people poor are heard and their concerns addressed.
This conference is about the Africa people. Their welfare, health employment, education, political power, physical security and empowerment are of paramount importance in realizing this vision of the future.
3. To reduce poverty and inequality we proposes acting on several fronts.
4. Offering farmers improved irrigation, machinery and crop varieties will help boost agricultural productivity and tackle poverty head on, since half of African people work in agriculture, supporting small and medium - size enterprise will help create jobs. We need to implement an integrated rural development programmes development to sterm the flow of migration from rural to urban areas.
5. Half of African are children the bridge to a prosperous future. We have to recognize the importance of children, by making the improvement of education system a top priority
6. HIV/AIDs is a major social and health problem. It also threaten the African countries productivity and economy. So we have to improve the system of health care delivery, with emphasis on HIV/AIDs and other preventable diseases and reproductive health related illnesses. Furthermore
7. Reduce maternal mortality by three-quarter and under-five child mortality by two-thirds. Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDs, malaria and other major diseases

Provide special assistance to children orphaned by HIV/ AIDs thrust

1. Setting up of comprehensive health centres
2. Government immunization and inoculations programmes and introduction of new health insurance scheme based on personal contributions

3. Reduce the disease burden attributed to priority diseases and health problems including malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/ AIDs and reproductive health.
4. Significantly improve the lives of at least 100 million sleep dwellers by 2030

Thrust

1. Provision of affordable housing, water and sanitation
2. Programmes to build skills and entrepreneurial development
3. Improve access to credit
4. Improve access to adult education and offer scholarships
5. We call for replacing pension scheme, which is in crisis, with a contributory scheme. It proposes special programmers targeting African people who have the weakest political voice and who are most vulnerable to the ravages of poverty. Laws and programmes will be implemented to empower women, children, the disabled and the elderly.
6. Development of infrastructures is important. More and more reliable electricity and a new and better maintained network of roads will encourage businesses to expand.
We have to give support to agriculture, industry, small and medium scale enterprises and oil and gas. Under the process the government will seek long term capital investment. We have to establish stronger links between educational institutions and industry to stimulate rapid industrial growth and efficient exploitation of resources.
7. Empowering African people by allowing the private sector to thrive, we creates opportunities for employment and wealth creation. It empowers African people to take advantage of these opportunities by creating a system of incentives that reward hard work, and in providing special programmes the most vulnerable members of society.

Promoting Private Enterprise

The private sector will be the engine of economic growth. It will be the executor, investor and manager of businesses. The government will play the role of enabler; facilitator and legislator, helping the private sector grow create jobs and generating wealth. Deregulation and liberalization will diminish governmental control and attract sector investment

Changing the way the government does its work. We have to restructure the government to make it smaller, stronger, better skilled and more efficient at delivery essential services. It seeks to transform the government from a haven of corruption to an institution that spurs economic development and serves the people.

On conclusion we can say solutions to Africa development is inspired by current, challenges for change and vigorous growth, it identifies the major problems we face today

and suggests how we can begin to solve them over the next five years and beyond. It sets realistic targets for progress and outlines a way of finding activities to achieve them. It is a development plan that integrates economic development efforts at the Federal, State and local government levels. It does not confine itself to specific sectors or limit itself to addressing only the major challenges identified, instead, it looks at the big picture experiencing now the challenges identifies in and sector affect one another.

Recommendations

1. Enhanced probity and accountability at all levels of government
2. Political reforms that can make government accountable to the people and also pave, way for confidence in the polity so as to attract investment from abroad.
3. Formation of social development departments to disburse social grants like old age, pensions, grants for child support, disability, unemployment grants etc.
4. Special attention should be given to the needs of the marginalized disadvantages and vulnerable women towards their empowerment and self-sufficiency
5. Economic policies of government should be geared towards creation of jobs
6. Investment in infrastructures that directly enhances productive capacities (such as water, supply irrigation schemes, prevention of erosion can have a high economic reform through increases agriculture output. Roads and other infrastructures should be extended to geographically remote areas.

Furthermore, we demand it as a right to be given access to the various communication media to use it in the formation of public opinion. We denounce the use of authority in a domineering way to deny subjects their personal freedom and fundamental human right. We denounce the use of religion as an instrument of violence and call on Christians, Moslems and followers of African Traditional Religion to make use of their faith and conviction in the existence of one God who is the father of us all to provide peace and concord.

We appeal for a spirit of international solidarity which there is mutual respect for all human beings, irrespective of religious application, political persuasion, colour race, sex or status. The number of government jobs will decline and the cost of running the government will fall dramatically as in kind benefits for civil servants, such as subsidized housing transport and utilities are magnetized. Reforms and regulations will be implemented to ensure greater transparency and accountability and corrupts practice will be outlawed. Government activities and budgeting will be informed by a framework that connects policy with government income and expenditure.

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