Volume 15 Issue 12
Originally issued as F2

Global Journal of human-social science: f
Political Science
Volume 15 Issue 2 Version 1.0 Year 2015
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)
Online ISSN: 2249-460x & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

Rethinking African Governance Architecture; Lessons and Recommendations for Action

By Mohammed Yimer

Arba Minch University, Ethiopia

Abstract- What has been seen from the experiences of African countries is that a leadership style based on command and control is no longer suited for making a capable state, characterized by constitutionalism. This will require high-level skills combined with strong commitment and determination on the part of African leaders at large. Beyond the coming into power with a limited experience, African leaders are too stubborn and are attacked by rigidity and no room for dynamism in their character. This situation contributes its part to the today's insecure governance structure in the continent. If African leaders and the government they lead are dedicated to the rights, unity and well-being of their people, they will ensure the consolidation of their nation and its security which will have a cumulative transformation on the governance architecture of the continent. Recently, Africa needs leaders that understood the social, economic and political forces that constitute the security arena and who never forget their role as an ultimate stakeholder for promoting good governance and the subsequent events of wealth creation and sustainable development in the continent.

Keywords: good governance, leadership, development, africa.

GJHSS-F Classification : FOR Code: 120199



Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:

© 2015. Mohammed Yimer. This is a research/review paper, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0 Unported License http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/), permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Rethinking African Governance Architecture; Lessons and Recommendations for Action

Mohammed Yimer

Abstract- What has been seen from the experiences of African countries is that a leadership style based on command and control is no longer suited for making a capable state, characterized by constitutionalism. This will require high-level skills combined with strong commitment and determination on the part of African leaders at large. Beyond the coming into power with a limited experience, African leaders are too stubborn and are attacked by rigidity and no room for dynamism in their character. This situation contributes its part to the today's insecure governance structure in the continent. If African leaders and the government they lead are dedicated to the rights, unity and well-being of their people, they will ensure the consolidation of their nation and its security which will have a cumulative transformation on the governance architecture of the continent. Recently, Africa needs leaders that understood the social, economic and political forces that constitute the security arena and who never forget their role as an ultimate stakeholder for promoting good governance and the subsequent events of wealth creation and sustainable development in the continent.

Keywords: good governance, leadership, development, africa.

I. Introduction

During the 20th century, the greater Horn of Africa formed one of the most dynamic and unstable regions in Africa. It underwent profound changes, and faced a number of political and economic crises. The political reality in countries such as Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Sudan was shaped by internal and external actors and forces that contributed to dramatic events, including military coups, revolutions, ethnic and religious tensions, and changing borders.

As (Obasola, 2002) cited in (Afegbua and Adejuwon, 2012) people and government in every part of the world are calling for unity, justice, peace and stability. The resurgence of this uninterrupted call is not only explicable through their political policies alone; but also it is reflected in the social and economic policies In fact, most constituted governments in Africa have been undergoing serious and deepening politico-economic crisis. These problems generated by political, social and economic instability and the prevalence of ethnic, communal and religious crises, which have bedeviled Africa, call our attention to the problems of leadership and governance in the continent.

Although, in its very nature, governance approach highlights issues of state responsiveness and accountability, and the impact of these factors on political stability and economic development, for too long and still today, researchers and much of the literature dealing with Africa's development have concentrated on economic issues, with a particular on technological innovation, overlooking the highly important political dimension of the process (Bratton and Rothchild, 1992) as cited in (Afegbua and Adejuwon, 2012).

The problem of weakening African governance and the consequent underdevelopment[1] could be traced back to the long history of exploitation and marginalization of African citizens by those nations of the northern hemisphere. The first phase of the exploitation i.e unforgettable memory of slave trade which lasted for almost three hundred years and the second one of exploiting Africans with in Africa, i.e colonialism[2] have a considerable impact on the todays African states governance architecture. Despite, the independence lasted half of a century; people in much parts of Africa are suffering from lack of good governance and the resultant effects of under development. What is equally important and not to be passed unnoticed issue is the other side of the coin, i.e leadership challenge faced African nations. The emerging concept of new public management has put the issue of leadership at the apex of governance architecture and sustainable development. Seteolu (2004:70) pointed out that the governing class has been target of pillory, vilification, condemnation and disdain in view of the pervasive and persistent socioeconomic and political crisis. In relative speaking with their northern development partners, the economic domain in African countries has been characterized by huge external debt overhang, net capital flight, disinvestments, collapse of social infrastructure, food crisis and insecurity, over-devalued national currency, pervasive poverty, unpopular, repressive and alienating economic policies (Afegbua and Adejuwon, 2012).Therefore, one of the triggering factors responsible for the aforementioned deep rooted problems in Africa is found associated with

Author: Department of Civic and Ethical Studies College of Social Sciences and Humanities Arba Minch University.
e-mail: muhamed_yimer@yahoo.com

[1] See, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa. Walter Rodney 1973.

[2] Africa could not underestimate the anguish and brutalities of slavery and colonialism and developments constitute the major source of the legacy of socially imposed disabilities in Africa such as poverty, disease, ignorance, squalor, etc.

© 2015 Global Journals Inc. (US)

leadership quality. In Africa, most often is observed while coming leaders with limited experience. This paves the way for creation of irresponsible, self-appointed, and irrational leaders who usually take coercion and military options apogee of their alternatives to respond to the questions of the governed and to calm popular resistance. The experiences we saw so far and recently in some parts of Africa, such as the social unrest and the creation of factions in Egypt following the unconstitutional removal of the former leader of Mohammed Moursi, the long history of social unrest in Somalia whose foundation stone has been traced back to the regime of Said Bare, and political instability in Libya occurred following the removal of Gadhafi, the most recent and ongoing crisis in south Sudan created after its independence and has been responsible for the death and displacement of thousands of citizens are just few justifications and manifestations of leadership deficit and bad governance in Africa. In these and some other parts of the continent, issues of constitutionalism, good governance and democracy are determined by the type of leadership in a respective country (Arthur, et.al 2013). The immediate role of leadership in Africa should not go beyond promoting pro-people policies that accommodate the needs of the populace. However, African states and their subsequent leaders have exploited and monopolized internal sovereignty, to mean absolute power, personalization of state-like services and have monopoly of and over organized violence (Ibid).

II. Manipulating Leadership for Achieving Good Governance

There are a number of factors which are of paramount importance for bringing about structural transformation in terms of good governance for African nations. Some of them are listed as follows.

Political Structures: Various literatures argued that the relationship between the various arms government as complementary institution is very vital for the emergence of good leadership and governance[3]. However, the fact at the ground in Africa does not provide a room for such a condition. The political elite should not be seen as a belligerent, and rather a kind of relationship based on harmony and common interest of citizens. Added to this is the relationship between the ruling party and opposition political parties in African states. This is one of the areas which narrow the political ecosystem and which consequently pose problems chaos and disorder in African states.

In an increasingly interdependent world, Africa must learn from all directions. Political parties must continue to emerge as organized expression of the views of all represented. But, institutions at the constituency level must be built to guard against the tyranny of political parties; Africa must strive for majority of ideas rather than party loyalties; elected leaders operating on the basis of the evolving needs and the direction of the electorate; a system that takes cognizance of the rights of minority; and the crafting of relevant democratic principles of traditional African societies to present requirements of democracy in Africa should be the pillars of the evolving democratic processes in Africa[4].

Lack of National Consensus: failure of public officials to distinguish between personal or ethnic, or partisan political interests and what may be called the national interest. The confusion that has resulted from this is that oftentimes, the former is allowed to override the latter with the formulation of out rightly contradictory policies and mutual ethnic suspicion and restiveness as outcome.

Lack of Awareness: In much of African states, the protection of human rights is at risk. One pressing challenge for this is the lack of awareness on the part of the executive bodies such as the military and other protection forces. The military is usually recruited from elementary education levels which could not identify what is right and wrong with regard to the nature and extent of human rights.

III. Recommendations for Action

Restless Strive and Perseverance to Restore Peace and stability: various conflicts and natural crises have paralyzed for years the development of democratic systems and good governance policies in some African countries. In addition, wars, civil strife and proliferation of light weapons impede the efforts made by many African countries to establish sustainable development. Some countries are still suffering from current conflicts others are recovering following the end of the conflicts they faced. Hence, addressing the challenges posed by conflicts to governance still remains a challenge in many parts of Africa. This includes the strengthening of national capacities for preventing governance crises, conflict and natural emergencies as well as for undertaking peace-building actions and addressing the inter-relationship between social integration and peace-building. The issue of south Sudan is indispensable which calls for the international community, but really to be solved by African states, i.e. African solutions for African problems. The two factions and their leaders are responsible for the vast causalities prevalent in south Sudan. Leaders should be aware enough that they come to positions just to serve the governed and not to oppress and not to be the cause for the lives of

[3] African leadership forum, LEADERSHIP FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA, 10 – 12 March, 2000

[4] Democracy and Governance in Africa; Conference on the African leadership Forum. Ota, Nigeria 29 November – 1 December 1991

© 2015 Global Journals Inc. (US)

thousands. Mechanisms should be in place which put an end to the seizing of political positions at the expense of the lives of the populace in the African soil. In addition to national security issues, capacity needs to be strengthened on managing cross-border population movements and addressing drug and small arms trafficking, transnational movements of mercenaries, epidemics such as Ebola, human trafficking and transnational organized crimes.

In recent years, increased stability in the African continent has contributed to a shift in the focus of development strategies that take into account good and effective governance as a condition for fostering economic and social transformation. In this context, the interdependence among governance, peace, security, stability and economic and social development started attracting great attention, while the issue of determination for action is still another significant challenge in the African peace, security and governance architecture. The peace negotiation process between the two political leaders in south Sudan undertaken by IGAD, and the frequent failure to be obeyed by the stated guidelines by the two parties is one counter example.

Africa needs leaders that respect and follow the provisions of their constitutions and who cultivate a culture of constitutionalism, democracy and good governance in the continent, since political leaders are the primary holders, controllers and distributors of power and resources in a particular institution (Aurther et.al, 2013). Above all, a new mentality accompanied by the ideal of constitutionalism in which leaders and their governments should be faithful to their constitutions is seriously needed. Leaders must be sensitive enough to the populace if they understand that the source of their authority is the people. In addition to this, they should not manipulate their people by their emphasis in the name of sovereignty, independence, self-determination and patriotism only for their own interest. Venter (2011) noted that there is extensive personalization of power that discourages the growth of wider forms of trust and reciprocity.What is being seen in Africa to day is the violation of human and democratic rights using the above principles as a pretext. Despite its resistance to admit its fowls, Ethiopia has been repeatedly accused of the human rights violation by the international institutions. The narrow political environment which does not provide a significant room for opposition political parties and the enmity relationship between the ruling party and the opposition groups are the challenges for democratization process in the country. In the name of terrorism too, especially some journalists and bloggers are in jail for long while others left their country for asylum abroad. Muslim elites who request the election of leaders in religious customary courts to be undertaken with in a mosque (for credible, transparent and free election result) are suffering a lot in jail. In a condition where all these grievances in the part of the governed, and violations in the part of government are prevalent, how the governed tend to develop trust, good will and fill a sense of ownership in the national effort to bring about sustainable development? All of which are the unfinished businesses of the African union.

References Références Referencias

1. Afegbua and Adejuwon, 2012.The Challenges of Leadership and Governance in Africa. International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences September 2012, Vol. 2, No. 9 ISSN: 2222-6990.
2. Alphonse and Valentina 2005. Governance Progress in Africa: Challenges and Trends. Discussion paper; Division for Public Administration and Development Management United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
3. Chikerema Arthur, Sithole Angeline, Chakunda Vincent and Matsika Kudzai, 2013. Good Governance, Democracy and Leadership styles in Africa. IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) Volume 14, Issue 5 (Sep. - Oct. 2013), PP 67-70.e-ISSN: 2279-0837, p-ISSN: 2279-0845.
4. Seteolu, D (2004). "The Challenge of Leadership and Governance in Nigeria", in Odion-Akhaine, S (eds), Governance: Nigeria and the World, Lagos: CENCOD.
5. Venter. D, 2011. The Imperatives of Democracy, Governance and Leadership in the Fight against Corruption in Africa: A South African Perspective, Paper presented at the International Conference on "Democratic Governance: Challenges in Africa and Asia", organised by the Association for Middle Eastern Public Policy and Administration (AMEPPA).
6. Democracy and Governance in Nigeria; Conclusions and papers presented at a conference of the African leadership Forum. Ota, Nigeria 29 November – 1 December 1991.

© 2015 Global Journals Inc. (US)