



GLOBAL JOURNAL OF HUMAN-SOCIAL SCIENCE: F  
POLITICAL SCIENCE

Volume 16 Issue 2 Version 1.0 Year 2016

Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal

Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)

Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

## Globalization and Non - Governmental Organizations in Africa (NGOs). Problems and Prospects

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*Keywords:* accountability, non-governmental organizations, globalization, global village and partnership.

*GJHSS-F Classification : FOR Code: 160699*



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# Globalization and Non – Governmental Organizations in Africa (NGOs). Problems and Prospects

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**Abstract-** Globalization has compressed the world to what is now called a global village. The phenomenal increase in the production of goods and services, and the rapid movement of persons across national boundaries have reduced the exclusivity of national frontiers. Thus the growing interconnectivity has spawned what may be described as a global consciousness and culture. Therefore, the rise of NGOs is a precipitate of this global transformation. NGOs which were hitherto, an exclusive preserve of some regions, have come to assume a global character. It is now located in almost all the corners of the world. This paper seeks to examine the problems and prospects associated with this development in the Third World, particularly Africa. In looking at the problems, our data collection method was based on two sources. Primary and Secondary sources. The primary sources include personal interviews and discussions, while the secondary sources include literature review, examination of official bulletins, gazettes, newspapers and magazines. It was discovered that NGOs in Africa perform some vital functions in the continent because of its underdeveloped character. These functions were obviously neglected by the state and the local authorities. We, therefore, suggest that the state need not suffocate NGOs or be wary about of their emergence. Rather, they should have a synergistic relationship through networking and partnership based on best practices and standard of accountability.

**Keywords:** *accountability, non-governmental organizations, globalization, global village and partnership.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The end of the second world war (WWII) witnessed an era which was characterized by fascinating changes in international relations and social movements. These mutations overtime facilitated the rise of industrialization, enhanced the quality of life and increased human population. Correspondingly, there was an unprecedented rise of crises, diseases and human insecurity which created unforeseen challenges for the state and the international community. Interestingly, in spite of the global improvement, some countries of the world still wallowed in underdevelopment and exist at the fringe of the global political economy while, some are living in munificence with the basic essentials of life. Africa is not immune from these global dialectical processes. It has appropriated the advantages of the global trend, yet it is

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made up of states with weak democratic institutions, presided over by a band treasury looters, and constrained by a phalanx of neo-colonial forces. The aftermath is that almost in all cases, African states do not possess the state building capacity legitimacy to command the loyalty of the populace, and often said to be at the limbo of the international system, existing at the outer limits of the planet... (Bayart, 2010:x). Despite the natural riches of the continent, it has not been able to rise beyond predatory rule, neo-patrimonialism and politics of the belly (Bayart, 2010). This is largely so because political power is a function of patrimonial power and not a representation of the sovereign will of the people (Taylor, 2009:9). It is against this background that we shall examine the process of globalization and NGOs in Africa. What problems and prospects do they portend?

## II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Globalization has become a big idea and the cliché of our epoch. This is because of its complexity, versatility and multifaceted nature. In fact, its clout can be experienced in an known disciplines. This has made it an irresistible and inescapable global phenomenon. As a process, it can be located in the womb of antiquity when interactions, exchange of goods and services commenced. By the twentieth century, there was a tremendous improvement in the means of communication. This was made possible because of the scientific revolution, especially in the discipline of communication technology. Instruments such as computer, fibre – optic cable, satellite television, Global System for Mobil communication (GSM) and internet have made communication among people of the world easier and less stressful. Globalization, therefore, is technology- driven. It can be defined as the transformation and intensification of global inter-connectedness because of improvement in the means of communication. Awonusi (2004:86), noted that globalization refers to the universalization of concepts, movements, technology markets etc... in the context of a compressed world. Globalization enhances the intensity of human interaction, opens the barriers of states and creates a united humanity. As Stiglitz (2012:4) put it globalization has reduced the sense of isolation felt in much of the developing countries access

to knowledge well beyond the reach of even the wealthiest in any country a century ago. It was this untrammelled access to information and unification of humanity that prompted Marshal McLuhan in the 1980s to aver that the world is a global village.

Regrettably, the benefits derivable from globalization are not evenly spread. Only those who can command the latest information technology have such opportunity. Unfortunately, Africa does not have the wherewithal to subject globalization to its needs and desires. This is why the continent is at the mercy of the apostles of the process. Biakolo, et al (2011:26) noted that in 2009, the internet use throughout Africa stands only at 6.7% of the population leaving 93.3% on the wrong side of the divide. The internet is often trumpeted as the newest and best for increased democratic involvement and participation. (Biakolo, et al 2011:110), and through it, and the satellite there is a glut of news, and the unprecedented internationalization of information across the world. The implication is that the nature and content of information is conditioned by the command of those who control the technology. This is a situation of he who pays the piper must pick the tune. The uneven spread of the gains of globalization has created a world of inequality and the preponderance of a global culture and consciousness, sometimes antithetical to the aspiration and historical specificity of third world countries, as in Africa. This is the basis for the vilification of the global order. While it may be seen as just a media imperialism, others just condemn it as an ideological tool for creating epistemic disjuncture in the consciousness of citizens in the peripheral states (Biakolo, et al, 2011:25). Apart from creating a false world and consciousness in the minds of African youth, the mantra of globalization is nothing but an old and continuing process that is exhibiting its latest manifestations in areas of market forces, trade liberalization and democratic institutions... (Oni, et al 2004:21). As the developed countries siphon the resources of the world and force their principles on the weak countries, there is a growing world of poverty - stricken people in the third world. The United Nations (UN) revealed that despite the progress of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), 863million people still live in extreme poverty of \$1.25 per day (Business Day, July 8, 2015), just as Africa continue to lag behind development benchmarks. According to Kofi Annan former Secretary General of the UN, globalization is presented as a foreign invasion that will destroy local cultures, regional tastes, and national traditions (Annan, 2000:127). The rapid spread of Western mannerism and the logic of market fundamentalism has equated globalization to westernization and associated with accepting triumphant capitalism (Stiglitz, 2002:5). Ake (1995:22) summarized the politics and contradiction of globalization when he observed that:

*It uniformizes and diversifies, concentrates and decentres, it universalizes but also engenders particularities it complexifies and simplifies. Always it is mediated by historical specificities.*

#### a) NGOs

The exponential rise of NGOs can be described as a global associational revolution such that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, they have become a household name with a portent force in the international political economy. Gradually, they have emerged from the backstage of events to global politics, development and inter-state relations. Through their activities, they have become an indispensable non-state actor in the formulation of global policy. Therefore, as an analytical category it is not easy to subject them to a simple definition because of their variation, structure, global reach and complexity. Nevertheless, the World Bank (WB) defines NGOs as:

*private organizations that pursue activities to relieve the suffering, promote the interest of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development.*

They are non-profit making organizations that have chosen a specific issue that need urgent attention, but have been neglected and abandoned by the government. Pearce (2003:xi) defines it as a name given to those non-profit associations focused on social change in a political influence or to those providing social and humanitarian services in highly politicized crisis – national contexts. NGOs are issue based and action – oriented. They pick a specific matter and bring it to the attention of the government and society through consistent enlightenment and advocacy. Their activities are based on charity and voluntarism. Seldom do they receive government patronage. As Lewis (2009:3) put it, NGOs are self-governing, private, not for profit organizations that are geared to improving the quality of life for disadvantaged people. A look at the definitions would see some of their essentials which include an institutionalized structure, institutionally separated from government, non-profit making and some degree of voluntary participation in the conduct or management of the organization (Lewis, 2009:3). It is important to state that private organizations are the oldest organizations humanity has experienced. But they grew and became complex and sophisticated with the growing inability of the state to fulfil its social contract with the people. Today, NGOs have constituted a third force in the society and serving as the moral pulse and conscience of the exploited. They are known by different names such as Community Based Organizations (CBO), Voluntary organizations depending on convenience. The post WWII and the epoch of globalization saw the rise of NGOs mainly because of the urgent need to address some of the attendant problems associated with the war and the progress in communication and exchange of

goods and services. In 1863, the International Red Cross was formed by Henry Dunant to deal with humanitarian issues arising from the Crimea war of 1859, January 15, 1936 Edsel Ford founded the Ford Foundation, Oxfam Britain in 1942, to address famine and relief, Cooperation for American Remittance to Europe later CARE was formed in 1945, showing solidarity with war – torn Europe, Carnegie Foundation in 1905 and Chartered in 1906 for the Advancement of Teaching and National Endowment for Democracy. In 1980 to assist democratic efforts in the Third World. From the 1970s to the late twentieth century, NGOs had a phenomenal growth, actively promoting their identities and proving to be indispensable in the state and international discourses.

Makoba, (2002) observed that the number of development-oriented NGOs registered in the countries of the industrialized North “grew from 1,600 in 1980 to 2,970 in 1993”. A WB document, Working with NGOs noted that “since the mid-1970s, the NGO sector in both developed and developing countries has experienced exponential growth... it is now estimated that over 15 per cent of total overseas development aid is channelled through NGO. That is roughly \$8b dollars”. <http://www.globalissues.org/print/article/25>. Accessed on 14/06/15

*Economists estimates that the number of international non-governmental organizations rose from 6,000 in 1990 to 26,000 in 1996. The 2002 UNDP Human Development Report noted that nearly one-fifth of the World's thirty seven thousand NGOs were formed in the 1990s. The independent sector, a non-profit organization that serves and track developments in the third sector of the society estimates that there are currently 1.5 million non-profit organizations in the United State (Meciam and Johnstone, 2006).*

This scenario is not an eerie one because globalization during the 20<sup>th</sup> century gave rise to the importance of NGOs. (Wikipedia, 2006). Since NGOs operate within a contextual matrix derived from a historical specificity, they are not alien to Africa. Whether in the pre-colonial or colonial epoch, civil society organizations have made noticeable contributions to their constituency. They were prominent through participation in nationalist struggles and protest against colonial thraldom. The growing incidence of NGOs in the continent reflect its desire for development and the particular despair against the state. In Nigeria, there are about 221 registered NGOs, 500 in Kenya, 1,000 in Uganda, Zambia 128, Tanzania 130, Zimbabwe 300 and Namibia over 55 (Makoba, 2002). These groups are carrying out many policy oriented programmes, enlightenment, and awareness raising in their locations.

#### b) Functions

NGOs are not limited liability companies, but non-profit making institutions in the society. They are

closer to the grassroots, most often seen as the preferred channel, and most efficient agent of guaranteeing the success of sustainable development. It is, therefore, not surprising that many NGOs are involved in care and welfare activities. In-fact, as triggers of change they assist the people to be part of social change, and foster a feeling of belongingness and sense of responsibility among the marginalized segments of the society. As catalyst for social transformation, and vehicles for empowerment, their demand for a people-centred development and democratization through protests and awareness programmes have the efficacy to propel government to be amenable to democratic etiquette. Recognizing the vital role of NGOs in development and democratization, the secretary general of the UN in 1985 averred that:

*Non-governmental organizations are a basic element in the representation of the modern world. And their participation in international organizations is in a way a guarantee of the latter's political legitimacy. On all continents non-governmental organizations are today continually increasing in number. And this development is inseparable from the aspiration to freedom and democracy which today animates international society. From the standpoint of global democratization, we need the participation of international public opinion and the mobilizing powers of non-governmental organizations (Uwhejewe-Togbolo, 2005).*

That NGOs have become a basic element of development initiative in the modern world is mostly because of their efficient service delivery, cost – effectiveness, innovations and beyond the bureaucratic constrains of the state. Lewis (2009) argued that NGOs embodied a philosophy that recognises the centrality of people in development policies, and that this along with some other factors gave them a comparative advantage over government. This is because of their proximity to their members or clients, their flexibility and high degree of peoples strong commitment, appropriateness of solutions leads to acceptance of decisions implemented (Africa Recovery, 1999). In 1987, the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNDO) noted that NGOs have a comparative advantage in six areas viz, local accountability, independent assessment of issues and problems, expertise and advice, reaching important constituencies, provision and dissemination of information and awareness raising. Article 71 of the UN charter recognised NGOs is an integral part of global governance. It stated that:

*the economic and social council may make suitable arrangement for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are conversant with matters within its competence. Such arrangements maybe made with internal organizations and, where appropriate with national organizations after*

*consultation with the member of the United Nations concerned.*

With the collapse of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republic (USSR) in the 1990s, the political relevance of supporting dictatorial regimes and war lords like Jonas Savimbi of the Union for the Total Liberation (UNITA) of Angola, Joseph Mobutu of Zaire and President Samuel Doe of Liberia as buffer against communist aggression was under scrutiny. The new era eclipsed the decade's long cold war, and ushered in the dawn of political liberalism. Makoba (2002) pointed out that for most western industrialized countries including the United States, the end of cold war has meant an end to using foreign aid to 'buy' allies in the third world to support it against former Soviet Union.

Hence, the strategic importance of development aid has diminished. Pursuant to Article 71 of the UN charter, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) granted consultative status to many NGOs. As allies of the UN, they became privy to most of the programmes, policies and even assist in the planning of some UN conferences such as the Stockholm Environment Conference in 1972 and the Rio Environment and Development Conference in 1992, Brazil. But when the pains of globalization became unbearable in the Third World, it was the NGOs that epitomised the feelings of the people by disrupting the 1999 Seattle Washington meeting of the WB and International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Xenophobia Conference in 2003 South Africa. The end of the cold war and the ascending of liberal democracy, made western donors insist that NGOs must conform to the new reality couched in Washington consensus if they must benefit from Official Development Aid (ODA). This is the basis of the New Policy Agenda (NPA) enunciated in 1989. The NPA sees NGOs as part of the market based solutions to sustainable development and private sector development.

*they are seen as vehicles for democratization as well as for providing goods and services in the third world countries where markets are inaccessible to the poor or where government lack the capacity or resources to reach them. In the eyes of the donor community, NGOs are both cost – effective in reaching the poor and are considered the preferred channel for service provision in deliberate substitution for the state (Makoba, 2002:2).*

In this regard, the State is confined to a minimalist role, only creating the enabling environment for the third sector to triumph. Bagei (2007) noted that the functions and services of NGOs could be expressing the complex needs of the society, motivating the individuals to act as citizens, promoting pluralism and diversity and creating an alternative to the centralized State. It is important to note that, despite the end of the cold, war, the focus on NGOs by international donors

was precipitated by the apparent failure of African States in their development agenda. The manifest graft, exclusivist governance, warped electoral system and a leadership in limbo have combined to weaken states in Africa, thereby making it a visible log on the path of development.

These glaring limitations have made African states the inhibitors of social, economic and political development (Makoba, 2002:3), and bugged down by a confusion of agendas (Ake, 1996). Today, NGOs have become a counter-weight to state power especially in the promotion and protection of human rights and community development. The efficacy and efficiency with which they carry out their duties have convinced many people to believe that they have the magic bullet to strategically tackle the problem overlooked by an incompetent and weak state. Therefore, the rise of NGOs is not an accident, but a response to economic and political thinking in developed capitalist world. It is not strange, therefore, that NGOs received fabulous amount of aid in the late 1980s and the late twentieth century than the state. Between 1980 and 1993, total spending of NGOs rose from \$2.8 billion to \$5.7 billion:

*In 1980 funding from international donor community allocated for less than 10% of NGO budgets (but) by the 1990s their share had risen to 35 per cent. NGOs in some African countries now provide or implement more than a fifth of total aid flows compared with less than one per cent fifteen years ago. Increasingly, a large number of NGOs in the third world are funded by small number donors such as World Bank, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The World Bank not only encourages member governments to work with NGOs on development projects, but also directly funds the NGO projects... From 1973 to 1988 NGOs were involved in about 15 World Bank projects a year. By 1990 that number had jumped to 89 or 40 per cent of all new projects approved. In 1997 approved World Bank projects in the third world countries involving NGOs were 84 per cent in South Asia, 61 per cent in African, and 60 per cent in Latin America and Caribbean. USAID is said to funnel 20 per cent of its funds through NGOs (Makoba, 2002:2).*

According to the WB, 12 per cent of foreign aid to developing countries was channelled through NGOs in 1994, and in 1996 the total amount was \$7 billion worldwide. External aid to African NGOs rose from \$1 billion in 1990 to \$3.5 billion in 1999. This is in contrast to developing aid to states. Between 1993 and 1997, total aid to Africa declined by nearly 13 per cent from \$21.5 billion to \$18.7 billion, and Sub-Sahara Africa from \$17.3 billion to \$15.1 billion (Africa Recovery, 1999). The above scenario is in conformity with the policy of

building a vibrant civil society with the capacity for private initiative. This is why Prudence Bushnell, former United States Ambassador to Kenya in his Declaration noted that the US government would channel most of her development aid to Africa estimated at \$711.3 million in 1999 through NGOs, becomes instructive (Africa Recovery, 1999). With huge amount of money at their disposal, and their array of professional personnel, NGOs as international whistle blowers are demonstrating their vitality at every historical epoch.

*the effectiveness of their efforts stunned the major multilateral institutions and governments worldwide and forced them to develop ways to engage and involve NGOs in their deliberation and decision making. Wikipedia, 2006*

### III. PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

It is indubitable that NGOs in Africa are in the mainstream of social services and development in the continent. Nevertheless, they are saddled with myriad problems that have the capacity to eclipse their development-oriented efforts. One of their greatest vulnerability is the inability to match their vision with actions, and rise beyond the social impropriety of the society. There is an endemic crises of transparency and accountability. In most cases, these can be equated to what obtains in the State. Since they are not accountable to any authority, except their distant donors, it becomes easy to manipulate financial records. Sometime fake invoices and receipts are printed to satisfy the donors who do not have the time to scrutinize the records and claims of NGOs. It is not strange that Executive Directors of most NGOs use the money siphoned from the organization to establish chains of capitalist ventures, engage in real estate business and display mindboggling munificence. During the military era in Nigeria, NGOs were proliferated; most of them visionless and consequently some were embroiled in internal crisis traceable to distribution of revenue from funders and outright embezzlement of money meant for projects. Furthermore, with an untrammelled access to funds and global reach, it is possible that they can scorn and undermine state sovereignty. This is why some African states like Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa decided to apply some measures to checkmate their excesses. It is interesting to note that some of the NGOs do not have formal and recognisable locations. Hence, they are pejoratively addressed as Briefcase, Illegitimate and Pocket NGOs.

*The Tanzania government condemns what it terms briefcase NGOs. It noted that it will not tolerate those set up to funnel public funds to private ends. President Daniel Arap Moi recently warned that any NGO in Kenya found dabbling into politics will be de-registered, and accused some NGO in the country of corruption and financial indiscipline.*

*President Nelson Mandela of South Africa criticized what he called illegitimate NGOs trying to subvert government (Africa Recovery, 1999).*

In Nigeria, it has become mandatory for NGOs to register with the Corporate Affairs office (CA). This is to monitor their voluntary social activities. A worrisome problem plaguing NGOs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is that they are vulnerable to infiltration by insurgents whose activities are inimical to national interest. The free flow of goods and services have made it possible for the movement of Small and Light Weapons (SALWs), and the emergence of terrorist groups like Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al shabaab in Somali and Mali. Arms supply to Africa by Western countries especially Sub-Sahara Africa stand the risk of being used for insurgent activities. In 2006, 22 of 48 countries in Africa were involved in conflicts whose impact was dehumanizing, to millions of Africans. These conflicts were sustained by insurgent groups buoyed up by their command of SALWs. According to the 2005 Human Security Report, 'by the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Sub-Sahara Africa had become the world's most violent region, experiencing more battle – death than all other regions combined'. In West Africa, small arms are estimated at 7 – 8million with a minimum of 77,000 in the hands of insurgent groups. Guinea Bissau is estimated to have 25,000 weapons in circulation. In Nigeria, one could acquire a pistol for between \$25-\$28 depending on the type, and the Centre for Defence Information stated that 120,000 African children under the age of 18 were used as child soldiers in conflict perpetrated by the availability and use of small arms. Since NGOs are not under the ambit of states, it becomes a herculean task to monitor and supervise their activities. It is within this out of state reach that they can be used to import large cache of arms for sinister motives. The point is that there is the possibility that NGOs can be used for illegal trafficking in weapons and transnationalization of organized crime. Aware that NGOs can serve as conduits for the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), the Security Council(SC) of the UN in 2014 passed the resolution 1540. The Resolution Committee headed by Peter Brown of the Slovak Republic, has the onerous responsibility to advance awareness and compliance of the Resolution. According to Turpen:

*the Resolution includes for states to adopt and enforce 'appropriate affective' laws which prohibit any non-state actor to manufacture, acquire, possess, develop, transport, transfer or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons their means of delivery, develop and maintain effective physical protection measures, border controls and law enforcements, to address illicit trafficking and national export and transshipment.*

*Wikipedia, 2015*

The Cooperative Non-Proliferation of programme at the Stimson Centre in 2006 launched the 100 project, also to sustain implementation of the UNSCR 1540. The United Kingdom based One World Trust has launched the Global Accountability Project geared towards checking the NGOs to conform to the tenets of accountability. The Centre for Global Counter Terrorism has joined to give strength to Resolutions 1540 and 1373 against global terrorism.

Apart from the above, the fact that most NGOs suffer from a strictly defined goals and objectives, creates a lacuna which makes it possible for them to dabble into areas where funds are readily available. To survive and keep afloat in the competitive market environment becomes a daily mantra. In this circumstance, practicing what they preach becomes a problem. This is compounded by lack of an internal mechanism for conflict resolution and career development. The Executive Director and other top members of the organization create a sectarian cabal such that every vital information of the group remains opaque to other members of the organization. In most cases, resource persons and project officers are underpaid, but they would be made to sign that their payment was in compliance with the donor's approved proposal. The victims do not have a choice, but to accept whatever was given them. If they protest or reject, next programme invitation may not be extended to them. This is in spite of the 10% institutional development always built in the proposal. In this scenario, one begins to query the non-profit motif of NGOs, since in most cases they are used as fronts to attract foreign currency. From our survey of NGO activities in Nigeria from the 1980s to the late 1990s, it was discovered that the political ferment and the currency of Niger Delta theme which centred on environmental degradation led to NGO explosion. Billions of dollars were pumped into the region to address specific environmental problems, and raise awareness about the human insecurity bothering on military administration. Regrettably, only few were able to meet their target, while others haphazardly produced a report just to cover their records or claim that they were disrupted or arrested by the military junta. With the return of civilian rule in May 29, 1999, the so called vibrancy and vitality of NGOs came to the nadir. It was against this backdrop that late Gani Fawehemi demurred total dependence of NGOs on foreign funds. He consistently pointed out the negative implications of this economic dependence both on the image of the country and the vision and mission of the organizations. Malena (1995) noted that:

*the most commonly weakness of the sector include, limited financial and management expertise, limited institutional capacity, low level of self – sustainability... and lack of understanding of the broader social or economic context.*

<http://www.wds.worldbank.org/-servlet> Accessed on June 20/06, /15

It is a common occurrence that NGO fraternity in African countries are echoing and mimicking the state of corruption happening within the leadership circles of their countries. In many NGOs, reports have indicated that those entrusted with funds for the institutions have misused them for personal benefit and in some instances corruptly access funding (Kang'e the and Manomano, 2014). Most NGOs suffer from chronic donor-dependence. This is a situation where NGOs always depend on foreign donors to finance their projects. We discovered that members of NGOs hardly contribute to the administration of their organizations. This reluctance is hinged on reliance from funding. In some cases, basic administrative materials cannot be provided when there is a dearth of external funds. The implication is that NGOs become susceptible to the vicissitudes and ideological bent of funders. After all, he who pays the piper must pick the tune. Lewis (2009) declared that NGOs maybe seen as progressive vehicles for change, but regarded as part of market – based solutions to policy problems. In Nigeria, it was discovered that NGOs who questioned the relevance of free market orthodoxy were blacklisted and starved of funds. Sometime in the 1990s, the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (CDHR) had a change of leadership in Benin City, Edo State, but those who lost the election told the external funders that the organization had been taken over by communists. This unverified statement starved the organization of needed funds to execute its projects for a long time. CDHR was one of the most vocal NGOs in Nigeria that fought against prolonged military dictatorship in Nigeria between 1985 and 1999. Only what is allowed is dished out to members of the public. The implication is that members and other volunteer staff pretend to work since their boss pretend to pay them. Gradually, an organization that was built on populist pedestal and pro-poor vision degenerated to a one-man business. Unfortunately, this hypocrisy has not come within the scrutiny of anti-graft agencies in Africa. Most NGOs are urban based and not regularly in touch with the peculiarities of the rural areas. They only visit during advocacy campaigns and take beautiful pictures, adverts and publicity to justify their expenditure. This disconnect has kept them aloof from the development trend and needs of the society.

Finally, NGOs in Africa are associated with the deepening of market ideology in the continent. Hence, they are often referred to as a new form of westernization of Africa. The launch of NGO watch website on June 26, 2003 shows that international NGOs are not free from the ideological influence of their government. According to Andrew Natsios, Head of USAID:

NGOs had to do a better job of linking their humanitarian services to US foreign policy and making it clear that they are an arm of the US government. If they didn't Natsios threatened to personally tear up their contracts and find new partners". (*The Globe and Mail*, June 20, 2003).

#### a) Prospects

Although NGOs have come under intense criticism because of their problems. As Rief puts it,

*Without a treasury, a legislature or an army at its disposal, civil society is less equipped to confront the challenges of globalization than nations are, and more likely to be wrecked by divisions based on region and self – interest of the single issue groups that form the nucleus of the civil society.* (*The Nation*, February 22, 1999)

Nevertheless, NGOs in African cannot be wished away in spite of their challenges. Apart from being part of the responses of the dialectical trend in the world, there is no gainsaying the fact that they have undoubtedly contributed to the continent's human security, served as the voice of the poverty – stricken and unreservedly condemned obnoxious practices in the continent of much significance is the vigorous and fearless campaign against the military rule in Nigeria in the 1990s. And the aggressive anti-apartheid struggles in South Africa. It was their dogged and consistent campaigns that attracted international condemnation and sanctions from the international community. The Civil Liberties Organization (CLO) CDHR, Campaign for Democracy (CD), Women in Nigeria (WIN), National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) and the Labour became prominent in installing a civil regime on May 29, 1999, and ensuring that Ken Saro-Wiwa's death on May 10, 1995 received global condemnation and sympathy. The well-coordinated campaigns of Bring Back Our Chibok Girls has created the awareness about the inhumanity perpetuated by Boko Haram. The Nigerian Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) of 2011 is the handiwork of the Coalition of Freedom of Information, including the Media Rights Agenda (MDA). In Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Environment Research Organization (ZERO) and the Empowerment for African Sustainable Development (EASD) have embarked on people-based projects to enhance the protection and conservation of the environment and improve the quality of life of the people. Therefore, the prospects of NGOs in Africa cannot be overestimated because of their rising record in development planning, research, awareness raising and employment generation. As many African States continue to experience some symptoms of State failure, NGOs have become a necessary channel to reach out to the grassroots. As whistle blowers, they have gradually become indispensable in our lives.

## IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

NGOs have come to stay because they have become the conscience of the globe. Their geometrical rise since WWII demonstrates their indispensability in the global village. As the third sector in the society, they are an important ally of the exploited and the channel through which the poor gets the attention of the international community. Indeed, state-centred monopoly in development policy and economic growth is now brought under a sharp focus. In Africa, NGOs have constituted themselves into an alternative channel drawing the attention of the state to the grassroots, especially on gender – related issues and human rights. All these were facilitated because of globalization. The revolutions in communication technology unprecedentedly offered humanity a new era of swiftness in social relations, communication, relations political governance, geographical reach and economic vision. Sadly, the benefit from this development is not evenly distributed. In fact, globalization has become a foundation on which NGOs are propelled to greater height. However, despite the essential duties to humanity, they have come under caustic criticisms. These range from the opaque nature of their operations, to lack of accountability, transparency and susceptible to be overwhelmed by the totalizing logic of neo-liberal orthodoxy. It is against this backdrop that the New York Times averred that "we should not be afraid to ask who holds groups working in the public interest accountable or asking 'Do-gooders' to prove they Do good" (New York Times, January 3, 2004). In other words, NGOs must practice what they preach because they appear to epitomize the best and highest ideals. Nevertheless, considering their historical role which portends a glowing prospect, to eclipse their existence is to deny African a rare opportunity to be in the mainstream of global trend. NGOs must be embraced as partners in the business of governance, protection and promotion of basic freedoms of African peoples. As in integral part of democratic development, they must be given a pride place because:

*from the abolition of slavery, the drafting of the UN Charter and its subsequent formation through to the campaign for the international criminal court and the ban on anti-personal mines, NGOs have made critical difference to our world. [http://www.global-issues.org/ print/article/25](http://www.global-issues.org/print/article/25) Accessed on June 22, 2015*

In conclusion, African NGOs have come a long way. Sometimes, they have become the only visible official institution the rural poor can reckon with. Considering their holistic importance to Africa, it becomes suicidal to shrink their responsibility and force them to wither away. This calls for their sustenance, partnership networking with the state and among

themselves based on best practices and minimum standards of accountability.

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