

## **LEADERSHIP QUESTION AND DEVELOPMENT CRISES: THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CHALLENGES IN AFRICA AND QUEST FOR CHANGE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

That Africa has been held hostage by a cabal-like leadership, juggled between the military and the civilians from late 1960s to date is an established fact. Post-independent African states have been retrogressive in the quest for sustainable growth, peace and development. Even though underdevelopment in Africa can also be attributed to the manner in which Africa was integrated into the world economy, this article posits that the more fundamental cause of African underdevelopment and conflicts lies in the vicious leadership in the continent from 1960s. It would focus on the comprador leadership style of African heads of states and government and assert that sustainable development and peace will remain an illusion if the continent refuses to look inwards and continue to be partners in Aids with the West and America, or can such scenario of equality emerge if the Centre-Periphery structures that have existed in the comity of nations persist.

**Keywords:** Underdevelopment, Destructive leadership, corruption, conflict, peace and sustainability.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Right from the 1960s, African states has been confronted with conflict and developmental issues. Indeed, nothing has seemed more elusive than peace, stability and progress in the continent, particularly in Sub-Saharan African states. While the pre-1960s history of African states speaks volume of Western intrusion and occupation, post independent African states has continuously witnessed conflict, poverty and other forms of social maladies that has bedeviled the continent. This is just one side of the problem. More fundamental however is the failure of African leadership. From East to West, Central and North Africa, the continent has been inundated with uncharismatic leaders; of little or no vision to move African states to greater heights and perhaps as equal participant in the comity of nations. Consequently, most post-1960s African leaders, both those that came to power through fraudulent election and via the barrel of the gun are all locked up in the culture of plunder and power intoxication. They set their ideas and values more on 'self' rather than in 'national' context; as such taken retrogressive steps that plunges the states further into socio-economic and political decay.

Succinctly put, African past certainly exerts a destructive influence. The colonial legacy crafted principally by United Kingdom and France is one that accommodates socio-political exploitation. Second is the creation of arbitrary borders which has sustained ethnic divisions and conflict. More than five decades after, African states has remained in a vicious cycle of conflicts, stunted development and finally characterized by all indices of destructive governance; this time not as a result of colonial invasion but by the character of its leaders – power politics, endemic corruption, clientilism and politics of patronage.

Making reference to few African countries, this paper essentially reflects on the comprador leadership styles of African political elites and how such leadership has impeded African quest for sustainable growth and development. African leaders in the course of more than fifty years of independence have plundered the continent more than build it. In the last decade, the continent is home to about two third of world conflict (Woodruff: 2005); regrettably avoidable conflict. Corruption has permeated the system while governance has been at best authoritarian. The paper further asserts that proactive leadership and development are two sides of a coin; so also is conflict and underdevelopment. Therefore for African states to move towards sustainable growth and development, there is need for the continent and its leadership to fashion new strategy that allows for accountability and transparency in governance, participatory government, policy implementation and grassroots development.

## **AFRICAN LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

*'Here lies our sovereign lords and kings, whose promise none relies on; he never said a foolish thing, nor ever did a wise one.*

John Wilmot (1647 – 1680), 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Rochester

At the dawn of the new millennium, only 15% of Africans live in an environment considered minimally adequate for sustainable growth and development; at least 45% live under poverty line (Wky: 2000). Speaking on the causes of Africa

underdevelopment in 1998, the then Secretary-General of United Nations (UN), Kofi Annan singled out the character of African states and politics as a key source of conflict and underdevelopment across the continent. According to him, *power gets personalized in the winner-takes-all kind of politics*. Going further, he said, *there are insufficient accountability of leaders, lack of transparency in regimes, inadequate checks and balances, non-adherence to the rule of law, absence of peaceful means to change or replace leadership, lack of respect for human right and excessive political control*. So far, the 21<sup>st</sup> century has not been totally different from the preceding years. More than five decades after independence, Africa is still crawling; held bondage by the claws of its leaders – juggled between the military and civilian leaders alike. This view underscores the mainstream assertion on the issue of development and conflict in Africa.

In terms of leadership, Africa has had more than a fair share of all that is bad; backward, kleptomaniac and outrightly destructive. While the West African sub-region has the worst record of recurrent military coups, East, North and Central Africa, in spite of less frequent coup d'état, seem to have the worst record of the worst dictators and sit-tight rulers that have bedeviled the continent (McGowan, P. and Johnson, T. H.: 1984). These areas have produced Idi Amin of Uganda, Emperor Jean Bedel Bokassa of Central African Republic, Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya, Hastings Kamuzu Banda of Malawi, Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia, Siad Barre of Somalia, Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe.

Though the entire continent of Africa has since independence been in a state of military siege, West Africa has had the worst record. In the course of the military adventurism into political affairs in sovereign states, Nigeria alone has had nine military coups and six military heads of state. Three heads of state, Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa, General J. T. U. Aguiyi-Ironsi and General Murtala Mohammed lost their lives to the coups. Ghana has had five military coups and four military heads of state. Sierra Leone has had five military coups and four military heads of state, and has undergone enormous turbulence in its political history that it is the intervention of the international community that has kept the country in one piece. Burkina Faso has had four military heads of state. In the course of its coups, Burkina Faso has recorded the deaths of two heads of state - President Yameogo and Thomas Sankara. Mauritania had had three military heads of state.

In the West Africa sub-region, the first military coup took place in Togo on 13 January, 1963, during which President Sylvanus Olympio was assassinated by a group of mutinous soldiers. Since then, the continent of Africa has truly remained a battleground of contending dooms (Fair: 1993). This opened a floodgate of military coups that came in rapid succession leaving pain, misery and shattered dreams behind their trails (Souaré: 2006). On 23 October, 1963, Benin Republic (Dahomey) had its own salvo of military coup against President Hubert Paga. By 1966, there came an explosion of military coups, particularly along the West Coast of Africa. There was a military coup in Burkina Faso on 3 January, 1966. On 15 January, 1966, Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu led the military coup, which toppled the government of Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa in Nigeria. In Ghana, Joseph Ankrah led the military coup that ousted the legendary Kwame Nkrumah on 24 February, 1966. On 19 November, 1968, Moussa Traore led a coup which ousted President Modibo Keita of Mali. On 15 April, 1974 Seyni Kouatche ousted President Hamani Droyi of Niger Republic. President Ould Daddah of Mauritania was ousted on 10 July, 1978 by Ould Salek.

In continuation of this dangerously attractive trend of military adventurism into politics in Africa, Obiang Nguema Mbasogo ousted one of the most dreaded despots in Africa, President Marcias Nguema of Equatorial Guinea on 3 August, 1979. On 14 November, 1980, the President of Guinea-Bissau, Luiz Cabral, was ousted by Joao Bernardo Vieira. On 12 April, 1980, Samuel Kanvón Doe killed President William Tolbert of Liberia and became the country's president; his, was one of the bloodiest coups Africa ever had (McGowan, et al). The sorry tale in Africa has been that civilian leaders who ascend to power and refuse to hand over at the expiration of their constitutionally allowed tenure (Robert, Mugabe of Zimbabwe), or of military leaders who bulldoze their way to power and craft constitutional documents by which they civilized themselves to become permanent rulers of their country (Yahya Jammeh of the Gambia). In other cases, those who cannot capture power by violent means render their country ungovernable by sustained guerilla warfare (an example is Jonas Savimbi of Angola) and some, who by means of brutal insurgency later capture power after wearing thin the collective conscience of the international community turn around to sponsor such moves in neighbouring countries.

In recent times, the unpatriotic and despotic leaders of African countries have formed a cabal of Like-minded tyrants who have successfully hoodwinked their largely ignorant, selfish and clannish populace. These leaders covertly agree on corrupt practices in their countries and create investment opportunities in countries run by their cronies, where they systemically stash away the larger portion of their stolen loot (Bond: 2006). When they are eventually kicked or harangued out of power by popular uprising executed by nationalist movements that they describe as rebels and insurgents, or in very few cases, by democratic processes, they quickly seek asylum in countries run by their cronies. The case of Mobutu Sese Seko, the dictator of Zaire who died in Morocco where he was on asylum, and the presently embattled former president of Liberia, Charles Taylor justifies this assertion.

The absence of credibility is what has transformed the leadership system in Africa into what it has become. This brings to mind the postulation of John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1917 - 1963), the 35<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America, who once observed that: 'the worst thing that can happen to a leader is to look back and find that there is nobody following him - nobody, except his own court jesters, clowns, sycophants and coterie of supporters who help him perpetuate himself in power for their inordinately selfish ends'.

Walter Rodney (1972) had argued vehemently that one of the causes of Africa's many problems regarding the internationalization of trade in the 15<sup>th</sup> century was that the Europeans used the superiority of their ships and cannons to gain control of all world's water ways, starting with the Western Mediterranean and the Atlantic coast of North Africa, and within a short time, Europe dominated all trade routes linking Africa and the rest of the World. Where Africa had already gained access, it lost it to Europe. Where it would have gained access, it never did because Europe prevented it from doing so. By her *control of the seas*, concluded Rodney, Europe took the first steps forward, transforming the several ports of Africa and Asia into economic satellite.

This and many other futile attempts to defend Africa's backwardness have continued to raise many questions, which have not been satisfactorily answered. Why was it that Europeans had superior ships and cannons at the expense of Africa, which is

believed to be the continent from which humanity originated? Why must the tiny Europe gain complete control of the world's waters when the huge Atlantic and Indian oceans engulf Africa on all sides? Where were Africans when Europe was developing superior ships and cannons? Going further than these initial questions, it is pertinent to ask if those superior ships and cannons dropped from heaven or did the Europeans use the same brain, which God distributed equally to all human beings to develop them? After Europe had developed all these and turned them against Africa, what did Africa do? Who or what prevented Africa from developing her own superior ships and cannons even up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century and use them to ward off European intrusion and destruction? If Africa contributed so much to the development of Europe, why is she unable to contribute same to her own development?

Among African socio-political novelists, James Ngugi Wa Thiong'O (1986) aptly captures Africans leaders' proclivity for self-glorification, inefficiency, vindictiveness and lack of foresight which eventually leads the entire society that such leaders control towards self- destruction. Like most Africans, the writer is optimistic about the African potentiality to transform Africa. He sees the current happenings in Africa as the birth pangs that herald the brighter future when Africa would be reborn. But that cannot be done without much sacrifice on the part of Africans themselves. Though Ngugi does not like the white colonialist for the way he has treated Africa, he however admits that while during the colonial period, the white man had everything at his disposal to exploit Africa; today African leaders must be made to bear the responsibility of the woes that bedevil the continent. This is why he made Hugo, the hero of his book, 'A Grain of Wheat', to confess his unworthiness as a leader just at the peak of his fame. Hugo can thus be seen to have been a traitor of the African cause all the days of his life as a ruler. Hugo today typifies the character of most African leaders in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; leaders who in spite of the means and available natural resources that can be harnessed for the development of the continent has opted to indulge in greed-dotted governance at the expense of the masses and societal progress. As such, African states namely Nigeria, Cote D'Ivoire and Kenya have moved towards retrogressive development than sustainability.

Frantz Fanon (1963) is another African writer, who was also a metaphysician and revolutionary firebrand that fought gallantly for the African cause. Though he openly condemned the colonialists for the harm they did to Africa and appropriately apportioned blame to them for this historical retrogression foisted on the continent, Fanon did not share the view that everything about Africa's past was glorious, nor did he envisage a reascent Africa that would soon become a paradise on earth. In one of his numerous expositions on the situation in Africa, Fanon posited thus: *I admit that all the proofs of a wonderful Songhai civilization will not change the fact that today the Songhais are underfed and illiterate, thrown between sky and water with empty heads and empty eyes.* Fanon did not develop his identity by just pouring verbal invectives on the white colonialists who, according to him and most supporters of the liberation of Africa, raped and emasculated Africa to the point that it has no alternative than to remain backward. He frowned at the black man's penchant for imbibing mainly the decadent and negative spirit of Europe without paying full attention to the dynamic, inventive and pioneering spirit of adventure which made Europe great and the domineering master of the world.

In his discourses on the phenomenon of development and underdevelopment in Africa, Fanon prophetically envisioned that immediately after the independence of African States, old rivalries would surface among African leaders and swallow the

spirit of unity, which brought immense pressure to bear upon colonialism. When this happened, African unity, the patriotic cliché which helped the people to act like one and to throw off the yoke of colonialism, would take off its mask and crumble into regionalism within the hollow shell of nationalism itself. Furthermore, instead of wallowing in a renaissance Africa of a wishful dream, Fanon foresaw a situation whereby the leaders and high officers of state in Africa would become general presidents of the companies of profiteers, spreading their long tentacles to embrace endless opportunities for inordinate privileges, corruption and moral decadence. Ultimately, in the so-called African states, the rule would be that the greatest wealth would be surrounded, by the greatest poverty (Koo: 1981); and in these societies, the army and the police would constitute the pillars of support that would uphold the corrupt regime. In such situation, the strength of the police force and the power of the army, combined with the level of brutality with which they would intimidate, repress and suppress the populace in the society, would be proportionate to the stagnation in which the rest of the nation would be sunk.

In the midst of this general societal decadence, it would become extremely difficult to find a single person, from the president, ministers, governors, commissioners, traditional rulers, special assistant, advisers, top-level bureaucrats and other cadres of civil servants down to the lowest ranking policeman, customs and military officer who does not join in the great procession of corruption. In order to conceal and maintain their ineptitude, ethnic chauvinism, corruption and flagrant misappropriation of public funds, the new African leaders would, among other things, capitalize on the peoples primordial sentiments, ethnic psychology, banal emotion and ignorance. Finally, they would add insult to injury by creating an atmosphere that would split the nation into warring ethnic or religious groups. In the course of the ensuing fracas, what are supposed to be national political parties would then be turned into dens of belligerent religious fanatics and/or organized ethnic dictatorship using the instrument of state to settle personal vendetta.

Once this is accomplished, the people's attention is diverted. Their enemies are no longer the colonialists, not even their corrupt new leaders but the members of the other ethnic group, professional organization or the other religious faith. Fanon saw such leaders as the *true traitors in Africa, for they sell their country to the most terrifying of all its enemies: stupidity*. This *trailblazing of the central authority... he continued, encourages regionalist ideas and separatism... and the nation falls to pieces, broken in bits*. Unfortunately however, a dangerous hydra-headed problem would have been unleashed on the society by the odious leaders whose antics will result in the long run in a situation in which the society will be riddled with most of the ethnic groups developing irredentist tendencies that start with their clamour for their own ambassadors and ministers at the central level and culminate in their eventual demand for their own nation-states to be carved out of the existing underdeveloped polity.

What Fanon espoused long ago portrays a sordid but true picture of what has been happening in almost every African state since independence. And certainly, one does not need a Frantz Fanon in a locus classicus country like Nigeria today to validate the truth of all this. Today, Nigeria records a staggering number of those who became rich at the expense of others and yet such known rascally elements still parade themselves in the society under the sobriquet of *opinion leaders, political chieftains and captains of industry* (my emphasis).

Nigeria is a giant filled with comprador elites and leaders, a giant of weak economic and political structures, of a poverty induced development and fiscal policies, a giant military characterized with brutality and abuse of inalienable rights of Nigerians, of unmitigated despotism, debt burden economy, deteriorating social services and infrastructures, huge unemployment, dwindling fortunes of agriculture, fractionalization of the ruling class, bad governance, large scale corruption and near collapsed security apparatus; a giant filled with helpless youths with unfulfilled dreams; very vulnerable and ready to challenge the state albeit violently (Isa: 2010).

The expression of the late Josiah Mwangi Kariuki (1921 – 1975), a Kenyan politician and opposition leader clearly exemplifies the condition of Nigeria and majority of African states, which has become a country of *ten millionaires and ten million beggars*. Today, Nigeria has fallen from the enviable heights of economic prosperity and socio-political advancement to the lowest depths of poverty, diseases, despair, and anarchic destructiveness because the nation's central authority has been tribalized and bastardized by years of political brinkmanship, military dictatorship, insincerity, inept corruption; moral decadence, general insecurity of lives and property as well as national ethos of indiscipline, disregard for constituted authority and flagrant abuse of fundamental human rights (Nwabueze: 1999).

The country has been auctioned off to stupidity as many great intellectuals play to the gallery by being palace jesters who invest their brains in defending illegal, aimless and oppressive regimes that continuously serve to pull the country deeper into the abyss of underdevelopment, poverty, disease, ignorance and doom. Others who do not wish to join the band wagon of palace jesters choose to go into a state of self-exile when it became apparent to them that they have been branded as subversive elements by the governments of the day and could meet with untimely deaths through ever-increasing and never-resolved incidents of brutal assassination officially termed as 'armed robbery' attacks by the police force whose credibility has long ceased to exist.

As many sections of the Nigerian state for example complain bitterly of extreme marginalization, which is fast edging them out of the scheme of things in the nation, one cannot deny the fact of the threat of regionalist ideas and separatism. And when Nigerians sing the discordant litany of the rapid proliferation of states and local government in the country, and when cognizance is given to the lethal communal clashes often precipitated by this proliferation, one can then understand that the nation has truly fallen to pieces and broken in bits.

## **A GLOOMY FUTURE?**

In critically assessing the impact of leadership in Africa, it is not out of place to paraphrase one of Nigeria's socio-political novelists, Chinua Achebe's exposition on the situation in Africa and use it as a reference point to qualify the Nigerian scenario. Achebe (1983) opined that *the trouble with Africa is simply and squarely the failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the African land or climate and collective psyche or anything else. Instead, African problem is the heartless unwillingness and unacceptable inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibilities and challenges of personal example, which are the hallmarks of true leadership*. Going further he said, *without peace, no meaningful social programme*

*can be undertaken; without justice, social order is constantly threatened. And the reason is simple. A normal sensible person will wait for his turn if he is sure that the shares will go around; if not, he might start a scramble.*

At the height of his political greatness, Azikiwe (1968) expressed his sadness over what he described as a situation whereby the entire continent of Africa was crawling under the back-breaking burden of colonial bondage, with the result that Africa's God-given wealth and rich cultural heritage were being sequestered to other lands and climes. Those were the old bad times when Africans were humiliated, exploited and dehumanized by Europeans in unprecedented spate of man's inhumanity to man.

Azikiwe had a vision that in the new age, the age of renascent Africa, that the continent will be free, strong and virile. It was an Africa that had suddenly emerged from the shackles of the combined forces that had crippled and labeled her a *Dark Continent* (Stanley: 1878). It was an Africa that was rapidly shaking off the yoke of colonial bondage with a resolute finality, raising her head among the comity of nations, and could now stand firmly on her two feet. It was an Africa that demanded redress for the wrongs done to her children with a dogmatic persistence. And as a result of the combined pressure of the justice of her cause and the urgency of her demand, Africa could no longer be ignored. In the end, Azikiwe saw that Africa, the plundered continent, was now spiritually balanced, socially regenerated, economically deterministic, mentally emancipated and politically resurgent.

It is rather unfortunate to posit here that this dream of Azikiwe has remained in the realm of Utopia, at it is yet to be realized. Going by the situation prevalent in contemporary Africa states, these expectations of the great Nigerian statesman may never to realized. The basic reasons for this being that, while it was the Europeans that saw to the ruthless task of the underdevelopment of Africa in the colonial era, in the contemporary neo- colonial situation, African leaders are now viciously and mindlessly exacerbating the further development of underdevelopment in the continent. Africa has indeed gone full circle in the course of historical development from communalism to feudalism, to slavery, to imperialism, to colonialism, to capitalism and the present stage neocolonialism. In this last stage, described by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah as the last stage of capitalist development, the situation progressively worsens for the downtrodden and heavily exploited masses of the populace.

Evidently, the 21<sup>st</sup> century African leaders have not learnt from history. The culture of plunder, power politics and chronic corruption still runs through the economic and political system. Over the years in Nigeria, bulk of the funds allocated to capital projects has been looted by political leaders. From the military heads of state to civilian presidents, Nigeria has recycled men who has held the country hostage doe decades living in its wake a ruined economy and failed political institutions. Till date, the country has barely transformed: the education sector is still in shambles. The health sector has virtually collapsed, employment rate has plummeted more and crime remains unabated. Fundamentally, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and many other African states namely Niger and Kenya among others tops from the bottom in the UN Human Development Index (HDI [UNDP:2011]) in the last decade with the exception of Botswana that has shown signs of sustainable growth and development. In all instances, it has taken the states leadership to move backward and forward respectively.

African leaders have thus become classical expressions of the personalities satirized by John Wilmot (1647 - 1680) 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Rochester, who poignantly affirms that they (the African leaders) perceive themselves as *sovereign lords and kings* (by their personification of the offices and failure to distinguish between their personalities and the office of state that they occupy). He goes further that *none relies on the words of these sovereign lords and king*, meaning that they are not truthful and lack credibility, and hence are not accountable to anyone, are morally bankrupt, inept, nepotistic, arrogant, inconsiderate and incurably corrupt.

Lastly, John Wilmot points out that these sovereign lords and *kings never said a foolish thing, nor ever do a wise one*. By this, he notes that these rulers lack wisdom and fortitude, and were also cowardly as they were afraid to take bold steps that may demand that they show exceptional courage by remaining resolute in their convictions.

## CONCLUSION

As Sørensen (1986) asserted, countries with rich resources may indeed have poor population – it is either the country is ripped off by its leaders, or foreign/domestic investors get all the profit living only destroyed environment and disrupted local economies behind or investors may stay away from such countries with unstable political system since creative capitalism requires stable or predictable environment. For African states, these three factors have combined to institutionalize underdevelopment in the continent. It has proven that the richness of natural resources of a country does not translate to development or determine the general welfare level of the population.

Development and peace does not exist in a vacuum. The enabling environment for both to triumph has to be created. Practically speaking, African underdevelopment lies in the comprador leadership style of African heads of state and government. So far, the conditions necessary for development to triumph is what the African leaders has squandered. One cannot totally rule away the assertion by Peace Activists that claims that, at international level, special interest often determine the case of events in the periphery. Linz and Stepan (1996) for example emphasized the importance of *international influences*, which includes foreign policies and the diffusion effect which oftentimes adversely impact upon stability of African countries. In other words, there is always external interests, that would always want to retain the status quo or where they support political change, their choice of preference is always contradictory to the wishes of the people. For instance while many countries took a tough stand on Arab Moi's regime in 1980s and early 1990s in Kenya, Britain did not take a strong stand against him, due to their interests in Kenya (Ony'ayo: 2008).

Though much is expected from African leadership as a solution to African perennial problems, Africans partners in the West need to come to terms with the fact that the marriage between Africa and Europe, whether by default or reinforced by an integrated global economy and human security concerns as Ong'ayo noted, demand a deeper understanding of African interest, which in essence require supporting Africa to lead itself. Looking inwards seems more appropriate. State structures in the continent should be strengthened in such a way that accommodates and encourages equal participation in government at all levels, in all regions and states in the continent regardless of one's ethnic background or religious affiliation. Certain

fundamental tasks underlie every government's mission without which sustainable poverty reducing development is impossible. These are the establishment of law and order; good democratic framework, maintaining a healthy policy environment, investing in social infrastructures; and protecting the environment. All these takes the right set of leaders and approaches to be institutionalized. Here, the Top-Down effect works very effectively. Africa needs leaders that think in the context of 'national projects'; not in personal, uncoordinated and overtly self-interest manner.

At present, African leaders, who are bent on hanging to power at all cost and for the purpose of primitive accumulation, have perfected the art of political expediency – election manipulation, frequent amendment of the constitution and privatized army – even when these acts threaten the stability of their respective states. However, the present appalling situation in Africa is not the continent's final phase. Norway till date ranked as one of the best developed/welfare state with very high Human Development Index entered the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a poor country. Senghaas (1985) opined that Norway would have remained undeveloped in spite of the availability of natural resources where it not for its' remarkable strong and functional institutions. Therefore, how resources are harnessed; and the readiness of leaders and policymakers to put to effective use revenues generated from the natural resources is very contributory to national development. Regrettably, both leadership and natural resources has turned out to be more of burden on African societies because of the conflict it has generated as a result of the scuffle and competition by political actors who in the first place seek political power by all means possible to legitimize their greed and control of natural resources. Seen from another perspective, creating a producer-friendly institutions and environment is a prerequisite for sustainable development; here again most African leaders has failed, hence the scarcity of foreign investment in the production sector.

Proactive leaders and strong institutions are exactly what Africa needs now for growth and sustainability; leaders that are guided in theory and practice with the true tenets of democracy namely transparency, accountability, inclusive government and national patriotism. Leaders that will bring about the desired change and transformation that African states need now, that will see political office as an opportunity to serve, not to plunder available resources. So far, the continent cannot boast of such competent leaders but instead has recycled old corrupt political elite and in some cases sit-tight rulers. From Nigeria to Niger, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Equatorial Guinea, the story is the same: corrupt and incompetent leadership. The present crops of leaders are dragging the continent further into a pit of conflict, poverty and insecurity; living African economy at the mercy of the West, America and the Bretton Woods Aids. Many states in Africa are preoccupied with one form of conflict or the other as a result of excessive power politics of our political actors at the detriment of the body politics that yearns for development. The result of all these power intoxication by African leaders is purely retrogressive, dragging the continent further into a pit of conflict, poverty and insecurity. Africa leaders need to work hard not only to improve basic social infrastructures for development and empowerment, create an environment that support businesses particularly the productive sector which invariable is an incentive for influx of foreign investment. This cannot happen if the continent continued to be partners in Aids with the West and America, rather than partners in progress. First step to African states sustainable growth and development cannot be found in the West or America but in Africa – visionary leaders and strong institutions.

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