

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

My Dear Colleagues and Friends:

It is once again my honor to bring you the good news about the *JSDA* published articles for the winter of 2015. The global economic trends have been quite devastating for countries around the world. We have been watching the European countries struggle with many economic, political and socio-cultural problems. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have been sounding the alarm about global economic downturn. The European Union (EU) countries are looking for new paradigms for tackling the serious declining economies of member countries.



African countries that rely heavily on the export of commodities and minerals have been experiencing a great deal of hardship. Even Nigeria, the African country with the largest economy, has been having a great deal of economic problem due to the declining oil price and its inability to diversify its economic base. The lack of diversification of the economic bases of African countries has been the greatest "Achilles heel" that hampers economic development. Poorly planned and implemented development attempts have been devastating to many economic ventures such that realistic growth has not been achieved in many cases. Corruption and embezzlements have been rampant at all levels of government across the continent of Africa. President Buhari, in Nigeria, has devoted his energies to fighting corruption and recovering some of the public funds stolen by government officials. Just this month, Switzerland has decided to return over 234 million dollars stolen from Nigeria by former President Abacha. Sustainable development is impossible under a very corrupt government. In the last six months, Nigeria's news have been inundated with information about how much public funds were stolen by those who had the responsibility of managing the affairs of government. It is generally agreed that people seek government positions in order to line their pockets and those of their families and friends with public monies. This type of mentality must cease if African countries are to make progress in growing their economies and alleviating the problem of poverty.

Many African countries are handicapped by the problem of dependency, in that, they were linked historically with Western nations as colonies. Adjustment programs instituted by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have always led to the devaluation of the African countries. This global realities must be handled properly by African countries. The Nigerian Naira is currently being debated about a possibility for devaluation.

The economic problems of African countries are exacerbated by the declining quality of the environment. The poor planning of the urban and rural environments has led to the poor quality of life of Africans. There is a direct correlation between the declining environmental quality and people's health. Land use planning must be done properly. Landscape architecture, architecture and urban planning must be done in a coordinated fashion in order to strike a balance between the built and natural environments. The papers in this issue tackle economic and environmental concerns.

We ask our readership to continue to provide us with useful comments. Thanks for your support.

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