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LEADERSHIP, CAPACITY BUILDING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICA

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Abstract: There is now real optimism of the prospects of Africa reclaiming the 21st century given its recent sterling growth performance and the number of successful reforms undertaken. There have been considerable and noticeable efforts to invest in innovation, infrastructure, integration, institutions and a revamp of incentive systems to develop new values that allow for transparency, accountability and greater social inclusion. New forms of leaderships have emerged at various social levels and institutions to drive a development agenda based on peer-learning and knowledge-sharing. Africa, in so doing, is unearthing deep skills and the reaping low-hanging fruits needed to speed its ambitions to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and sustainable development. This broad development agenda has required Africa to adopt strategic and practical solutions to the development challenges it faces. This volume interrogates a number of issues that are crucial for the attainment of sustainable development in Africa: a responsive governance framework, the demographic transition and youth bulge, conflict and related dynamics – such as disarmament and demobilisation, capacity building in post-conflict and fragile states, the role of donors in enhancing (or otherwise) local development efforts, the need to understand the ‘softer-side’ of capacity development; and above all the role of savvy and strategic leadership. Understanding these issues and beyond, by organizations like the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), will determine whether Africa will achieve its development ambitions in the very near future.

Keywords: ACBF; Africa; Capacity Development; Fragile States; Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); Politics; Sustainable Development; Transformative Leadership, Universities.

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INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to present this special issue of World Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development (WJEMSD) devoted to Africa's capacity development and socio-economic transformation, covering a wide range of dimensions, focus and country-specific cases.

Africa seems to have come full circle to a position of real promise in the four decades since most countries in the continent attained independence. At independence, there were great expectations of rapid economic and social progress. These expectations were broadly realised in the 1960s, when production grew and real per capita incomes increased appreciably. After this initial period of growth, however, most economies stagnated in the 1970s and went into decline in the 1980s. Although a number of countries undertook far-reaching structural adjustment and reform programs, the region's aggregate economic performance remained disappointingly weak, with falling real incomes per capita and increasing poverty throughout the continent.

Now, in the new millennium,

renewed signs of economic progress, positive social transformation, and a broader commitment to reform augur well for the future. These reform efforts need to be sustained, strengthened and directed towards the attainment of the millennium development goals and targets. The attainment of these targets is premised on the existence of strong capacity at all levels of Africa's society. However it is also important to acknowledge the complexity of understanding capacity development in fragile environments in Africa. This complexity has largely been because of existing knowledge gaps on what exactly causes fragility of states, the economy and society. Capacity development and reconstruction in fragile and post-conflict situations is specially challenging for policy makers in that it represents a situation that needs to be carefully managed.

The theme of this special issue has been carefully chosen "*Leadership, Capacity Building and Sustainable Development in Contemporary Africa*". In its conceptualization it aims to critically analyse and investigate the various challenges facing Africa's sustainable development agenda. More particularly, it seeks to provide an overview of the important role

of the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) in fostering capacity development and sustainable development across Africa. The paper constituting this special issue, speak to efforts across the African continent in response to the urgent needs of societies emerging from conflict and works to improve the efforts of key actors in rehabilitation and reconstruction operations by identifying and filling gaps within the current capacities of local and international actors.

Undertaking state (re)building, generally, entails triangulating different capacity development strategies and supporting processes at all levels. As a result, investing in restoring state capacity is often a venture in long-term stability and peace, both pre-requisites to sustainable development and poverty reduction. While the degree of fragility and its root causes dictate the adoption of various strategies to restore capability for meeting basic needs and services, it is imperative to make explicit provision for capacity development in the interventions deployed in post-conflict environments from the onset. Promoting good governance and democracy, particularly as part of a post-conflict reconstruction effort, is

a complex and challenging task – and one which has no quick fixes or easy solutions. A right policy mix is of the essence!

This special issue of the journal is ambitious in its intent with contributions representing the outcome of many comprehensive research programmes undertaken in Africa (including ACBF) and the rest of the world as part of the 20th Anniversary Summit of ACBF held in Kigali, Rwanda³ February 2011- under the theme ‘**The Future of Africa is Now! The Critical Role of Capacity Development.**’ The plurality of issues interrogated reminds the reader of the complexity of the subject matter under investigation and the multifariousness of the concept of sustainable development itself.

ACBF 20TH ANNIVERSARY SUMMIT

The 20th Anniversary Summit represented a landmark in the strategic vision of the Foundation, as it sought to further enhance and entrench ACBF’s position as the premier capacity development institution on the Continent. The Summit rejuvenated and reinvigorated commitment to capacity development on the African

continent at the highest levels of policymaking; shared lessons and best practices in capacity building; and, raised further awareness about the ACBF. It shed light on the implications of the emerging world order for capacity development in Africa, with special emphasis on new finance regulation issues, new international competition, global financial crisis, exit strategies and future technologies. In so doing, the Summit identified and interrogated potential roles that can be played by capacity development institutions such as ACBF.

Objectives

The Summit of ACBF, amongst others, sought to renew stakeholders' individual and collective commitment to capacity development on the Continent. The strategic objectives of the Summit were to:

1. Mobilize the attention of the African leadership and development partners on the importance of adopting innovative solutions to the challenges of capacity facing the Continent;
2. Foster peer-learning and experience-sharing on capacity development on the Continent;
3. Interrogate the short, medium and long term capacity development strategies and supporting processes; and
4. Examine how capacity development efforts and interventions can be better devised to meet unique needs.

The Summit brought together a wide range of the Foundation's stakeholders, country teams led by Heads of States/Government, senior cabinet ministers, senior representatives of multilateral, bilateral, continental and regional organizations, members of the diplomatic corp, ACBF Executive Board Members, ACBF Board of Governors and many others, who in our opinion, represent the family of ACBF. Also in attendance were both the local and international media.

The structure of the Summit's myriad knowledge and learning events were designed to foster maximum peer-learning and experience sharing. The format allowed for panellists to present their views on specific topical issues followed by a question and answer session. This provided opportunities for delegates to effectively engage in dialogue and share their individual experiences

and perspectives on the given issue or topic. The learning events were specifically designed for development practitioners, policy makers, academics and decision makers to participate in a forum that allowed them to share experiences, develop innovative approaches, and create partnerships to enhance capacity development. One of the most important outcomes of these events was the adoption of the Kigali Resolution on Capacity Development.

Africa Capacity Indicators Report (ACIR)

The 20th Anniversary Summit also witnessed the official launching of the ACBF's flagship publication-Africa Capacity Indicators Report (ACIR) with the theme: - '*Capacity Development in Fragile States*', leading former South Africa President Thabo Mbeki to comment that the flagship is as timely source knowledge product, and a testimony of ACBF's contribution to capacity development. ACIR provides an authoritative characterization of the state and evolution of African capacity across space and time. ACIR also provides an invaluable tool for country benchmarking and monitoring-and-evaluation of capacity development interventions.

ACIR is therefore an important guideline and milestone for all Government officials, policy makers, development practitioners, researchers, scholars and all who have a keen interest in Africa's development agenda. The inaugural edition of ACIR provides important baseline and insights on capacity development landscape in Africa with respect to the specific capacity clusters that have guided the underlying inquiry. The Report, examines not only these countries' visible capacity development needs, but also the underlying historical, political, economic, cultural, and societal elements that contributed to their current fragility and complicate efforts to address the problem. Its premise is that it's not enough for development organizations to assess fragile, post-conflict African countries' capacity development needs in terms of those traditional, quantifiable performance benchmarks.

CONTENTS OF THE SPECIAL ISSUE

The first paper in this special issue by Severine M. Rugumamu investigates the critical role of politics in capacity development by interrogating the theoretical and empirical foundations for capacity development in the Africa's fragile environment with par-

ticular reference to parliaments in fragile environments. Rugumamu argues that the liberal peace development model that generally informs post-conflict reconstruction and capacity development has a limited conception of fragility by narrowly focusing on the national dimensions of the problem, promoting donor-driven solutions, emphasizing minimal participation of beneficiary actors in the identification and prioritization of capacity development needs, and by subcontracting the design and management of projects and programs. The resulting capacity development impact has therefore generally been disappointing. While these efforts usually achieved their presumed number targets but tended to ignore addressing the larger issues of political economy within which capacity development take place. It is therefore of no surprise that the recent re-conceptualization of parliamentary capacity development as a development of nationally owned, coordinated, harmonized, and aligned development activities seems to be gaining growing attention in Africa. Rugumamu's paper provides some insights of best practices from the fast changing environments of fragility of the post-genocide Rwanda.

Following Rugumamu's insights from Parliaments in Africa

regarding capacity development polices and strategies, the next paper by George Kararach, Kobena T. Hanson and Frannie A. Léautier explores the challenges facing countries in Africa in relation to their demographic transition, investigating the type of policies that would be most effective to address the challenge. The papers argues that Africa is going through a youth bulge with more people under 25 than above 50 in all of its countries and creating opportunities for the burgeoning number of youth is a challenge that cannot be solved only at the country level. It is therefore critical to encourage regional integration policies that expand the opportunity space by increasing the size of economies and markets. Also needed are regional policies that can support the development and enhancement of innovation systems including investment in science and technology education to speed up the creation of a cadre of young people that can lead the transformation of stages of production from dependencies on primary products and extraction. Moreover there is a need for policies and programs that can modernize agriculture and support effective creation of value chains that enhance the value added from agriculture that can

excite youth back to the rural areas. The paper gives special attention to subsets of policies at the regional level due to their opportunity expanding nature. Finally the paper also provides lessons learned from other potential observed results in other regions of the world.

The next paper by Alemayehu Geda examines other challenging tasks for policy makers with regard to capacity building in fragile and post-conflict situations. In doing so the paper argues that understanding of the dynamic link between capacity building and conflict requires understanding the nature and determinants of conflicts, their duration, intensity and the modalities for their cessation and post-conflict reconstruction. By critically analyzing the relevant literature, from systemic or theoretical perspective, Geda outlines three core areas of capacity building that are needed in post-conflict and fragile states: capacity building to address immediate needs of post-conflict states, address the core economic and political causes of conflict, as well as address issues of finance and financial sector reconstruction. Each of these aspects is discussed in detail in Geda study. Moreover the study underscores

the need to view and understand capacity building exercise as part and parcel of a broad developmental problem which requires broader developmental solutions.

Peter Arthur's paper argues that discussions on post-conflict reconstruction and development have generally focused only on disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants. What is missing however is a discussion on capacity development and capacity building initiatives to help in reconstruction in the period after DDR. Arthur paper therefore attempts to examine the importance of capacity development in post-conflict African environment. According to the paper the success of reconstruction efforts in a post-conflict environment depends largely on the ability to build and develop capacity and skills that are pertinent to helping reconstruct and promote the development goals of the countries. It is argued that post-conflict societies should have a coherent and co-ordinate approach to rebuilding, reconstructing and developing the capacity of the state in order to achieve the state's legitimacy and effectiveness. Such capacity development measures should involve the development

of physical infrastructure; the building of the state's institutional structures; the promotion of good political and economic governance; skills and education training for individuals; and measures to improve and deliver security and social services.

Following on Arthur's piece and similar to the earlier conceptual and theoretical discussion in Rugumamu's paper about the donor-driven solutions for post-conflict reconstruction and capacity development, using case studies and interdisciplinary insights, Abbi M. Kedir research investigated Authority-Legitimacy-Capacity (ALC), Country Development Framework (CDF) and other models and frameworks of donor coordination. The paper addresses a number of asymmetries (e.g. technical, cultural and, financial) between donors and recipients and argues that in extreme circumstances, fragile states are loaded with aid beyond their absorptive capacity and in an ever shrinking pot of funds from donors mainly due to the current global economic downturn, it is extremely important to coordinate and harmonise aid delivery. Fragile states cannot afford to waste any money trapped under rubble of multi-donor aid bureaucracy. The

paper recommends that donors to harmonise their respective Africa strategies reports and give priority to infrastructure instead of focusing exclusively on the social agenda as in the past. Fragile states should fight the local culture of corruption, avoid fungibility, protect vulnerable groups in society, focus on reintegration as well as demobilizing ex-combatants with employment provisions. Donors should not give mixed signals to recipients and need to be flexible in their operational procedures. These discussions are critical as both donors and African aid recipients prepare for the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, South Korea in November of this year. African countries need to have a strong and common voice to allow for greater donor coordination, ownership of development interventions, focus on capacity development and real partnerships at local levels. Finally, Kedir discusses the implications of key emerging issues that threaten or facilitate sustainable reconstruction, development and poverty reduction in post-conflict environments.

In the sixth paper in the special issue, using a logistic model, Kobena Hanson, George

Kararach, Frannie A. Léautier and Robert Nantchouang test for the existence of ‘animal spirits’ in the capacity development interventions spearheaded by the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)-funded institutions. Animal spirits in modern economics has a specific meaning; it refers to the restless and inconsistent element in the economy as well as the peculiar relationship people have with ambiguity and uncertainty, which tends to lead to paralysis or incredible confidence and energy in decision-making and risk taking. Willingness to undertake extreme effort or self-sacrifice to get things done is another expression of animal spirits, which can again go in the opposite direction with people shirking responsibilities, and practicing generalized selfishness or individualism. Such behaviours can have visible effects on the performance of public agencies or civil service agencies, in the behavior of leaders in the public or private sector, or in the economic performance of a country. The analysis and findings of the paper highlight, amongst others, the importance of non-economic factors in shaping the capacity development sphere. Understanding this nature of animal spirits is critical to designing

and implementing effective programs for capacity development in Africa. It is particularly important to focus on issues of leadership and leadership development, including the capacity for leaders to instill confidence and piece together stories that motivate people into a common vision of the future or to achieve common objectives. More attention should be given to the ‘softer’ aspects of capacity development.

Following on the same important issues about leadership and leadership development in Africa, the final paper by Kobena Hanson and Frannie Léautier focuses on the crucial role of African universities on shaping the quality of leadership on the Continent, and consequently the resulting policy decisions and governance. Enhancing institutional leadership is if Africa is to compete in today’s rapidly globalizing world and knowledge society. Hanson and Léautier analyse the extant literature and experiences of selected ACBF supported programs to interrogate approaches to enhancing institutional leadership in African universities. The paper argues that African universities must proactively take charge of fostering institutional leadership so as to translate leadership

competence into strategic assets. African universities need to transcend their current 'modern' system of education to a post-modern perspective, which recognizes context, collaboration and knowledge as valued skills. The paper concludes that while institutional, political, demographic as well as resource challenges exist, African universities today, are uniquely positioned as a result of uptake of knowledge management, strengthened private-public partnerships and advances in ICT to enhance institutional leadership.

CONCLUSION

We hope that the outcome of this special issue will help to outline the major issues that frame the current state of the different aspects of *Leadership, Capacity Building and Sustainable Development in Contemporary Africa* and contribute to a better understanding of the important role that ACBF can play in building capacity and achieving sustainable development in Africa. Of particular concern is the problem leadership in Africa, which needs a greater and immediate response from all African states.

Finally, we would like to

congratulate the authors for their valuable contributions and it is hoped that the ensemble of papers presented in this special issue will help to stimulate debate amongst scholars, researchers and policymakers that will ultimately lead to a more integrated and multidisciplinary approach to policy design. We are especially grateful to all reviewers for graciously offering their invaluable comments, suggestions and criticisms which greatly enhanced the quality of this issue of *WJEMSD*.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Allam Ahmed completed his Ph.D. in Technology and Knowledge Transfer for Development from Edinburgh Napier University, UK. Allam is currently based at SPRU, University of Sussex, UK (*world leader in research, consultancy and teaching in the field of Science Technology and Innovation Policy*) and leading the Government of Abu Dhabi first of its kind in the Middle East Knowledge Management Framework (Musharaka). Allam has published widely on how knowledge and technology transfer (TT) contribute to sustainable development (SD) and competitiveness in the developing countries (DCs). He produced more than 120 publications and recipient

of several international Awards and Medals for contribution to International scientific Research. Allam is the Founding President of World Association for Sustainable Development; Founding Editor-in-Chief of six international journals; Expert Advisor to the EC on International Scientific Cooperation; International Coordinator UNESCO Chair on TT and has worked extensively for the WB, UN and EU.

Dr. Kobena Hanson is the Head, Knowledge and Learning Department, ACBF. Prior to joining ACBF in 2006, Kobena was the Knowledge Management Coordinator, Ghana SHARP Project; a USAID-funded, Futures

Group-implemented KM Country initiative for Ghana. Dr. Hanson also taught at West Virginia University, Morgantown, USA. He holds a B.A. in Geography & Resources Development from the University of Ghana (1989); an M.A. in Population Studies from the United Nations Regional Institute for Population Studies, University of Ghana (1992); a PGD in Population & Development (Distinction) from the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague (1994); and a Ph.D. in Geography from Queens University, Canada (2001). Dr. Hanson has published a number of critical articles on livelihood strategies and social networking in top-tier development policy and geography journals.