AFRICA LEADERSHIP
THE SUCCEEDING GENERATION
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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1998
INTRODUCTION

There has never been time in modern African history when the issue of leaders and quality of leadership have been so important. The need for an African leadership that has the competence to comprehend the threats, challenges and opportunities of globalisation, the imperatives of democratisation and good governance, the vision of a preferred future and the capacity and commitment to realise it, is clearly crucial. In light of the endemic problems facing Africa the first generation of African leaders have been subjected to severe criticism. It cannot however be maintained that they totally failed Africa and Africans. To do so would be both unscientific and unjust. Some of them responded to the problems confronting them in the best manner they could. There were successes and failures.

Time changes, opportunities come and go and circumstances are never repeated; and if they do appear to be repeated they may not respond to similar policies. As Shakespeare put it: “Time and Tide Waits for no Man --or Person”. Each situation is a combination of continuity and change: the old and tested, and the unfamiliar yet to be tested. However broadly based on consensus or firmly grounded on sound scientific data, public policy formulation is not an exact science. It is subject to political and ideological pressures and vulnerable to the exigencies of globalisation. Moreover, its success or failure depends on the human factor: the availability and quality of leaders and leadership.

The first generation of African leaders has to a very large extent failed to respond effectively and positively to the challenges of change. For various reasons the first generation of African leaders lacked the capacity to fully comprehend the long-term implications of the domestic and global changes, the problems facing their people and the competence to provide sustainable solutions. More importantly, they failed to create an environment that would enable the continuous evolution of succeeding generations of young African leaders with competence, integrity, vision and commitment.

Part One of this paper begins with a brief revisit to the first generation of African leaders, with the objective of ascertaining some of the major factors that were responsible for the failure in coming to grips with the changing world, or in preparing the succeeding generation of leaders in that task. The future belongs to the youth. The first generation of African leaders failed to create the conditions conducive to the evolution of a young generation of leaders with the capacity, integrity, vision and commitment to take Africa into the 21st Century. Identification of the factors responsible for the failures is clearly important, otherwise the failures might be repeated.

We live in a world that has been and is continuously changing, impacting on Africa and Africans in multiple ways and at various levels. Globalisation poses threats, fears and challenges but it also creates opportunities and possibilities for those with the capacity, vision and commitment. Part Two looks at the changing world and its challenges and opportunities for the young generation of African leaders. What is needed is the creation of the appropriate leadership that is capable of nurturing and promoting the African Renaissance and steering Africa through the transition to the knowledge and information based societies of the 21st Century. Part Three discusses the profile of the leadership appropriate for the 21st Century.
There is now a new generation of young Africans, well educated, many of whom are competent and committed with great potentials for leadership. What is required is the creation of an environment that will facilitate the identification of those with the talents for leadership, nurture and promote the qualities of honesty, integrity, loyalty, respect for knowledge and justified pride in strivings, achievements and successes. Part Four focuses on the enabling environment, institutions and the mechanisms for the creation of the succeeding generations of African leaders. Part Five concludes with the challenges and opportunities confronting the succeeding generations of African leaders.

PART ONE
AFRICA LEADERSHIP REVISITED

Africa’s seemingly endemic problems have been attributed to three major factors: inappropriate policies; bad governance; incompetent, corrupt and ineffective leaders. In the last analysis they could all be reduced to leaders and leadership. Given the challenges confronting Africa as it transits towards the 21st Century, it is imperative that Africa creates leaders who are knowledgeable about the ever-changing world, competent, with integrity, vision and commitment.

The first generation of African leaders was the product of colonial governance. We can best understand the paucity of African leaders with the requisite capability, integrity, vision, commitment and will power to lead Africa towards its Renaissance by briefly revisiting the manner by which leaders were recruited during the colonial period. We need to understand the environment and conditions in which the first generation of African leaders emerged. These may or may not have changed with the assumption of Independence. It is important to have a balanced perspective. Not all first generation leaders failed. A few of them did very well. And there are reasons for both failures and successes.

These leaders were creatures of the times. They were both victims and beneficiaries of the exigencies of the Cold War and decolonization. There was so much expected of them; and they expected so much for themselves. They were subjected to the conventional wisdom and the buzzwords of the nascent development community of that period. The same thing is taking place today. New buzzwords are flying around and globally driven market forces and privatisation are all impacting on Africa and African leaders have to respond to them. Circumstances of the time need to be thoroughly understood, otherwise history may be repeated.

…”the 1960s can be – and must be – the crucial ‘decade of development’ – the period when many less developed nations make the transition into self-sustained economic growth – the period in which an enlarged community of free, suitable and self-reliant nations can reduce world tensions and insecurity.

President J.F Kennedy, The President’s Message to the
The Congress, 1961

There were two types of leaders: those created and supported by the colonial authorities; and
those who emerged amongst the people to lead the struggle against colonial rule and for independence. The latter came to be generally known as “African nationalists” and the former as “colonial collaborators or stooges”. Democracy played no part in the recruitment or creation of either type of leaders. The colonial government identified the collaborators and imposed them on the people. With a few exceptions African nationalists manipulated their way and imposed themselves on the people.

Although both types of leaders claimed to be working in the interest of their people yet each had different interpretations of those interests and the means of achieving and promoting them. In most cases these differences were so profound and seemingly insoluble that hostility and war-like atmosphere was created between the two types of leaders. Each regarded the other as the enemy or obstacles to the real interests and welfare of the people. They called each other names: snakes and hyenas. There was very little co-operation between them other than the one that was occasionally forced upon them by the colonial government; and this was often done in support of the colonial interests. Each leader was more inclined to trust the colonial authorities than any one in the other group.

Although diverse in their original creation the major objectives of these leaders were basically the same: to capture power and assume leadership of their countries at the end of the colonial rule. For many of them personal greed and the impulse to maintain themselves in power, and not the fulfilment of the electoral promises, influenced their vision of the future. This did not necessarily entail neglect of the peoples’ welfare or the real development of the countries. It simply re-arranged the priorities: the advancement of the leaders and not that of the country or the people. For their own personal advancement leaders often cynically used the concepts “development” of the country and “welfare” of the people during elections and as means of attracting foreign aid.

To achieve their objectives the leaders focused their energies and mobilised resources: youth wingers, women organisations, trade unions, peasant farmers, all types of the then inchoate professional associations; in a word, they captured the nascent civil society, manipulated, twisted and emasculated it. As they confidently believed that they knew what was in the best interest of the people they did not waste any time consulting them. Meetings, conferences or rallies were taken merely as occasions for the leaders to tell people what they, the leaders, wanted them to know and do, and not as opportunities for the leaders to listen to the people, articulating their needs, fears and aspirations. This applied to both types of leaders. There was no democracy for the people; and this was justified on grounds of economic development and nation building.

Public policy was not based on objective information or systematically acquired knowledge, but on leaders’ inspirations and personal whims, the ideology of the single party, or on foreign advice and exhortations. Most leaders lacked the required knowledge and experience to govern a modern nation-state. And the few who had the capabilities were unwilling to use them for various reasons. Many of them ignored their own intellectuals and scholars. Some leaders feared the indigenous intellectuals and scholars and took measures to alienate, isolate and even harass them. The Universities were regarded primarily as national status symbols and not as centres of intellectual power, knowledge and excellence. In many African countries the Universities were regarded as the centres of opposition and the deliberate indoctrination of the innocent youthful students.
Opositional and opportunistic rather than constructive and visionary were the main characteristics of the politics of the period. The leaders intrigued and manipulated, threatened and coerced in order to maintain power or to dislodge those in power. And the qualities of leadership required, particularly in the single party, which then dominated the political scene, were authoritarian, dictatorial and cynical.

Given the importance of ethnicity in African society leadership tended to be monopolised by the dominant tribe or a cluster of tribes. A shrewd ‘nationalist leader’ was the one who could assess, balance and manipulates the contesting demands from the various tribal or regional leaders without necessarily taking into account the overall interests of the country or the welfare of all the people. In general the main preoccupation of the leadership were to pacify, bribe, coerce, cheat, threaten and manipulate other leaders to ensure that there was ‘peace’ and ‘stability’ so that ‘nation-building’ and ‘economic development’ could take place.

This strategy worked well within the anti-colonial context, and was carried over to the post-independence period in many African countries.

Apart from perpetuating the ‘oppositional’ and ‘opportunistic’ politics, the strategy created an environment that tended to prevent the evolution of a succeeding generation of young, well-educated, modernising, committed and visionary leaders. It also discouraged some of the incumbent leaders who were motivated by public service and wished to promote the welfare of the people. On the whole the youth were used as means to ends defined by the leaders. No specific measures were taken to prepare them as the succeeding future leaders. Although there are today many young people with the potentials for leadership, the socio-political and economic environments in many African countries are such that it is virtually impossible for youthful and competent leaders with visions different from those of the incumbents to emerge. Changes are needed to release and galvanise the energies, talents and enthusiasm of the youth.

However such changes are unlikely to take place without the co-operation, or at least connivance, of the first generation of leaders. These leaders are not immovable objects nor are they necessarily captives of the past. Some of them have acknowledged mistakes made and are prepared to discuss and share the experience of their times. They are valuable resources that could and should be harnessed. They are part of the ‘relay-race’ to be discussed later. But they are suspicious of the young and some even hostile towards them. This is probably due to ignorance, fear and insecurity. The young generation of Africans is better-educated, well-informed, professionals in their chosen fields, aggressive and highly critical of past leadership.

Major Concerns of the First Generation of Leaders
Following the departure of the colonial rulers African nationalists took possession of the colonial state with all its coercive apparatus. They became the rulers and masters of their peoples. At independence African leaders were faced with three options. The first was continuity with some changes. This meant "business-as-usual" but with the appropriate changes of attitudes vis-a-vis the former colonial rulers. A new relationship of "partners in development" was assumed but as yet undefined. The second option represented a break with the past, and for several African countries it entailed the adoption of a socialist model of development of some kind. The third option was in effect the first window of opportunity provided by Independence, to enable Africans to reflect on the kinds of changes and directions they would wish to adopt for their new
...Africa now has an opportunity to build an ethic appropriate to the development of a good and stable society or allow one to develop which contains the seeds of future strife and confusion...It is my belief that we in Africa must seize the opportunity we now have, so that a new attempt can be made to synthesise the conflicting needs of man as an individual and as a member of society

...the opportunity [created by independence] is before us provided we have the courage to seize it. For the choice is not between change and no change; the choice for Africa is between changing or being changed - changing our lives under our own direction or being changed by the impact of forces outside our control. In Africa there is no stability in this twentieth century; stability can only be achieved through balance during rapid change.

Africa must change her institutions to make feasible her new aspirations; her people must change their attitudes and practices to accord with the objectives. And these changes must be positive, they must be initiated and shaped by Africa and not simply be a reaction to events which affect Africa.

Julius Nyerere, Freedom and Unity/Uhuru Na Umoja, 1966

And while yet we are making out claim for self-government I want to emphasise...that self-government is not an end in itself. It is a means to an end, to the building of the good life to the benefits of all, regardless of tribe, creed, colour or station in life. Our aim is to make this country a worthy place for all its citizens, a country that will be a shining light throughout the whole continent of Africa. Giving inspiration far beyond its frontiers. And this we can do by dedicating ourselves to unselfish service to the humanity. We must learn from the mistakes of others so that we may, in so far as we can, avoid a repetition of those tragedies which have overtaken other human societies.

Kwame Nkrumah, The Motion of Destiny, 1953

The first generation of African leaders was faced with seven major challenges. One, the management of the inherited colonial state machinery, the economy, and the maintenance of law, order and stability. In many African countries there were not enough Africans with the required technical and professional knowledge and experience to run a modern nation-state. In some countries, the so-called multi-racial societies where Europeans or Asians minorities were dominant in the economic and commercial sectors of the country, the problems were quite serious, and urgent at that. Popular perceptions of independence implied that Africans must be seen to be in control, occupying key positions in the economy and society. Yet non-Africans -- citizens or non-citizens, occupied most of the important and sensitive positions in the private and public sectors.

Two, to create a new political order of peace and stability within which peoples from diverse racial, ethnic, regional and religious backgrounds could work in co-operation and harmony to produce the goods and services needed by the new nation. Three, to develop the human resources
and institutional capacities to meet the challenges of the rising expectations of the peoples and the demands of the post-colonial governance. 

Four, to formulate an ideology that could galvanize the enthusiasm, imagination, talents, skills and energies of the ethnically, culturally and religious diverse peoples to build the new nation, promote its interests and defend its sovereignty. The nostalgia of the pre-colonial communal African past, coupled with apparent successes of the Soviet Union and Communist China in rebuilding their societies and feeding their peoples convinced a number of African leaders of the relevance of socialism to their own post-colonial situations. But what kind of socialism and how to implement it were questions that confused and confounded African leadership and ruined many African economies. 

Five, to obtain aid, technical assistance and to attract foreign investments. 

Six, was the promotion of African unity. The quest for unity precipitated controversial debates and led to the adoption of different strategies based on divergent ideological convictions and international political and economic support. Although unity was obtained in the form of the Organization of African Unity Charter in 1963, this was achieved at the expense of confirming the colonial boundaries, and thus reinforcing the artificiality of African states and the fractious nature of their societies. The boundary disputes were to engulf leaders in various political and armed conflicts, which consumed their energies, time, talents and resources. And Seven, to promote the decolonization of the rest of Africa. This was the logical imperative of Pan-Africanism. If the rest of Africa was to be freed then the anti-colonial movements and their liberation armies must be supported. 

Born and bred under colonial rule the first generation of African leaders was acutely conscious of racial domination, oppression and discrimination, and their impacts on Africans’ self-esteem and self-confidence. Once Independence was achieved these leaders determined to ensure that the succeeding generations of Africans should not suffer the same fate as they did.

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**Years of Arab slave raiding, and later years of European domination, had caused our people to have grave doubts about their own abilities. This was no accident; any dominating group seeks to destroy the confidence of those they dominate because this helps them to maintain their position, and the oppressors in Tanganyika [as it was then] were no exception. Indeed, it can be argued that the biggest crime of oppression and foreign domination...is the psychological effect it has on the people who experience it. A vital task for any liberation movement must therefore be to restore the people’s self-confidence, and it was quite clear to us that a multi-racial TANU(Tanganyika African National Union) could never do that. There would be to many amongst our people who would believe that any successes of the movement were due to the superiority and assistance of our non-African members. Only by creating and developing our own exclusive organization could we begin to develop confidence in our own abilities or, in the Tanganyika of that time., believe it was really ‘our organization’. For these reasons TANU became a racial organization; yet it was one which, from the beginning, campaigning for racial equality.**

*Julius Nyerere, Freedom and Unity/Uhuru Na Umoja, 1966*

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The resistance of the Portuguese colonial authorities to orderly decolonization, and the reluctance of the major Western governments to provide material support for African independence
movements, converted decolonization from an essentially legitimate political process into a military confrontation in which the big powers were ultimately involved. The Soviet Union and its allies supported any liberation movement that appeared to be anti-West or critical of Communist China. Communist China supported any movement that appeared to them to be either ant-West or critical of the Soviet Union. And the West in general supported any movement that appeared, or could be persuaded, to be anti-communist. Africa then became a new arena of proxy wars and ideological competition between the big powers. This further complicated African domestic and external politics and economics. It also involved African leaders in unnecessary global ideological struggles that consumed a considerable amount of their time and talents.

The pursuit of the various concerns demanded from the as yet untested African leaders a combination of talents, abilities and skills ranging from statecraft and consensus building to diplomatic shrewdness, political manipulation, coercion and repression. The attraction and in some cases the presumed relevance of the one-party democracy in Africa must be viewed within the context of the problems and tasks confronting the first generation of African leaders.

...Their successes...
Overwhelmed by the endemic problems of African development critics have tended to ignore or belittle the initial real achievements of the first generation of African leaders. The odds against these leaders are ignored. There were successes as well as failures. Clearly one of the greatest successes of the first generation of African leaders is the fact that they were able to hold their countries and economies together for the duration they did. In the midst of post-independence criticism of African leadership there is a tendency to forget that virtually all the leaders were totally inexperienced in statecraft or economic management. They had never had managerial apprenticeship of any sort, political leadership experience or decent exposure to the workings of democracy. The colonial rulers held tight on the reins and rules of their colonies.

The first generation of African leaders were most successful in the provision and extension of social services, particularly education and health facilities. They built schools, colleges and universities where none existed before. They increased in multiple folds the entrance to the schools and colleges. They built hospitals, dispensaries, and health stations of various sizes, and trained doctors, nurses and all kinds of hospital support. They raised the levels of adult literacy, and gave pride and self-respect to those that for the first time in their lives could read the newspapers for themselves, or write replies to the letters they received from their families. They brought piped water to isolated towns, and improved the quality of drinking water to the villagers. They extended electric power to a much wider circle than was the case during the colonial period. They built impressive transport and communication network. They improved the postal services. In their enthusiasms to serve their peoples, post-colonial governments moved into manufacturing and the supply of basic consumer goods, like soft drinks, beer, textile, detergents, cereals; and so on.

The first decade of independence was in many ways exhilarating; partly because independence itself was a novelty and partly because there were many things Africans could now have or do which in the colonial period they could not. Nation-building and economic development were the major preoccupations of the first generation of African political leaders. They were obsessed with the fears of ethnic and racial conflicts and the loss of the mobilization momentum achieved during the anti-colonial struggles. In the process and due to various other factors many problems
were created. These were incrementally accumulated and became visible towards the end of the second decade of independence. By then the novelty of independence had worn off, the crudities and hardships of the real world, the abuse of power and mismanagement clearly manifested themselves.

It is noteworthy to recall that some of these leaders were the best products of their times, some of whom were educated and trained in the West. They thus carried with them into power their share of the then prevailing Western conventional wisdom in matters related to economics and politics. Some of them espoused Fabian socialism and others Keynesianism, and a scattered few were intrigued, though not quite seduced, by Marxism-Leninism. But all of them believed in the primacy of import-substitution industrialization, a strong central political authority and the state as the engine of economic growth. In all these the contemporary leading development economists and modernization theorists—including the World Bank—supported them.

...And their failures
The first generation of African leaders assumed all the attributes of the colonial state. In spite of the elections and promises of more freedom for the people that preceded independence, the state continued to be authoritarian unresponsive, unaccountable, lacking in transparency and in most cases repressive. In response to the rising expectations triggered by the promises of independence, the post-colonial government was forced to extend social services to areas where they did not exist, and expanded them in places where only a few existed. In the process the state became the main provider of social and other public services, thus involving government in a much wider circle of economic and social activities; and inevitably their control. Gradually the state became not only very powerful but also the supreme source of 'rent', and those who controlled it—the leaders—also manipulated its flow in the form of bribery and other illegal means of acquiring incomes.

During the colonial period there was very little training in the transition to power or socialization in the democratic process and practice in good governance. The most vocal African nationalists were called agitators; and those who resorted to mass political education and mobilization were considered rebellious and dangerous to peace, order and good government of the colony. Hence, to the first generation of African political leaders, political power was won by a combination of actual physical struggles, mass political mobilization, mutual threats and propaganda between the colonizer and the colonized. It was not the product of civilized discussions and debates between equals committed to common objectives. It was the consequence of prolonged struggles and arguments between those who had the power and those who wanted to take it away from them.

There were a notable few exceptions where for various reasons the transition to independence was characterized by discussions and mutual understandings between the colonial powers and the African nationalists. On the whole however independence was the result of bitter and prolonged power struggles. And those were the perceptions of politics and democracy the first generation of African leaders carried with them when they assumed independence. This also explains why they tenaciously held on to power. There was thus very little time or patience for multiparty politics, democracy or good governance to take roots.

The first generation of African leaders failed in five broadly related areas. One was their inability to respond positively to the domestic and global changes that had taken place since independence.
Two, they failed to creatively utilize the inherited colonial state as an engine of economic growth. The colonial state per se was not an obstacle to growth. It was clearly not a democratic state. In its specific African manifestations the colonial state was oppressive and repressive to the majority of the people, while at the same time beneficial and responsive to the interests and needs of the few most of whom were foreigners. However, creatively and purposefully utilized the inherited colonial state could be a very efficient intermediate engine of economic growth. In the hands of dictators and tyrants it could be an effective instrument of regimentation, coercion, repression and exploitation. And this is what took place in many African countries.

Leaving aside for the moment questions of meaning and interpretations of colonialism, it is untrue to say that colonial status is incompatible with material progress, and that its removal is a necessary condition of economic development. Some of the richest countries were colonies in their earlier history, notably the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand; and these countries were already prosperous while they were still colonies.

Nor has the colonial status precluded the material advance, from extremely primitive conditions, of the African and Asian territories which became colonies in the nineteenth century. Many of these territories made rapid economic progress between the second half of the nineteenth, when they became colonies, and the middle of the twentieth century, when most of them became independent.


Three, they failed to create modern economic institutions relevant to the African conditions, adaptable to changing global patterns of production, technology and markets, which could facilitate and promote sustainable human development. Four, they failed to create democratic political systems relevant to African traditions with structures and patterns of governance that are effective, pragmatic, accountable and transparent. Five, they failed to create the enabling environment for the evolution of succeeding generations of young African leaders with the capabilities, integrity, visions and commitment to respond to the challenges and opportunities of the 21st Century.

**PART TWO**

**THE EVER CHANGING WORLD**

We live in a world of continuous changes. Change is a fact of life. But changes create fears and insecurity as well as challenges and possibilities. What has distinguished the successful countries from those that failed is the existence of leaders with the capability to anticipate changes and to respond to them positively. Historically, the successful countries have been those whose leaders had the capabilities to identify or anticipate important changes in the global market-place of goods, services and ideas and responding to them timely and effectively.

Problems confronting Africa are very complex and deep-rooted in history. It is the contention of this paper that Africa is poor and underdeveloped primarily because it has failed to respond effectively and timely to changes, challenges and opportunities in the domestic and global
market-places. Africa has failed because it has lacked the requisite capabilities, the political will, or both, to effectively respond to the changes, challenges and opportunities that have confronted the continent in the course of its modern history. The world has been in continuous shifts of major changes in science and technology, scales and types of production, organizational principles, invention of new goods and services, and in various forms of social development. Those who were actively involved or participated in those changes acquired the capabilities to respond positively and timely to the challenges and opportunities generated by those changes, as well as to predict and prepare for future changes, challenges and opportunities. For various reasons Africa failed to participate in these changes and exchanges in the global market places of goods and services, of ideas and new ways of doing things.

There is no way we Africans could, by some freakish leap, transcend our realities and land into someone else's ready-made future. In themselves, such slogans as “Here comes the 21st century computer revolution; Africa should be there!” are fine. But are they not mainly useful as advertisements for new electronic hard ware? Computers can be of immense helping in the creation of communications facilities serving a system of education for all. But unless Africans can learn to handle necessary maintenance, and train programmers to come up with software tailored to the specific needs, in particular the socio-cultural standards of Africa, our entry into the computer age will only mean more of the same old dependence on external reference points. It is just not possible to cash a cheque drawn on someone else’s cultural bank account. Such cheques are sure to bounce. Only an authentic education will enable us to draw on the capital of knowledge and values stored up by all humanity, thus equipping ourselves to put even future time to good use. A couple of hundred Africans here, a few thousand there, may become computer wizards, but unless all sectors of national life, in particular those using state-of-the-art technology, are resolutely focused on the recognized needs of those majority groups most disadvantaged in the distribution of past, present and future knowledge, their expertise will have no impact whatever on the process of education for all.”

Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Educate or Perish: Africa’s impass and prospects, p.84

The cumulative consequences of the inability or unwillingness to respond to changes have incrementally tended to isolate Africa and Africans from the major global events. Africa became progressively isolated, ceased to be an active participant in the global market place and instead became victim or casualties of the global changes and challenges; in effect, a recipient of other peoples' ideas and ways of doing things, and of their goods and services. Africans have to be involved and participate as free agents in the global market place. The survival of Africans as a distinct people with their own cultures and civilization values to enjoy, nourish, promote and defend, will depend on their capabilities to respond to the global changes, challenges, possibilities and opportunities as the 21st Century is unfolding.

The persistent negative images of Africa, as a continent in deep troubles and of Africans portrayed as a people unable to solve their problems is unhealthy and damaging. If these images are not challenged they may not only continue to mislead the rest of the world, more seriously
they may cause young Africans to doubt their own capabilities and self-esteem, and thus undermine their role as levers of change for an alternative better future for Africa. It is imperative that Africans begin to build now the requisite capabilities to respond to these changes otherwise the marginalization of Africa from major world activities, like trade and politics, science and technology, would accelerate.

At a time when not only the developed countries, but also the developing countries, are racing towards the 21st Century, Africa has actually been sliding back into the Fourth World of its own. Not only has Africa been losing its share of global markets and losing out in the scientific and technological race, but it has been declining economically and socially, and has also become increasingly dependent on external food aid and food imports; increasingly poor and increasingly unable to satisfy the basic needs of its inhabitants. Moreover, many countries in Africa have actually retrogressed into a pre-underdeveloped state of ethnic anarchism and conflict and of struggle for sheer survival. How can a continent with such attributes not be marginalized?...How can we ensure that Africa in the 21st Century will not continue to be forever preoccupied with survival and would become a viable partner in global affairs?


No body is going to bail out Africa. African problems must be solved by Africans; and this of necessarily requires rethinking, followed by imaginative and bold answers. To acquire the capabilities to respond to the challenges and opportunities in the market places of the 21st Century, Africa must mobilize its resources by facilitating the release of the energies, talents, skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship of its peoples. Only competent, honest, visionary and committed leaders are likely to create the enabling environment within which such liberalizing process could take place.

**PART THREE**

**PROFILE OF 21st CENTURY AFRICA LEADERSHIP**

Globalization is not an option to be debated and avoided if so preferred. Each historical period dictates its own demands on society, and the type of leadership required to promote the interests and welfare of the people and defend their peace and security. People over the world are demanding new leaders and new style of leadership that would guide them promote and protect their interests in this bewildering world of globalisation. Africans cannot opt out of globalisation nor continue to depend on the help of other people. The “culture of entitlement” is now no longer acceptable and the donors have rejected that of “dependency”.

The phenomenon of globalization is irreversible and cannot be avoided. It is not simply a fashionable word but a mode of behaviour which is going to be imposed, and if Africa does not prepare itself for the event, it will once again find itself marginalised...Our little African, Caribbean or Pacific countries will have to think hard about how we can play a part in this world economy. There is no longer any room for idiosyncrasies or sentiment! In economic terms, we have moved on from the time when people took account of certain considerations that were not
purely economic to one in which the clear-cut rules of liberal economics reign. We must prepare ourselves. Instead of whingeing and asking our partners in Europe to grant us total support, we have to organize ourselves to meet this objective.

Tertius Zongo, Burkinabe Minister of Finance
And Economic Development, *the Courier*,
No.164, July-August, Brussels, 1997, p.67

Although globalisation is a universal phenomenon its impact, the threats and fears it poses, and the opportunities and possibilities if offers are bound to differ from one society to another. As an extension of technology worldwide it is only those who are equipped to deal with it are likely to be its beneficiary; and those who are not are bound to be its victim. Africans belong to the latter category and South East Asians in the former. Hence although globalization might enable Africans to participate in the global economy, however because of Africa’s very low technological absorptive capabilities, they may do so in roles whose determination Africans have no control. Africans may have the goods and services offered by the global markets, but they may not have the requisite technological capabilities to produce the goods and services with quality and price acceptable to the advanced economies.

Ajit Singh, “Global economic changes, skills and international Competitiveness”, *International Labour Review*, Vol.133, No.2
1994, p.168

As the world is rapidly transiting to the 21st Century and as globalisation is inescapable a new breed of leaders is needed in Africa. with leadership based on intellect, knowledge and experience and not on personal inspirations or aspirations; one who is well educated, respects knowledge and those who have it, and knows how or where to obtain it; has a sound understanding of the globalisation phenomenon and its impacts on Africa, and is prepared to respond to the challenges and opportunities created by the globalisation process; one who understands the critical importance of good governance, accountability and transparency in both democratic and development processes; one with honesty, integrity, and a vision of better future for all, and with the capability and commitment to realise the vision; one who recognises the importance of the generational linkages and is committed to develop and sustain the synergy between the generations.

More importantly, Africa needs leaders who believe in democracy not simply as an electoral mechanism of gaining power, but as a means by which legitimate power is achieved and
responsibly and accountably exercised on behalf of the people. Elections are held in all African countries and those elected claim to represent the will of the people, and yet in their daily exercise of power African leaders tend to be oblivious of the needs, fears and aspirations of the people who elected them. Africa needs leaders who respects and are respected, trust and are trusted, by those who elected the, and are thus secure and confident in their leadership.

PART FOUR
CREATING THE ENABLING

As each historical period demands a particular kind of leaders and leadership, it would be prudent to be mindful of the circumstances that produced the first generation of African leaders and the manner in which they pursued their objectives. History does not repeat itself. It is people who try to repeat it. The first generation leaders had their successes and failures. They made their mistakes some of which were costly in both human and material terms. Nonetheless, their collective actions and experience constitute an important body of knowledge that needs to be properly understood, analyzed and lessons extracted from them. The four decades of independence, of experimentation with their successes and failures, have produced useful knowledge and insights on the processes of development and democratization in Africa. Appropriately treated such knowledge and experience could be useful to the succeeding generation of leaders. What is needed is the creation of an environment that will facilitate the transmission of knowledge and experience between the generations.

Leadership: Succession…
There are important distinctions between leadership succession and the recruitment of leaders. Succession is a process that involves the assumption or transference of leadership from one person, or group, to another. How successful, peaceful or effective such an assumption or transference might be will depend on the relevant laws, historical experiences, norms and cultural traditions of the peoples concerned; as well as the existential circumstances. Where the laws and traditions are observed the succession is likely to be peaceful and effective. Where such observations are ignored problems are likely to occur. In general leadership succession in post-Independence Africa has tended to be a product of crude political manipulations, rebellions or military coups rather than the peaceful application of the constitutional process. This is due partly to the fact that constitutionalism is not well founded in Africa; and partly due to the primacy of politics.

The constitution provides the basic foundations for the legitimacy of the government to rule and the peoples’ rights to demand accountability and transparency from the government. The constitutions of virtually all African countries make provisions for the establishment and maintenance of accountability and transparency systems. It is the manner in which these systems have performed that has been problematic. This deficiency in constitutionalism is one of the major contributory factors to bad governance in Africa.

Our constitutions are as good as any other constitutions in the world. Our laws are equally sound. The judiciary is supposed to be independent and the Police fair and accountable. In most of our countries the laws and the regulations provide for equal access to land and resources. Yet, we know in some cases, groups and individuals prevail over the general interest. We do have
Politics is a struggle for power. In a democracy the struggle takes place within a competitive framework regulated by rules, principles, norms and conventions. In Africa politics is personalized and transformed into a means of acquiring personal wealth and power; Thus those in power and position of leadership do all they can to keep others out. They ignore the democratic principle, norms and conventions. In Africa politics ceases to be a properly organized competitive struggle for power; it becomes simply a struggle between those who have the power and want to keep it and those who wish to take it away from them and use it for their own personal benefits. Hence the struggle between leaders resolve itself into one for the price of power and not as a competition for better policies and solutions to the peoples’ problems.

...And Recruitment
Leadership recruitment entails a process of identification, nurturing, education and training. This presupposes the existence of an enabling environment and institutions with mechanisms guided by principles, rules and codes of conduct by which potential leaders could be identified, attracted, nurtured and trained. Such an enabling environment attracts independent individuals who are talented, educated and well informed, with vision or ideas and are ambitious to promote them for the benefit of the country. These people need not be professional politicians attached to any particular party. They could be ordinary citizens who are sufficiently motivated to play an active role in public affairs.

The existence of such an enabling environment is very useful in that it facilitates the release of the talents, skills, enthusiasm, experience and enterprise from the multitude of the citizens. It thus plays a critical role in the expansion and enrichment of the pool of resources from which leaders could be recruited. It enhances the empowerment of the people to choose their leaders. It widens the options for various types of leadership for the talented and ambitious individual. It restricts the monopolistic powers of the political parties to impose their own leaders on the people.

Mature democracies have such environments and institutions for the recruitment of leaders. They are however products of deliberate actions and have taken a long time to evolve to the present state of performance. Africa does not as yet have such environments or institutions. Certainly the tradition of open competition for leadership where several contenders takes part is yet to be firmly grounded in Africa.

Leadership:...An Obstacle Race?...
Admittedly Africa demands new leaders and style of leadership that is competent, honest, visionary and committed, that can steer Africa from the vicious circles of endemic problems. Indeed, a leadership that is in tune with the changing world, competent and committed to respond to the challenges and opportunities of globalisation. Clearly, that leadership is likely to emerge from the generation of young Africans. There is now a generation of young Africans who are
well educated and understands how to get things done in the modern globalising world. The major challenges are: one, how to synthesize the ideas, experience and wisdom of the past generation of leaders with the expertise and global perspectives of the young aspiring leaders; and two, how to create and sustain the synergetic impulses of the two generations of leaders.

Obviously the future belongs to the young generation of Africans. Yet policies made today are bound to affect their future: either as beneficiaries or victims. They must therefore somehow be involved in the policy formulation process, and incrementally assume the responsibility of formulating the appropriate policies to respond to the challenges of globalization and the promotion of the African Renaissance. But the future is part of the present and the present is the continuation of the past. The future entails uncertain changes that pose threats and challenges as well as opportunities and possibilities. It is however difficult to anticipate the future and all the fears and threats it poses to some people, and challenges, opportunities and possibilities it presents to others, without a sound grasp of the present. Equally it is impossible to have an objective understanding of the present and all its problems without some knowledge of the past and the circumstances which produced the present problems.

An objective comprehension of past events, the successes and failures and their underlying reasons, are impossible without a good grasp of the present. There has therefore to be a dynamic, selective and positive process of continuity with change. A future without the past is meaningless and precarious. A future that is unaware of the mistakes, misunderstandings, lost opportunities and temptations of the past is bound to be a precarious one. And such a future would be meaningless if devoid of the ethical and social values, traditions and glories of the past.

…”It is right and proper that we should know about our past. For just as the future moves from the present so the present has emerged from the past. Nor need we be ashamed of our past. There was much in it of glory. What our ancestors achieved in the context of their contemporary society gives us confidence that we can create, out of that past, a glorious future, not in terms of war and military pomp, but in terms of social progress and of peace…Our battles shall be against the old ideas that keep men trammelled in their own greed; against the crass stupidities that breed hatred, fear and inhumanity. The heroes of our future will be those who can lead our people out of the stifling fog of disintegration through serfdom, into the valley of light where purpose, endeavour and determination will create that brotherhood which Christ proclaimed two thousand years ago, and about which so much is said, but little done.


Hence although it is true that the future belongs to the youth—the succeeding generation—that future cannot however be entirely of the youth’s own making. The future contains selective elements of the present and the past. The present is an inheritance of the past, handed over by the first generation or simply assumed by the succeeding generation. Like all inheritance the present is a product of hard work, pain, successes and failures, experience and rejoicing. It should be appropriately preserved, and creatively and productively utilised. More importantly it should not be indiscriminately destroyed. The youth must understand that today’s leaders are tomorrow’s seniors and veterans. And the record of their leadership will be the inheritance to the generation
that would succeed them; and so on.

…Or A Relay Race!
The past is a laboratory of social, economic and political experiments conducted by the first generation of African leaders. It is also a library, and a museum, that contain and preserve the thoughts, fears, inspiration and aspirations, as well as the artefacts, bits and pieces and the practical consequences of the actions of that generation of leaders. It is unscientific and indeed unwise to assume that all the first generation of leaders failed. It is arguable that even the few who could be considered as successes made tremendous mistakes, some of which in retrospect are difficult to explain let alone defend.

Nonetheless, amongst the first generation of African leaders there are those who have owned and explained their actions, admitted the mistakes made and are prepared to share the accumulated knowledge and insights that only age and experience can offer. These leaders are valuable durable assets that need to be utilised before they cease to be functional. The knowledge and experience they have accumulated over the last four decades of tremendous domestic and global changes are invaluable to the succeeding generation of leaders.

Unfortunately there are first generation African leaders who are suspicious of the young aspiring leaders, and some even hostile towards them. There are young African leaders who are acutely critical, and in some instances contemptuous, of the first generation of leaders.

This hostility and suspicion between the generations must not be allowed to continue; for while they last Africa is bound to be the greatest loser. Each needs the other. The young need the experience, wisdom and sagacity of the senior to enable them better understand human nature, state-craft and the real world of economics and politics. And the seniors need the expertise, energy, enthusiasm, vision and the commitment of the young to complement their own missions.

Hence the leadership succession should be a relay rather than an obstacle race between the incumbent and succeeding generations of leaders. The incumbent generation of leaders should consider leadership as a responsibility and trust to be exercised on behalf of the people, to promote their welfare and provide peace, security and stability. And as an intricate part of the trust and responsibility each succeeding generation of leaders should create and promote an enabling environment for subsequent succeeding generations of leaders.

What Needs to Be Done
One, strengthening the key institutions supportive of democracy and good governance: parliament; political parties; civil society; NGOs; press and media; and the think-tanks. Two, promoting the major principles supportive of the key institutions: freedom, human rights, democracy; good governance; open society; pluralism; multi-party politics; accountability and transparency; and constitutionalism

Accountability and transparency are integral parts of democracy and good governance. Accountability and transparency cannot prevail without democracy. There cannot be good governance without accountability and transparency. Yet democracy itself cannot exist without accountability and transparency. Nor good governance prevail without democracy. There is thus an interdependent and mutually supportive relationship between accountability, transparency,
democracy and good governance. What promotes and sustains this relationship are the principles of constitutionalism. These include the rule of law, separation of powers and human rights.

The **constitution** is a major legal and political document. It is a cluster of fundamental constitutional principles encompassing basic freedoms and human rights, as well as a corpus of legal, social and political processes. It is the source of power, authority and legitimacy for all the key players in the development processes: government, private sector and the civil society. The constitution legitimises and authorises actions taken by governments; it also empowers and sanctions the people to question and challenge those actions. And it is precisely for these reasons that people are now demanding revisiting and rewriting their constitutions, to ensure that the powers of governments are effectively checked and balanced by those of the people. People were not involved in the making of the constitutions under which they are now governed.

It [constitution making] is actually the most fundamental political process in any nation’s history. It is the historical rendezvous between the State and society – a time when the government and the people review their past history as well as their present needs and their future. It is a meeting point between these three points in time when people ask themselves: How shall we organize our government? What are the most fundamental values that we cherish and want to nurture, promote and protect? So while power is an important aspect of constitution making, there is something even more important and that is fundamental rights and duties.

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Prof. Berek Habte Selassie, former Attorney-General of Ethiopia who resigned during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie, **Daily Nation**, Nairobi, Kenya, 16.3.98

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It is difficult and certainly undesirable to create special conditions or mechanisms for youth leadership succession. Leadership is a trust. It has to be earned and its legitimacy and respectability depend on how it was earned and used. Otherwise leadership succession becomes a mere automatic inheritance. What needs to be done are, one: the removal of the obstacles, hostility, prejudice, ignorance, suspicion and fear on both sides of the generations’ divide. Two, empowering the youth through education, training, socialization and exposure to practical leadership situations. Three, to be sustainable and acceptable to the people leadership must be the product of choice, hard work and commitment. And all this takes time and dedication. Hence a balance needs to be established between “nudging and persuasion” by the incumbent leaders on the one hand, and the freedom of choice and initiative of the potential young leader on the other hand. Four, to re-assure the seniors by acknowledging their service to the nation, providing them with reasonable pensions, and ensuring them with a place in society; that there is an honourable life after politics. This will remove the temptation to cling to power, thus eliminating some of the leadership succession problems.

Democracy is not an option but an absolute necessity. All over Africa demand democracy and are prepared to struggle for it. Good governance, accountability and transparency should not be
construed as the prevailing conventional buzzwords or conditionality imposed by the donors that are likely to disappear with the changing interests or policies of the donors. The ordinary citizens demand democracy and good governance. They demand open and honest government; and they want their leaders to be responsible, responsive and accountable to them.

Though the task of governance and nation-building must be approached with care, time seems not to be on our side. Pressures are amounting both from within and from without for improved governance. Our people are becoming more and more aware of their rights in society and are accordingly demanding accountability and openness form governments. globalisation has also stretched our inter-dependency relationship demanding in its wake the need to rationalise and harmonise efforts at governance and development.

The present scenario of radical global change must however be seen as an opportunity to interact and work in genuine partnership among ourselves and with the technologically advanced countries.

Prof. J.E. Atta Mills, the Vice President of Ghana, at the Governance Forum Two, Accra, June 26, 1998

People want the power to elect leaders of their own choice; and once these are elected to be able to call them to account in more effective and meaningful ways. They are also demanding competence, honesty, integrity, vision and commitment from their leaders to steer them from the endemic problems towards the Africa Renaissance. Moreover, they want to be sufficiently informed about public policy options so that they could make the right choice of leaders, as well as control and call to account those responsible for policy implementation. They want leadership to be appropriately and honestly earned and not simply given or taken. Hence the need for an enabling environment and the continuous support of the key institutions, mechanisms and processes to sustain democracy and good governance.

Democracy and good governance are not there just for the wanting, or even for the knowing. It is not merely an act of will, legislation or resolutions. Democracy and good governance will not come about because good leaders have been elected. In fact democracy does not guarantee the deliverance of competent, honest and incorruptible leaders. Democracy may not always reject the undesirable, incompetent and corrupt leaders and bring those with the required capabilities, integrity, vision and commitment. But democracy will empower the people to organize themselves, articulate their views, grievances, needs and aspirations, and enable them to promote and protect their interests. Nonetheless, the long-term sustainability of democracy and good governance will require vigilance and continuous participation of the people in public affairs. And this takes time, effort, organisation, commitment, patience, persistence and resources.

In addition to the very high levels of illiteracy Africa also suffers from very low levels of operational literacy amongst its educated population. The culture of reading for sheer knowledge, information, enlightenment or pleasure is still underdeveloped in Africa. After their formal education many Africans lapse into voluntary illiteracy. They read only when they have to; and even then it is usually connected with their professional or job responsibilities. To sustain a thriving democracy and good governance an informed and participatory citizenry is essential.
Visions of the African Renaissance are not likely to fall from heaven like the Gospels or Koran. Visions are the products of prolonged hard work, experimentation, experience, and at time the consequences of violent struggles or revolutions. Hence the importance of creating an enabling environment, so that ideas, opinions, experience, knowledge and information freely circulate; in short, the existence of a market place where ideas, goods and services could be exchanged without undue restrictions. Each individual human being has the right to participate in the decision-making process that affects his/her life and livelihood. Given the opportunity each individual human being has the potentials to provide the appropriate solutions to any problem.

**Think tanks** and independent public policy research centres are crucial in the support and promotion of an enabling environment. So are the press and the media. Think tanks and research centres create new knowledge and subject the conventional wisdom and the activities of those in power to reasoned criticism. The press and the media help in the circulation of ideas and information.

**Political Parties** play a very important role in the processes of accountability and transparency in a democracy. They mobilise public opinion in order to be elected, and in the process make numerous promises to the public that once in power they would be implemented. They thus create the basic foundations for accountability and transparency for their members as well as the general public. It is impossible to imagine a functional and sustainable democracy without political parties. And yet in Africa many political parties are not democratically organised or managed.

Internal party democracy will strengthen the accountability to the members and promote the inter-generations succession of leaders. To ensure a sustainable succession of leaders parties should be based on principles, visions and commitment, so that support could be based on commitment to principles rather than to personalities. This would enable the succession to leadership of those most suited and trusted to promote the principles and vision of the party. There must be genuine open competition for leadership within the party and the country at large. To ensure that party policies are based on knowledge and information –and not on personal inspirations or whims- leaders must be adequately educated and with experience in the management of a modern nation-state.

**Parliament:** In a democracy parliament is the sovereign legislative body. It enacts laws, appropriates, allocates and monitors public expenditure. It checks and balances the activities of the government and censures members of government and senior public servants. It acts as a forum in which the representatives of the people articulate their grievances, express their anxieties, demand wrongs to be rectified, and in general compel the government to acknowledge its accountability to the people. Parliament is thus an important legal and political institution in a democracy. It brings together leaders of the various communities comprising the nation to deliberate and decide on issues affecting the entire nation. It creates the environment within which national leaders could be identified, and leadership established and acknowledged. It provides the opportunities for the young aspiring leaders to demonstrate their competence, integrity and leadership qualities. Parliament ought to attract the most talented, competent, committed and public-spirited individuals.
In mature democracies parliaments play very critical role in ensuring that governments are accountable to the people, and that good governance and transparency are observed. In many African countries parliament is weak. It has neither the legislative independence nor the respect of the people. In some countries fractious opposition parties have further weakened the effectiveness of parliament as a forum to debate national issues. In most countries the executives control parliaments. And in virtually all countries parliamentarians lack the necessary institutional, academic and material means by which they could perform their duties with efficiency, respect and dignity. Unless African parliaments are strengthened and enabled to perform their constitutionally mandated duties with respect and dignity, they would not be able to attract young Africans with the appropriate expertise, visions, integrity and commitment.

**Culture of Knowledge**
**Centre for Leadership Reflections and Studies**

Africa continues to be lacking in the culture of accumulation, analyses and dissemination of knowledge and experience. Very few political leaders write their memoirs; and those that do it is often a case of justifying past actions rather explaining events and shedding lights on hitherto classified events. Some leaders have published several books but these have tended to be collected speeches, elaboration of their ideological persuasions or defence of their political decisions. Virtually no African leader has written a book explaining in details his/her life long experience in politics, the exigencies of state-craft, economic management, administration, and governance in general. Such information could be useful to the new generation of African scholars and researchers who are keen to create an independent African scholarship and research capabilities. Appropriately presented it could also be very valuable to the aspiring young African leaders.

The world is inexorably moving towards knowledge and information based societies and economies. Attempts should be made to develop the culture of written transmission of knowledge; experience, insight and wisdom from one generation to another. This will enable the succeeding generations of leaders acquire the expertise and self-confidence to respond to the challenges of the 21st Century and beyond. The first generation of leaders has the responsibility of transmitting the knowledge, lessons learnt and insights gained to the succeeding generation. Effective leadership entails continuous flow and succession of leaders, and not just one or two good leaders. Hence the notion of the “relay race” between the generations of leaders.

The ALF should consider the creation of a centre where retiring African leaders, senior civil servants and businesspersons, could be assisted to collect their thoughts, rethink the past, comment on the present and reflect on the future. This could be done in recorded seminars, workshops or roundtable discussions, or facilities being provided to those inclined to write. Africa is losing a lot of valuable information on the art and science of its governance with every death, senility or madness of an African leader.

**Let A Thousand Flowers Bloom…**
People are the greatest and most valuable resources Africa has. Over 60% of Africa’s population are under 20 years of age, and the majority of these are female. Very few of these are likely to receive university education or any other form of advanced education or training. Most of them
are likely to be literate, productive and creative in their various communities. They constitute the
critical mass of potential leaders.

The challenge is the creation of a system that can tap these resources, identify and attract those
talented and ambitious, educate, train, nurture and encourage them to take position of leadership
in their various field of endeavours and at various levels. Leadership need not necessarily be in
politics.

…and Know Your People
Inspite of the four decades of Independence citizens of many African countries are still ignorant
of the real social and economic conditions of their fellow citizens in other parts of the country.
They continue to suffer from the old stereotypes and prejudices of the past that have unfortunately
been manipulated by unscrupulous politicians. Mobility within the country is
difficult and expensive—bad roads and high fares. Those who can afford to travel are eager to
travel outside their countries than within it. This is one of the downsides of globalisation and
liberalisation. Those with the marketable skills and talents are attracted to the global markets for
better rewards, working and living conditions.

There is thus the need to create national programmes that will enable the young to know their
fellow citizens, familiarise with the social and economic conditions, and thus be able to
appreciate the problems and potentials of their countries. Good leadership entails appropriate
technical and ethical knowledge as well as familiarisation with the peoples’ social conditions. If
the young from different parts of the country are familiarised with other parts of the country and
are brought in contact with one another in a deliberate and constructive way they are likely to
establish links and net-works amongst themselves as they grow to adulthood and maturity.

Ethnicity is still a very important factor in many African countries. It is a critical factor in both
democratic and development processes. In Africa the tendency to vote according to ones ethnic
preference rather than policy options is still strong. And so is the allocation of economic and
other social resources. Public images of leaders are closely associated with their ethnic
background rather than the soundness of their policies. Given its multiplicity and deep historical
and social foundations, it is both impossible and indeed undesirable to suppress let alone
eliminate the ethnic factor in public policy issues in Africa. Nonetheless, to be trusted and thus
acceptable and effective the 21st Century African leader has to act and be perceived as a leader of
all the people

…Perhaps the most important challenge facing African countries is how to transform the ethnic
diversities inherited from colonial boundaries into national States. There is, in effect, an acute
crisis of identity. The political identity of an African is rather like three-tier edifice. At the top of
the structure is an overarching sense of continental identity which all Africans share. Thus, they
can all say without hesitation: “We are Africans.” At the base of the edifice lies a sense of ethnic
identity; this is a powerful force that enables most Africans to proclaim with complete
confidence: “We are Kikuyu’ or “We are Yoruba.”

The crises arises in the middle of the edifice, that is, at the national level. Those who can truly
affirm with feeling and conviction that “We are Ugandans” are still relatively few; that is to say
that, with some notable exceptions, the sense of national identity is still the least developed of all

22
PART FIVE
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities…
The succeeding generation of African leaders are better educated, well conversant with domestic issues and understands the threats, challenges and opportunities posed by globalization. They acknowledge the critical importance of freedom, democracy, strong civil societies, good governance, accountability and transparency in the development process. To these young leaders the colonial domination and the struggles for independence are historical facts to be acknowledged, but the consequences of the failure of that generation of leaders to deliver on their promises is something they themselves have experienced. They are understandably angry, impatient and frustrated. They have a better sense of what needs to be done to prepare for the challenges and opportunities in the 21st Century.

The end of the Cold War and the demise of communism as a competitive development model have liberated Africans from the manipulations of the big powers. Africans now have the opportunity to think for themselves; to decide what is best for Africa without having to worry about the attitude or reactions of the big powers. In a sense this is a second window of opportunity for African leaders to reinvent their future societies. At Independence many of the African leaders were inadequately educated or trained to manage modern states. Nor was the relevant information available or easily accessible to them. With information technology the succeeding generation of leaders has ample opportunities to obtain the quality and quantity of information they need or want. These young leaders are also living in a world that has had four decades of experience in development co-operation, in which the notions of partnership, networking and collaboration are the acceptable methodologies of getting things done.

The 1990s bring unprecedented hopes for worldwide political co-operation in the face of global development challenges. Profound changes took place in the 1980s in the world’s political structure, perceptions, economic relations, ethics, demographic and ecological balances in other areas; do these changes present threats to or new opportunities for human progress? Do they bring with them fresh impetus to foster global development co-operation similar to that of the three successful decades of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s—decades of notable improvements in human conditions? Or will these changes once again push aside the great enterprises of development co-operation, as in the case of the 1980?”

Uner Kirdar, Change: Threat or Opportunity?
United Nations Publications,
1992
...and Challenges
The succeeding generation of African leaders is faced with six major challenges. The freedom and ability of the individual to pursue his/her own interests, and the confidence to express one’s views and question those in power are critical to both democratic and development processes. The challenge is: given Africa’s notion of the community and traditional preference for consensus, how to promote individual freedom in order to release the productive energies and creative talents without posing a threat to the fabric of the social cohesion, or encouraging destructive individualism and alienation. Two, utilization of the global market forces to promote growth and sustainable human development beneficial to all the people and not only the multinationals and the few fortunate African elite.

Three, the creation of an environment that will promote the co-operation between the different generations of leaders and facilitate the recruitment and succession of leadership. Four, the promotion of the culture of constitutionalism, accountability and transparency. Five, democratic principles are universal but their manifestations depend on specific historical experience and social foundations. The sustainability of good governance depends on not only the observation of constitutionalism but also deference to the peoples cultures, norms and traditions. The challenge is the identification of the appropriate African norms and traditions that could be grounded with the universal democratic principles.

Rethinking politics and reinventing government
The long rule by single parties and military juntas in Africa have unfortunately misrepresented the role of politics and misinterpreted the responsibilities of government in civilised societies. Single party dictators resorted to intrigues, regimentation, manipulations and coercion in support of what came to be known as the politics of nation building and economic development. The military dictators dissolved political parties, banned politics and banished politicians in the name of cleansing society of bad politics and corrupt politicians. They all used governments to achieve their objectives, and a lot of these objectives were not for the public good.

Consequently politics and government have acquired bad names and mystics of their own. This is particularly the case with the young generation of Africans who have grown up during the periods of single party and military rule. To many of them politics is an exciting and a dangerous game in which one could get hurt or killed; as well as a means by which one could acquire popularity, fame and fortune. And governments are perceived either as benevolent providers and protectors or as malevolent destroyers of life and property, hopes and aspirations.

Africa continues to be in deep economic and political problems with the “night-mare scenarios”, predicted by the ECA [Economic Commission for Africa] early in the 1980s, threatening many African countries as the 21st Century approaches. Africa has been suffering from brain drain as well as drained brains. Globalization has enabled those talented Africans with marketable skills and experience to emigrate to the richer countries, thus creating brain drain in their own countries where they are most needed. And those who remain for patriotic or other reasons suffer from drained brains. They are overworked in their own jobs; and because they have to supplement their domestic budgets to make ends they have to take extra jobs. They are thus compelled to suffer from drained brains!!
Whether due to lack of jobs or personal insecurity at home or expectations of better life in the richer countries many Africans flee their countries. This has created a sad and somewhat pathetic situation where an African feels proud to be a citizen of a non-African country, and is willing to defend it with his life.

**Why I Would Die for Britain**

**Sousa Jamba**, who recently became a UK citizen, explains his love of his new country

I have just become a British citizen. In order to grant me citizenship, the authorities at the National Office in Liverpool expected me to have paid my taxes, to have a reasonable command of the English language and to swear an oath of allegiance. And so it became about that, one recent rainy afternoon, I held up a Bible in a solicitor’s office in Crystal Palace and swore that I would defend the Queen and her descendants.

…For me fighting for a nation is not a trivial question. I was, after all, born in Angola –a country that is synonymous with conflict, and many of my peers have been press-ganged into one of the longest wars in the world

…I would be ready to fight for Britain, because I have always admired this country.

…Take, for example, the notion of individual liberty. As a British citizen, I now have inalienable rights. I do not expect the state to arrest me at the whim of some local potentate. The sight of an armed policeman—and I have seen a few of them – does not make me anxious.

…An incident from my childhood keeps haunting me and firing my fear of the mob. Once, a man was seen running away from a shop with a loaf of bread. Someone assumed he was a thief and chased after him. The poor man fell into a ditch, and an angry crowd continued throwing stones and bricks at him until he died. Many times, I have dreamt that I was in some other country being chased by a mob. I have felt deeply relieved when, on waking up, I realised I was lying in my studio in Crystal Palace.

…Some of my fellow Britons, as I now think of them, take some of these rights and qualities of British life for granted…Sadly, they seem unaware that they belong to a small, privileged section of humanity…

The author is a novelist and writer, *Daily Telegraph*, London, 24.11.98

But the proper roles of politics and government in human societies are quite different from those projected by the first generation of African leaders. It is politics that has guided the human kind from the lowest levels of economic and social existence to affluence and sophisticated civilisations. Politics has enabled human beings to find solutions to their conflicts and the best mutually acceptable means by which they could earn their living, protect lives and property and improved their standards of living. And government was one of the means by which human beings used to achieve their collective objectives

In reality government is a group of individuals who manage on behalf of the people the various public institutions and bodies that are responsible for the governance and economic management of the country. In the course of the last four decades the role of government has undergone considerable transformations Just as there is good governance and bad governance there is
likewise good and bad politics. The sixth challenge for the succeeding generation of leaders is the promotion of good politics and the reinvention of government appropriate to the new African conditions and global realities. They must create an enabling environment that would reassure those with talents, skills, experience and entrepreneurship to remain within their countries, and attract those who have left to return to Africa with their enhanced skills and experiences.