Africa and the Challenges of Democracy and Good Governance in the 21st Century

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1. Abstract

The paper problematises the issues of democracy and good governance in Africa and analyses their future prospects especially in the 21st century. Liberal democracy and good governance, beside market reforms are the new puzzle words on the global agenda. Indeed, the three issues appear to be organically linked in the present context, with the hegemony of the liberal capitalist ideology in the international arena.

However, there are inherent problems and contradictions in the nature of the domestic and the International Political Economy of African States, which may significantly vitiate or undermine the “democracy-good governance” project in Africa. Thus, evolving democracy and good governance in Africa will require not only the discipline of the state and the reconstitution of politics, but also the animation of the civil society and its democratic potentials, re-adjustment in economic policy and agenda from the fundamentalist market orthodoxy, resolving the military question and engendering some relative re-ordering of economic and power relations within the global arena.

2. Introduction

Beginning from the 1980s, there has been a gradual, but concerted attempt to reverse the trend of political despair and disillusionment, which hitherto characterized political life in Africa. This attempt manifests in the demand for political pluralism and democratization. The long years of political misrule and of course bad governance exemplified by personalized political regimes and ruthless dictatorships left most African States politically demobilized and economically decapacitated with an immiserised population ravaged by poverty, illiteracy and disease. Regrettably, Africa harbours the highest stock of the world's poorest people.

The debilitating poverty of the people accentuated by the economic crisis seems to have provided a basis and indeed, a common platform in the demand for democratic change by the people. Thus, the struggle for democratization in Africa has relevance not only in liberalizing the political arena and achieving civil and political liberties, but also to ensure better living standards and social welfare for the African people (Adejumobi 1996, Mamdani 1987, Lisulo 1991). In other words, achieving the object of good governance.

However, the extent to which the current democratic project with its frailties, uncertainties and sometimes reversals, could usher in a viable democracy and ensure good governance particularly in the 21st century remains an issue of conjecture. In other words, what is the future of democracy and good governance in Africa? This question constitutes the focus of the paper.

The paper takes a conceptual and reflective view of its problematique. It traces the current global emphasis on good governance and democracy and sets in context the theoretical linkage between the two concepts. Further, it reflects on what went wrong in Africa in the over three decades of her post-colonial history in which neither the values nor nuances of democracy and good governance were cultivated by the governing elite. In the final section, the paper analyses what is to be done in order to evolve and sustain democracy and good governance in Africa taking cognizance of its current strides and setbacks.

Bringing Democracy and Good Governance Back In
The demand for political participation and the involvement of the people in the choice of their leaders and decision-making which constitutes the critical hub of political democracy (Sorensen, 1993) is not a new phenomenon in Africa. The anti-colonial project was constructed and legitimized on this basis. As such, the current democratic effervescence in Africa could be regarded not as a process of “democratic birth”, but to use the words of Richard Joseph (1990) is a process of “democratic renewal”. Although the urge for good governance is implicit in this process of democratic renewal as we earlier noted, however, the conception and usage of the term “good governance” in recent times came from the World Bank. Given the virulent political resistance which greeted the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in Africa and the growing concern with their apparent failure by the World Bank, there was a slight shift in strategy by the Bank towards domesticating the policy and finding an appropriate institutional and political framework within which to situate it in the domestic economies of African countries. The emphasis therefore shifted to “good governance”.

In the view of the World Bank, the market economic reform policies it recommends rarely work and have achieved very little because these policies fall on institutionally barren grounds and are stalled by internal bottlenecks and political ineptitude in terms of governance. In other words, the poor performance of SAPs is caused by lack of good governance. To quote the Bank:

Underlying the litany of Africa’s development problems is a crisis of good governance. By governance is meant the exercise of political power to manage a nation's affairs. Because countervailing power has been lacking, state officials in many countries have served their own interest without fear of being called to account. In self-defence, individuals have built up personal networks of influence rather than hold the all-powerful state accountable for its systemic failure. In this way, politics becomes personalised and patronage becomes essential to maintain power. The leadership assumes broad discretionary authority and loses its legitimacy, information is controlled, and voluntary associations are co-opted or disbanded. The environment cannot readily support a dynamic economy (World Bank, 1989: 60-61).

The World Bank therefore argues that adjustment alone cannot put Africa on a sustained poverty-reducing path, such must be complemented with institution building and good governance (World Bank, 1994: 2). germane to the conception of good governance by the World Bank are the issues of public accountability of government officials, transparency in government procedures, rule of law and public sector management (Olukoshi, 1992; Nunnekamp, 1995). The process of evolving good governance in Africa according to the Bank requires the shrinking of the state and engendering support for non-state actors (Civil Society). Following the footpaths of the World Bank, the donor agencies - multilateral and bilateral - have incorporated the demand for good governance in their aid policies and development cooperation agenda in Africa. These include the O.E.C.D. (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) (see O.E.C.D., 1994), and private agencies like the Ford Foundation (see Ford Foundation, 1990) and the Carter Center (see Carter Center, 1990) in the United States, with the emphasis of the latter two, on supporting civil associations and non-state actors in Africa.

On a broader platform, organizations like the Commonwealth and the United Nations and some of its agencies, have begun to emphasize and promote the issues of democracy, human rights and good governance in their activities. For example, the Commonwealth in charting a new course for itself resolved at its Harare Summit in 1991 to promote the principles of democracy, respect for human rights and good governance. A resolution was passed to this effect, by which member-states were to be bound, by these principles. In 1996, at the meeting of
the Heads of State and Governments of the organization in Auckland, New Zealand, this resolution had to be revisited, with sanctions imposed on an erring member-state (Nigeria), for the callous and extra-judicial killing of a human rights activist - Ken Saro Wiwa, and the Ogoni eight by the Abacha military junta in Nigeria. Nigeria was thus suspended from the Commonwealth. In 1997, Sierra Leone was also suspended from the Commonwealth due to the illegal seizure of power by the military junta led by Colonel Koromah.

Within the United Nations system, apart from the U.N. adopting specific resolutions on the question of democracy and good governance, some of its agencies like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have taken conscious steps and adopted policies to promote the cause. For example, the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa has developed a special programme, called the *Special Initiative on Governance in Africa* (SIGA) aimed at improving the effectiveness of governance on the continent by addressing five major areas, which are: leadership building, transparency and accountability, civil society empowerment, political transition and peace and stability. Indeed, it is estimated that the UNDP currently spends about 39% of its resources on governance related projects (see *Africa Recovery*, July 1997: 22-24).

However, it is the World Bank’s position which provides not only the background to the current tide, but also the basis of the political economy of the "democracy - good governance" project in Africa, as it defines the economic context and the political framework and parameters of such projects. Two things are worthy of note in the World Bank's apostasy to good governance. First, while the World Bank (and its arch types) preaches good governance, rule of law and human rights in Africa, the Structural Adjustment Programmes it has improved undermine those noble political ideals. SAPs, rather than empower the civil society, encourages its ruthless repression and dismemberment, rather than promote social security and welfare, contracts them quite significantly, rather than encourage public ethics and accountability promotes declining public morale and fraud with depressing low wages and salaries of public servants (As SAPs emphasise wage freeze and devalued low wages) (Kiely 1998; Adejumobi 1996, Mkandawire 1995, Mkandawire and Olukoshi 1995, Olukoshi 1993, Asobie 1993, Mustapha 1992, Beckman 1991). In addition, the deregulation policy germane to SAP has weakened the capacity of the state to control corruption, while privatization has created a host of opportunities for personal accumulation, especially in the area of financial deregulation, which has led to the emergence of what Morris Szeftel (1998:233) aptly described as "political banks", engaged in nothing but currency speculation and money laundering (see Lewis and Stein, 1997). SAPs reduce the capacity of the state to control and tighten rules governing Government - corporate relations (Szeftel, 1998). In summary, adjustment confounds the logic of good governance in Africa.

Secondly, the object of the World Bank “good governance” project is mainly to provide an enabling political environment for the market to function properly, and not because good governance is good in itself and deserved by the African people. Thus “good governance” along with the instant crafting of democracy is often traded the same way I.M.F. and World Bank economists sell neo-liberal market solutions around the globe (Rudebeck and Tornquist 1996: 8). Admittedly, although the World Bank good governance project with its emphasis on rule of law, transparency and human rights, is relevant to the African condition, however, the point being made is that it is a project enmeshed in serious contradictions and not grounded in the African intent, articulation and focus. In a trenchant critique of the World Bank's "democracy-good governance" project, Yash Tandon (1996) argues that it is a cause, which is self-serving, opportunistic and designed to serve the interest of capital within the context of neo-liberal economic ideology. As Tandon poignantly puts it:
Whose governance? It is certainly not governance on behalf of the common people. It is a governance on behalf of a couple of hundred industrial and banking transnationals who are draining Africa’s natural resources at enormous profit for themselves, a couple of thousand African billionaires who have tucked away their ill-gotten gains in Western banks, a couple of million white settlers who still own farm lands, mines and tourist resorts in Africa, and a couple of million black intermediaries who are acting on behalf of their foreign companies. That is the rough arithmetic of those who benefit from the rich resources of Africa. (Tandon, 1996: 27)

This constitutes the league of class and social forces promoted and sustained by the “invisible market” logic of structural adjustment and its governance agenda. In other words, good governance for the African people is not a complement to structural adjustment, rather, it is a normative political value, which negates SAPs and aims to reconcile state-society relations with the provision of social welfare and material betterment for the people.

Besides the object of good governance, a raging debate centers on what form of political regime or system is compatible with, and reinforces good governance. In other words, what is the linkage in theory, between democracy and good governance? Two major positions are discernible in this regard. Prominent Africanist scholars like Goran Hyden and Richard Joseph perceive a symmetrical linkage between democracy and good governance. For Goran Hyden, good governance refers to the conscious management of regime structures with a view to enhancing the public realm (Hyden, 1992: 7). It seeks to reconstitute politics from a high level frequency of zero sum calculation to a middle ground, where politics is a positive sum game characterized by reciprocal behavior and legitimate relations between the governors and the governed. The catch phrases or key properties of the governance realm are authority, reciprocity, exchange, trust and accountability, with each of these components emphasizing or reinforcing democratic norms and practices in one way or the other. For instance, authority seeks expression in the legitimate use of power in which the people elect and control their leaders, while the parameter of accountability is the extent to which the people can hold their elected or appointed officials responsible for their actions or inaction. Reciprocity refers to the nature and quality of the social interaction among members of a political community and its major indicator in the public realm is the extent to which individuals are free to form associations to defend and protect their interests (Hyden, 1992). Put differently, the emphases of the governance realm are elections, political control and responsiveness, freedom of expression and plural politics, which are principles, and nuances of liberal democracy. Along the same line, Gerry Stoker, contends that governance is primarily concerned with ordered rule and collective action, but one in which political power must be seen to be legitimate, there must be autonomous self-governing network of actors, and a balance between state and civil society (Stoker, 1998: 17-28). It is when this is achieved in qualitative terms that there may be good governance. Good Governance in this case also parallels liberal democracy.

Richard Joseph on his part argues that accountability is the most fundamental principle of good governance, which is assured through competitive elections in a democratic society. As Joseph puts it “free and fair elections are the bedrock of any democratic society and the most important means of making governments accountable to the citizenry” (Joseph, 1990: 205). Anyang Nyongo (1988) and Kofi Annan (1997) also share this libertarian position on the linkage between democracy, good governance and development.

The extent to which elections ensure political accountability, hence good governance, as the liberal theorists claim, has been variously questioned (Ihonvbere, 1996; Awa, 1992; Fatton, 1998).
Geoffrey Alderman, citing the British experience, argues that elections serve only a ritualist function, which conceals the class domination of politics by the British capitalist class. Thus, elections, according to him, are not about who governs or propitious to political accountability, but only a symbolic exercise in a democracy. Given the class basis of politics, governance, as Robert Fatton (1922; 4) points out, is not a classless political exercise defined by a social pact imbued with a sense of “commonness”, neither can political accountability in real terms, be a little more than a political myth, an enduring political cliché, which is characterized by a reciprocial, but grossly unequal relations between the governors and the governed, the king and his subjects, a relationship characterized by collaborations, subordination, coercion and violence (Chabal, 1992: 53-54).

The contrary view to the libertarian argument is that good governance is not associated with any particular form of political regime or system. It is simply about effective and productive governance, which may be present in a democratic, dictatorial, totalitarian or socialist regime, depending on how the rulers manage political power and its results. This perspective tends to share Alexander Pope’s popular dictum that “for forms of government let fools contest, what is best administered is best”. The concept of good governance is perceived to be holistic and consequential, rather than specific and procedural. It is not the process or course of a political rule, but its effects. It is anti-ideological and is best defined ostensibly rather than by semantic prescriptions (Dunn, 1986; Charlick, 1991; le-Roy, 1992; Chabal, 1992). At the micro-level, good governance denotes organizational effectiveness, that is, the capacity of an organization to achieve tasks assigned to it, with rules and regulations lay down by it, and within the context of favorable environmental conditions. At the macro-level, good governance derives essentially from the theory of utilitarianism. That is, good governance is measured by the extent to which a political regime can guarantee popular welfare and promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people in the society.

While democracy is unquestionably good in itself and may augment good governance especially with respect to the civil and political liberties it guarantees, however, it does not add up to nor is it organically linked with good governance. Constructing good governance in Africa will be determined by two factors. The first, is the extent to which peoples will enter decisions which affect their life chances or such decisions to reflect or aggregate the interests of the majority of the people and, the second refers to the extent to which their means of livelihood are guaranteed (Mafeje, 1995: 26). These two factors are likely to be more realizable not within the context of liberal, but social, democracy.

3. The Perils of Political Misgovernance

Africa’s development hemorrhage is a debilitating and profound one, when compared with that of other parts of the world. For example, Africa is the only region where for some three decades economic growth barely kept ahead of population growth, where the debt burden estimated at US$300 billion in 1995 is greater than total economic output and equals about 300% of Africa's export of goods and services, where about 50% in almost half of the countries live below the poverty line, while illiteracy rate is about 60%, infant mortality is 96 per 1000, and life expectancy at birth is 52 years (Conable, 1991; World Bank, 1995). In addition, Africa with a 10th of the world's population was estimated to have a third of its refugees in 1990 (Degefe, 1990: 187), a figure which certainly has increased quite significantly since then, given the internecine civil wars and conflicts in many African countries in recent times.
The genealogy and dimensions of the African crises have been well analysed (Onimode, 1988; Sandbrook, 1985, 1993; Mkandawire, 1991; Ravenhill, 1996), they therefore need no rehash. Suffice to point out that a recurring decimal in Africa’s development dilemma is the issue of governance. The situation in Africa, as Samuel Huntington (1968) described it, is one in which governments simply do not govern, that is, they often lack the organizational capacity to manage society and promote economic change and social welfare. Basil Davidson (1992:9) portrays the governance dimension of the Africa crises quite graphically:

But the actual and present condition of Africa is one of deep trouble, sometimes of a deeper trouble than the worst imposed during the colonial years... harsh governments or dictatorships rule over peoples who distrust them to a point of hatred and usually for good and sufficient reasons; and all too often one dismal tyranny gives way to worse one. Despair rots civil society, the state becomes an enemy, bandits flourish.

In spite of this dismal picture, it would be apposite to note that the performance and outcome of political regimes in Africa have varied among and within nations at different periods. While some immediate post-independent regimes like that of Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, Julius Nyerere in Tanzania and Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya, though statist in character, did place some premium on the welfare of the people and constructed what could be described as minimally or fairly good government. On the other hand, political megalomania like Mobutu in Zaire; Samuel Doe in Liberia; and Siad Barre in Somalia created for themselves “political fiefdom” in their respective countries. Miscreantly peculated national wealth, devalued the lives of the people and destroyed the fabric of the society. Mobutu’s case in Zaire is a classic example. Zaire (now Democratic Republic of the Congo) is one of the largest and richly endowed countries in Africa, yet, it is a country that lay bare in ruins. Apart from the damaging political misdemeanour of Mobutu, the living standards in Zaire under him stooped below that of the pre-independence era (Nzongola, 1982; Sandbrook, 1985; Human Rights Watch, 1997). It was the apogee of political misrule and bad governance.

The orgy of bad governance looms large in Africa and afflicts a broad spectrum of political regimes – “parliamentary”, “military”, “one party” regimes. The curious question is: what went wrong in the governance realm in Africa? Two factors seem to have facilitated bad governance in Africa. First is obviously the colonial pedigree. There is a strong linkage between the absence of good governance in the colonial era and that of the post-colonial period. The political structures and values, economic base and social orientation promoted in the colonial era were antithetical to the evolution of good governance and democracy (Ki-Zerbo, 1996; Chabal, 1992; Amin, 1990; Ekeh, 1975; Turok, 1987; Rodney, 1972). These structures and processes, firmly implanted, take new manifestations, both internal and external in the neo-colonial era.

Secondly, in the post-colonial period, the emphasis of the political rulers was on national integration, unity and development. Thus the dominant doctrine was one of a “dictatorship of development”, rather than the “democracy of development”. However, given the non-autonomisation of the state, the paucity of resources of the ruling class and its lack of hegemony, the tendency was that governance degenerated significantly, as the state became an arena of fratricidal struggles for primitive accumulation and power control. Governance in this context assumes a musical chair game, which oscillates between what Max Weber (1947) described as the phenomenon of sultanism, to military dictatorships and garrison socialism (Lukham, 1994). The net effect was that political alienation and de-participation and increasing material poverty became the norms of political governance in Africa. Both democracy and good governance took a retreat.
4. Reclaiming the Future

The present agitation for democratic reforms by the African people shows a clear predilection for plural politics and democratic governance. The expectation is that this will transform the social sphere and make life more abundant for the people. The pattern and modalities of such reforms have differed from place to place ranging from the national conference model of the French West African countries, to the state authored democratic transition process. Between 1985 and 1990, no less than 20 authoritarian regimes were forced to liberalize the political arena, while multi-party elections were held in eight countries (Bratton and va de Walle, 1992). By 1997, about three-quarter of African countries were under “democratic rule”.

In spite of this positive leap, the democratic project in Africa remains wobbly and qualitatively stunted. In countries like Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Togo, Gabon and Kenya one could at best talk of a "facade" democracy in which massaged elections were grudgingly arranged, with the perpetuation of civil political autocracy under the guise of democratic rule (Luckham, 1995: 49-50). In Ghana, Uganda, Equatorial Guinea, Niger, and Gambia, yesterday's military dictators have suddenly became "born again" democrats, reinstitutionalising their power mostly through a corrupted electoral process. In Nigeria and Algeria, callous authoritarian rulers, reluctant at disengaging from power deliberately subverted credible electoral processes through election annulment. In Sierra Leone, the subaltern of the military led by Major Koromah sacked the elected government of President Kabbah and re-established military rule in May 1997. It took the intervention of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), before Kabbah could be forcibly reinstalled back to power, with heavy human and material costs. The struggle for power still rage on in Sierra Leone. While in countries like Liberia, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, peace and national reconciliation and reconstruction are more urgent agenda than the object of democracy.

To be sure, civil and political liberties remain highly constrained in Africa and the parlous economy does not brighten the prospects of democracy on the continent. Indeed, extreme pessimism tends to permeate the thinking of some scholars on the future of democracy and good governance in Africa. Samuel Decalo argues that as Africa drifts off the map of the world's concern, in terms of economic priorities and investment commitment, as it is currently happening, and as the international vogue with democracy recedes, most African countries will likely slide back into political strife, dictatorship and military rule (Decalo 1994: 987-992). Essentially, this pessimism should act as a caution and not a guide on the future of democracy in Africa.

Engendering democracy and good governance in Africa will take four major dimensions. These are: the strengthening of civil society and unleashing and actualizing its democratic potentials; demilitarization and demobilization; the re-orientation of economic policy; and reconstructing the international context of democracy in Africa, by reforming the global economic and political order.

The civil society constitutes the underbelly of the society, an intermediary force and social agent between the individual and the state (Chabal, 1992; Rothchild and Chazan, 1994; Seligman, 1995). The civil society is generally conceived to be an organ for democracy, good governance and development, which presses for civil and political rights, institutional reforms, economic concessions and welfare for the people and socio-economic empowerment (Adejumobi, 1996a: 16). However, it is necessary to distill some illusions and half-truths, which permeate the discourse on civil society especially on its democratic import. The civil society is
not necessarily a democratic agent as most conventional arguments affirm. Indeed, civil society 
can be reactionary and anti-democratic (Bangura and Gibbon, 1992; Fatton, 1992). The civil 
society as Robert Fatton (1992: 6) points out can be “the prime depository and disseminator of 
reactionary forms of knowledge and codes of conduct that confine subaltern classes either to old, 
unchanged behavior or to ineffective, disorganized patterns of collective resistance”. The fact is 
that the civil society is an arena of class, political and ideological contestations of which 
members of the ruling class and their political cronies are also prominent actors. For example, 
the desperate bid to forestall the June 12, 1993 presidential election in Nigeria was engineered 
and effected by civil associations in civil society, notable of which was the Association for Better 
Nigeria (A.B.N.). In other words, civil society has no determining essential properties, neither 
“democratic” nor “undemocratic” (Bangura and Gibbon, 1992: 21).

Secondly, although civil society is defined by its plurality, its activities should not be 
conceived in terms of homogeneity and cooperation, but one of conflict and conflictual relations 
within itself and between it and the state.

Thirdly, the distinction made by Peter Gibbon (1996) between the “deepening” and the 
“politicization” of civil society is instructive. According to him, the deepening of the civil 
society does not impact too positively on the course of democratization, it is the latter, that is, its 
politicization, which does. Politicization involves the ability of the civil associations and groups 
to transcend their parochial group interests and articulate demands which could overcome their 
individual and group differences. It is then that the civil society can act as a potent force and 
form a viable platform for political change. While the politicization of the civil society is 
important as Gibbon insists, likewise, the deepening of the civil society is also very relevant. 
The deepening of the civil society is crucial to its strength and vitality, as it reinforces its capacity 
for self-organization and development, without which its politicization will be hollow. The 
challenge of democracy in Africa therefore includes the strengthening of the civil society through 
its deepening and politicization and also to encourage its democratic potentials, through the 
creation and nurturing of democratic principles and values in the civil associations.

The military constitutes a major obstacle to the transition to and consolidation of 
democracy in Africa. The crux of the military question centers on the problem of 
demilitarization of the political arena and society and how civil control and supremacy could be 
established over the military. Philosophically, it is a dialectical twist between force and freedom, 
order and liberty might and right (Adekanye, 1992: 1). The problem is even more debilitating 
when it is realized that the military often detest and mostly thwart the reform of the institution 
not emanating from or conducted by it. Achieving civil-military stability and control as most 
students of civil-military relations admit, requires the re-professionalisation of the armed forces, 
the inculcation of civic values of servile obedience to civilian authority, reduction in military 
expenditure, reasonable working conditions and promotion policies for military officers and a 
significant downsizing of the armed forces (Welch, 1992; Decalo, 1989; Luckham, 1995; 
Hutchful, 1995). The latter option, that is, substantial demobilization, albeit quite difficult, but 
very important, as the size and the social value of the armed forces in most Africa states are 
issues of serious concern. Perhaps, there is need to begin to understudy the Rosta Rican strategy 
(of a non-military state) for most African countries, in which a regional military force with 
considerable autonomy and set rules and policies will be established, to handle the issue of 
territorial security of the region.

Furthermore, the evolution of democracy and good governance in Africa will require a 
re-adjustment of economic policies and priorities in Africa away from the present religious
fidelity to the fundamentalist ideology of the market as couched in the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). SAPs are a class project, which weighs heavily in support of capital against labor and accumulation against social good and welfare (Adejumobi, 1995). Certainly, it is a policy, which will imperil democratization and scuttle the possibility of good governance in Africa (Adejumobi, 1996; Mkandawire, 1995; Olukoshi, 1992; Sandbrook, 1988). Sustaining democracy requires bringing the state back in, not only to regulate the market, but to provide social welfare and protect the weak and the vulnerable in the society.

Finally, the international economic and political environment must be made hospitable, for democracy and good governance to evolve and be sustained in Africa. Issues of Africa's external debt, deteriorating commodity prices and terms of trade and economic dependence have to be addressed. These global economic issues affect the texture and terrain of democratic struggles and political governance in Africa. Eboe Hutchful sums it up quite succinctly:

As a global event, democracy can be sustained only if it is built on national and international equity-on a foundation that recognizes the economic needs and rights of all peoples and nations - and for this conscious agreement between democratic movement on the rules of the economic game is necessary. (Hutchful 1995a: 115).

While a reform of the international political economy is germane to the quest for democracy and good governance in Africa, however, ultimately, what stands between Africa and its future, as Kofi Annan (1997; 4) rightly observed, is Africa itself.

5. Conclusion

Africa faces the future with much trepidation. Although a lot of hopes and expectations are invested in the current process of democratic change and its capacity to engineer good governance, however, the possible outcome of the process remains uncertain and open to conjecture. What is clear from the historical experiences of other countries and regions of the world is that democracy and good governance are not given, rather they are products of the concrete political struggles waged by the dominated groups in the society.

Good governance as Patrick Chabal (1992: 169) rightly noted, is a rare commodity in the history of the world especially in countries of the Third World. The process of its evolution within the context of plural politics, will be fraught with serious tensions, conflicts and contradictions. The capacity of the political rulers to manage the process effectively, the resilience of the civil society and the nature of the international political economy are some of the important factors which will ultimately determine the extent to which democracy could cohabitate with good governance and whether both will survive in Africa.
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