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TOPIC: SEARCHING FOR AN OPTIMAL APPROACH TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN AFRICA: ASSESSING THE CONTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SYSTEMS

PROF. GELASE R. MUTAHABA & AUDAX B. KWEYAMBA
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, UNIVERSITY OF DAR ES SALAAM
ABSTRACT

This paper addresses itself to two main issues namely, the search for an optimal approach to Development Planning in Africa and the effectiveness of the public administration systems in supporting development planning process since independence.

Africa has gone through three distinctive phases/approaches to achieving national development: (i) the central planning phase (five year plans), (ii) the liberalization period when the state abandoned steering the development process and let the market drive it, and (iii) the long term visioning (for example Vision 2016- Botswana; Vision 2025, Tanzania etc and Medium Term National Poverty reduction/Wealth creation strategies phase), where the state is expected to return to steering national development but by acting as guide and facilitator in cooperation with other players in society.

To what extent have African public administration systems played their roles in national development? There are suggestions that, for a number of reasons, during the first two phases African public administration systems did not play their roles effectively. We would want to address whether that contention is valid, what explanations are adduced for that situation and what measures should be taken to contain the constraints the achievement of development under the Visioning Phase.
INTRODUCTION

National visions have become indispensable components of strategic planning for development not only in contemporary Africa but also beyond the frontiers of Africa. Countries such as China, Singapore and Sri Lanka have attained commendable development partly due to well articulated and effectively implemented national visions characterized by, among important features, unwavering purpose and commitment, leadership support, communication and information management skills and clear prioritizing of what needs to be done and what can be done. One of the critical actors toward implementation of national visions is having in place public administration systems/ public service systems capable of propelling the engine for implementation of such national visions. This is in the context of having necessary capacities and capabilities or otherwise referred to as critical capacity and success factors.

This paper employs the historical and/or longitudinal approach in as far as the search for an optimal approach to Development Planning in Africa and the effectiveness of the public administration systems in implementing the various development planning phases in Africa are concerned. The paper begins with a brief account on key development paradigms and frameworks that have informed efforts toward development planning and implementation in Africa. This is followed by an account on three distinctive phases/approaches in Africa toward achieving national development, namely the central planning phase (five year plans), the liberalization period when the state abandoned steering (planning) the development process and let the market drive it, and the contemporary long term visioning (for example Vision 2016- Botswana; Vision 2025, Tanzania etc. and Medium Term National Poverty reduction/Wealth creation strategies phase), where the state is expected to return to steering national development but by acting as guide and facilitator in cooperation with other players in society.
The three distinctive phases are accounted for in view of gauging what has been the contribution of African public administration systems toward realization of development planning and implementation in Africa. The third phase is accompanied by a package of what we consider as necessary capacity or success factors for enhancing the contribution of African administration systems to contemporary long term development planning via national visions. Finally the paper provides concluding remarks.

1.0 THE SEARCH FOR AN OPTIMAL APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

From a conceptual point the journey toward realization of development has attracted the attention of many scholars and analysts from different perspectives. A quick glance at the literature on development provides a number of strands. There are development theorists who argue that there is need for development motivation. These are essentially motivation theorists. Their interest is to explore levels of development motivation among groups, individuals, communities, etc. Some in this category argue that people from different cultures or different parts of a country might have significantly different \( n\text{-Achievement} \) (need for achievement) (McClelland, 1961). They thus provide that one has to assess \( n\text{-Achievement} \) levels first before development intervention is made. This would help to indicate differences in the way people take or miss economic opportunities; their level of entrepreneurship, their propensity to spend or save, etc

The second trend on development literature, especially on African development in 1960s-1980s dwells on assessment of state-centric perspective toward development. Such studies largely show that state-engineered and centred development have had limited successes (Bates 1983; Mushi 2001). In the same period (1960s-1980s in Africa), development literature also show an increased tendency by government to penetrate in rural areas in the name of development initiatives. Analysts have labelled these state-centric initiatives as being aimed to control rather than empower the peasantry (Cliffe et al, 1977; Coleman, 1977; Bunker, 1987; LaPalombora, 1971).
The third strand of the literature on development calls for ‘democratizing development’. This aims to enable actors in the civil society, local governments, etc effectively participate in development initiatives. In this trend, there are two sub-schools. One is the neo-liberal and the other is the revolutionary. The former emphasizes need for fair application of market rules under the framework of political, social and economic pluralism (Clark, 1991). Although this sub-school may be credited for search for equal opportunity and fair play in the market, it tends to undermine the issue of affirmative action or empowerment of weak societies or underdeveloped geographical areas. The latter, namely the revolutionary school, seeks for ‘democratic revolution…to beat the crisis of underdevelopment’ (Ake 1991). Ake argues that a democratic revolution requires people-centred democracy movement which is entirely different from liberal democracy as this will, among other things, promote: concrete economic and social rights rather than abstract political rights; democratization of economic opportunities; the social betterment of the people, a strong social welfare system; and adaptation of democracy to the cultural and historical experiences of ordinary citizens. For Ake starting point for peoples’ empowerment should be people themselves, drawing from their experiences and traditions.

Together with the above three strands of literature on development, the development of the post colonial Africa, especially beginning the 1960s-1980s was perceived by ‘Western’ economics scholars such W.W Rostow as needing modernization path by abandoning traditionalism. The perspective presupposes a unilinear path toward development. Many countries in Africa attempted this path. The path was however coupled with other elements, particularly either at best by single party authoritarian governance system or at worst by military dictatorships. The consequences of this path left Africa largely underdeveloped not only economically but also in terms of lack of building strong institutional frameworks for promotion of good governance and development.
The end of the Cold War (in the late 1980s) and the intensification of neo-liberal paradigm in governance discourse, commonly referred to as globalization, has ushered in a new path of governance which also suggests a unilinear approach toward human development. Authoritarian governments and dictatorships, including the then communist regimes have been called upon (if not forced) to embrace some forms of liberal democracy, both economically and politically. However, realization of a uniform path in this regard is not yet realized. There are some who see globalization as threatening state sovereignty (especially of the weak nations) and thus promote ‘localization’ path i.e. look for local mechanisms of meeting challenges of globalization. At the international level, the developing world in particular has sought such ways as getting their voices head and development priority agenda incorporated in world governance institutions such as the United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization, etc.

It is evident from the foregoing that the search for optimal development planning in Africa has manifested itself through multiple approaches and the search still goes on. In the next sections an account is made regarding the specific chronology of Africa’s efforts toward development planning and particular interest is examining the extent to which public administration systems have facilitated or constrained the African development planning and implementation agenda in the three distinctive phases alluded to above.

1.0 NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND CENTRALIZED PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SYSTEMS:1960-1980s

The immediate post colonial Africa essentially resorted to adoption of centralized development planning. This was a reflection of the governance systems that characterized most of post-colonial Africa. Two major governance systems were dominant namely, single party systems at best and military dictatorships at worst. This centralized planning entailed in many countries involved, among other tactics, five year planning phases. In Tanzania for example, the first two five year plans were implemented in 1964-1969
1969-1974. These were essentially centralized and their implementation was also supposed to be state centred. Many African countries national development planning reflected this sort of trend, for example in Ghana, Zambia, and Kenya.

More important, however, was the need to develop public service systems or public administration systems that could fit in such governance and planning arena. No doubt the evolution and development of modern public service or modern public bureaucracies in Africa is essentially traced from the colonial era in Africa. During the pre-colonial era, there was hardly any bureaucracy in the modern sense of the word although there existed what could be regarded as the beginning of a modern civil service consisting of career men.\(^1\) The colonial powers established central civil services in the various African countries which came under their control. They also established local administrations in their metropolitan countries.

The first phase in the development of modern bureaucracies in Africa involved establishment of the major departments, the field administration and the local administration during the colonial era. The well-known system of indirect rule under which the colonial powers governed through the chiefs and traditional rulers, and the basic administrative infrastructure was established during this phase which lasted from the beginning of colonial rule to the 1940s in West Africa and the 1960s in East Africa.\(^2\)

Throughout the 1960s and the 1970s, African bureaucratic organization underwent many changes as it faced new challenges and expectations, and responded to changes in the African political economy. In Tanzania, as it was in many African countries, the public service was made state centred and politicized\(^3\) especially after the establishment of the de jure one party state in 1965 in Tanzania which brought in place party supremacy. This

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\(^2\) ibid.
\(^3\) See E.T Mallya ,The Politicization of Bureaucracy in Tanzania,M.A dissertation, University of Dar es salaam,1988
was done in the name of nation-building and development. Politicization went hand in hand with the desire toward africanization\(^4\) of the public service personnel.

The major problem with politicization and africanization in Africa (including Tanzania) was that they were done hastily and in form of crash programmes which did not consider their impact in terms of efficiency and effectiveness of the public servants. As a result, there was a tremendous increase of public service personnel which did not bring satisfactory quality delivery of public goods and services. It also resulted in glooming public services which were based on patronage. However, at least in design, the public service in Africa in the 1960s and 1970s remained a hierarchical, formal, centralized organization, albeit a much larger one\(^5\). Structurally, it remained a tightly coupled organization, with notable asymmetries and transitivities.\(^6\)

However, African bureaucracies retained most of their inherited colonial structures although two important attributes are worth noting in regard to the African bureaucracies in the 1960s i.e. the 1960s were the "boom years" for African bureaucracy and the post-colonial decade brought Africanization in its wake which resulted in the rapid replacement of foreign with indigenous personnel in public organizations.\(^7\)

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s ideas of developmentalism and dependency gained favour. Leaders (African leaders) stressed the necessity for centralized authoritarian rule to preempt class divisions, manage relations with exploitative economic forces in the


\(^7\) Ibid, p.404.
world economy, and organize the society for rapid development.\textsuperscript{8} By the 1970s most African states that were not under military rule had a one-party system, a form of government they proclaimed to be distinctively appropriate for Africa.\textsuperscript{9}

The above interventions in as far as African public Administration systems are concerned were also accompanied by, or as consequences of such interventions, economic growth and expansion of access to social services especially in the 1970s. However, many African countries had by the beginning of the 1980s started to experience what one could describe as negative economic growth, deteriorating social services and increasingly they were governed, at best by the military and the one party states, and at worst, they had become ungovernable.

As regards performance of African public administration systems during the phase in question, it is evident that it leaves a lot to be desired in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. Africanization and politicization as measures undertaken to address one of the critical challenges at independence in many African countries i.e. acute shortage of people with necessary technical skills who would constitute public service personnel\textsuperscript{10}, did not bring good results in terms of developing professional, efficient and effective public personnel.

The 1980s, in particular, was considered a ‘lost decade’ for Africa owing to the multiple crises experienced within the region. The combination of the rise in oil prices and the fall in the prices of primary products had a devastating effect on the performance of African economies. This was due to the region’s dependence on a limited number of primary products.

Other factors that contributed to the crisis in the 1980s included the burden of growing external debt, rapid population increases, limitations of one party and military states, especially in terms of

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{10} R. Gardiner, “From Colonial Rule to Local Administration” in A.Rweyemamu and G.Hyden (eds), A Decade of Public Administration in Africa, Kenya Literature Bureau, 1982, p.17
suffocating democracy, continuous drought accompanied by desertification, devastating internal conflicts. Specific to the African public Administration systems, the said reforms were, among other factors, propelled by the tendency towards centralism, too large a public service, declining resources for public management and inadequate and inappropriate institutional capacities (Mutahaba et al 1993: 5-18).

Other problems which afflicted the public administration systems in many African countries by the late 1980s included corruption, low administrative capacity, ineffective personnel planning, scarcity of resources available to public sector, increasing challenges to government and administration, increasing functional difficulties of several aspects of the economic, social and political environments within which administration was being conducted, weak recruitment and promotion policies and systems, and demand for greater transparency and effectiveness in government. These problems and challenges necessitated a need for reforms not only in regard to African development planning approach but also in regard to the nature and functioning African Public Administration systems.

Thus by 1980s, public administration systems in many countries of Africa were characterized by high degree of inefficiency and ineffectiveness. They were unable to effectively implement national development plans. In addition to internal weaknesses and institutional limitations, the weak performance of the public administrative systems in Africa was also due to increased dependency on donors for implementation of development plans. Donor dependency limited the capacity of the African public administration systems to plan and implement such plans according to relevant priorities and with certainty. Donor dependency generally compromised sovereignty in development planning and implementation in Africa. These weaknesses associated with the first phase approach to development planning in Africa brought about need for reforming not only the approach but also the administrative systems thereof, especially beginning mid 1980s.
2.0 THE 2ND PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN AFRICA (MID 1980s+): LIBERALIZATION COUPLED WITH MARKET ADORATION

This is the period in which the state abandoned steering (planning) the development process and let the market drive it. There was a general perception especially on the part of donor countries (especially the Western countries and Bretton Woods Institutions that centralized planning for development was a socialist one; undesirable and thus need for its alteration. It was understood as being conservative as it suffocated innovativeness, competition and entrepreneurship. It was also, to a great extent, held responsible for the weaknesses of the administrative systems in Africa noted in the previous section. The market was presented as the sweeping solution to problems and weaknesses of the then African development planning and administrative systems.

It is against this background that development planning was left in the hands of the market. The state-centred planning approach was seen as a nuisance to be avoided and market was seen as the commodity to be adored by African states as a way of addressing African development predicaments. In other words market became the gospel (Good News!) that every African state was supposed to preach.

The initial reforms that reflected the new gospel of neoliberalism were basically the donor driven Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in Africa. Many African countries adopted, in the early 1980s through mid 1990s, with the support of Breton-Woods institutions, a number of reform measures variously called Structural Adjustment programmes (SAPs), on the one hand, and measures to democratize and adopt multiparty and pluralist governance systems, on the other hand. Such measures were due to both domestic and external pressure on African governments. Consequently, democratic systems were introduced, which embarked upon ambitious programmes of political, institutional and economic reforms. The objectives of those reforms involved changing the role of government, creating an enabling environment for the private sector and civil society to flourish, and establishing an effective civil service by increasing its competence, efficiency, fairness and quality of services.
The SAPs package was on the first place targeting economic conditionalities. They were aimed at stabilizing developing countries' external and internal balances and promoting their export growth by devaluation, producer price changes, trade liberalization, privatization and supporting legal reforms (Gibbon, 1993). The SAPs package called for and indeed pressed for a pile of macro-economic reform policies aimed at redefining state functions, reduce the size and role of the state in favour of the market, reduce or eliminate entirely the state enterprise sector, etc (Mukandala, 2001).

Shivji (2006) also provides a somewhat comprehensive list of the SAPs package as he elucidates that the package included both economic and political conditionalities, especially in relation to aid. Shivji shows that whereas stabilization (economic) measures in the SAPs kit included getting rid of budget deficits, bringing down rates of inflation, getting prices right, unleashing market and liberalizing trade; the accompanying political conditionalities were in the areas such as multipartism, good governance, human rights, etc. However there was also domestic pressure for change in some African countries especially from the suffocating civil society. These reforms generally sought to reduce the role of the State in production as well as service delivery and encourage the deregulation of public enterprises. The emphasis was on maintaining macroeconomic stability, lowering inflation, cutting deficit spending, and reducing the scope and cost of government.

It is worthwhile to take stock on the impact of SAPs on African development and African Public Administration systems. A number of studies and evaluation attempts have been made (Gibbon 1993, Msambichaka et al 1995, Shivji, 2006). An overall verdict from these and many other attempts on SAPs impact assessment demonstrate that the reforms left a lot to be desired. Shivji (2006) acknowledges that the results of SAPs have been devastating as many studies by researchers have indicated. Shivji cites, among others, Gibbon (1993) who shows that even some of the modest achievements of the nationalist

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11 Ibid, pp. 11, 12
and/or developmentalist period\textsuperscript{13} were lost or undermined because the results of SAPs included decline of social indicators such as education, medical care, health, nutrition, rates of literacy and life expectancy. These were followed by increased de-industrialization and redundancies\textsuperscript{14}

With regard to SAPs reforms related to the functioning and role of the state in the economic sphere, in many instances, they have produced positive results. The privatization of public enterprises producing goods and services reduced the role of the state in areas where the private sector has often proved to be a better alternative. However, notwithstanding the positive results derived from these reforms, the retreat of the State in social areas (health, education and housing) was detrimental for many African countries.

As for the reforms related to the African public administration systems, they shook the public service to its foundation, moving it from the secure fortress of having a monopoly in the supply of public goods and services to the competitive setting of the market (Wamalwa, 1989), it had a devastating (some will argue, negative) impact on public service performance. First, by starving public agencies (particularly, those responsible for health, education, employment generation, law enforcement and justice administration) of resources, SAPs made it difficult to maintain tolerable standards in the delivery of the services. Secondly, besides destroying the incentives and motivation structure, the cost-cutting aspects of SAPs aggravated the ethics and accountability crisis confronting the African public administration systems. It was at the height of SAPs reforms that delivery of public services witnessed increasing cases of moonlighting, inflation of contract prices, bribery and corruption.(Nti, 1989; Mulokozi, et al, 1989). SAPs have also been accused of dismantling public service institutions without leaving behind any viable alternatives (Adedeji, 1992a).

Furthermore, the SAPs on the African public administration systems were generally externally propelled initiatives which in turn compromised the issue of ownership. In a second regional consultative workshop on public service reform involving African countries of Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda,

\textsuperscript{13} Among the key tasks undertaken by a few ‘visionary’ African leaders in the immediate post independence period included what has popularly come to be known as the ‘National Project’ involving such activities as africanization of the civil service, nation building and developmentalism. It is important to emphasize here that these steps were attempted by a few African leaders, including the late Father of the Nation of Tanzania, Julius K. Nyerere.

\textsuperscript{14} See Shivji 2006, p. 12
Zambia and Zimbabwe, it was categorically pointed out that the SAPs on African Public Services were mainly an imposition:

“....There was a somewhat false start to PSR (Public Service Reform) in many of the participating countries. Public Service Reform started as conditionality among many donors extending development grants or loans to the countries. Introduction of the reforms in the formative years was therefore seen as an imposition upon the developing countries by the western world institutions”\(^{15}\)

As a way of concluding an evaluation of SAPs in Africa, two verdicts could be put forward. The first verdict is the fact that the economic and social reforms were largely externally driven and in fact countries largely succumbed to the pressure from World Bank/IMF else they were not to get any assistance from the two international financial institutions. This undermined the issue of the right to state autonomy which is supposed to be part and parcel of modern nation states. That is probably why one assessor of the SAPs categorically states that most Sub-Saharan African countries ‘adopted more or less involuntarily-programmes of economic reform designed by the international financial institutions’\(^{16}\). Popular responses to adjustment in the form of riots in Sudan, Nigeria, Algeria, Ghana, Zambia, Egypt, Tunisia, Sierra Leone and Benin point to the fact that SAPs are unpopular\(^{17}\).

The second verdict in regard to the impact of SAPs is that the nature of the adjustment programmes was largely designed by World Bank/IMF without country specificity considerations. It was as if all countries were having similar characteristics; something,

\(^{15}\) See “Public Service Reform Comes of Age in Africa: Proceedings of the Second Regional Consultative Workshop on Public Service Reform held in Tanzania in 2001”, United Republic of Tanzania, Civil Service Department, President’s Office, Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, 2002, p.9


\(^{17}\) See Y.Bangura ‘Authoritarian Rule and Democracy in Africa: A Theoretical Discourse’ in Peter Gibbon et al., eds, *ibid*, note 8, p.66
which was not true. This again was at loggerheads with at least some culture and country
specific considerations which were altogether overridden by sweeping generalizations
about the situation which was facing Africa or was realistic in Africa by then.

Apart from the initial SAPs noted above, African countries have also, since 1980s, taken other
measures related to development planning approaches in the context of largely liberal market
frameworks. The measures were undertaken in an effort to establish the foundations for structural
transformation and integration of African countries into the global economy as well as towards a
path of sustainable development and economic growth.

In 1980, African leaders adopted the Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of
Africa. The Plan was designed to restructure the economy, based on the twin principles of
national and collective self-reliance and self-sustaining development. In 1985, the African
Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER) was adopted. This programme set out
measures for reducing the external debt burden and preparing a common platform for action at
sub regional, regional and international levels.

and Development (UN-PAAERD) was adopted by the United Nations at its thirteenth session.
The programme covered the period 1986-1990, and aimed at establishing the foundations for
structural transformation, increased productivity and general improvement of African economies.
The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) was
adopted in 1991. This programme was aimed mainly at the transformation, integration and
diversification of African economies so as to strengthen them as partners in world trade and to
reduce their vulnerability to external shocks.

Despite the above measures which, by and large, reduced the role of the state in national
development planning, contemporary trends in many African countries as well as in other
developing countries such as China, Singapore and Sri Lanka have revitalized the national
visioning approach. The next part of the paper attempts to shed some light on this apparently new
approach in the recent past of African history. This will be accompanied by assessing how
African public administration systems are facilitating the design and implementation of the
visioning approach.
3.0 THE 3RD PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN AFRICA (THE CONTEMPORARY PHASE): REVITALIZATION OF LONG TERM VISIONING

The recent two decades have witnessed many African countries resorting to long term visioning in the name of what has popularly come to be known as ‘national visions’. This suggesting sort of revitalization of the role of the state. This is in the context of the state being expected to return to steering national development but by acting as guide and facilitator in cooperation with other players in society. This is also associated with revitalization of some degree of regulatory function of the state instead of leaving everything to the dictates of the free market. This means that the gospel of the liberalization and free market development planning has not been fully received in Africa.

To cite some examples, the visioning approach has been recently adopted by such African countries (with their respective national development visions in blacket) as Tanzania (Vision 2025); Kenya (Vision 2030); Nigeria (Vision 2020); Botswana (Vision 2016); and Rwanda (Vision 2020) to mention only a few. These and many other African countries have established various measures and strategies through which the visions could be realized. Rwanda Vision 2020 for example is anchored on six pillars which include:

- Good governance and a capable state
- Human resource development and knowledge economy
- Private sector – led development
- Infrastructure development
- Productive high value and market oriented agriculture
- Regional and international integration

The Rwanda Vision 2020 also isolates three cross-cutting issues to include gender equality; natural resources and the environment; and science, technology and ICT.
The Tanzania Vision 2025 whose formulation began in 1995 is presented as a framework that would guide the nation to have realized the following five attributes by the year 2025:

- High quality livelihood
- Peace, stability and unity
- Good governance
- A well educated and learning society
- A competitive economy capable of producing sustainable growth and shared benefits

Implementation of Tanzania Development Vision 2025 is planned to involve:

- Developmental mindset and competitiveness
- Democratization and popular participation
- Monitoring, evaluation and review
- Governance and rule of law

Finally the Vision 2025 is anticipated to realize patriotism, nationalism and to strengthen national cohesion of all the people in society, taking into consideration current environment in the economic, political and other relevant factors. Some of the implementation measures in Tanzania have involved poverty reduction strategies and income/wealth creation strategies both in Mainland Tanzania and in Zanzibar.

The Botswana Vision 2016 is built on seven pillars which are:

- An educated, informed nation
- An open, democratic and accountable nation
- A moral and tolerant nation
- A united and proud nation
- A safe and secure nation
- A prosperous, productive and innovative nation
Reform measures in Botswana have also focused on the Performance Based Reward System Framework and Guidelines of 2004. This is the policy of the Government of Botswana to continuously improve the effectiveness of its organizations and people so as to achieve the National Development Plans and National Vision. This shows that there is a link between public administration systems reforms and national development plans and national visions.

Nigeria’s vision 2020 is implemented through, among other medium term strategies, the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) I & II. Under NEEDS, emphasis is on revitalization of the private sector as one of the important sources of wealth creation, poverty reduction and employment generation. The strategy is complemented by the State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS) in the 36 states of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Many African countries have resorted to undertake a more comprehensive reform approach to African public administration systems. Such countries include Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania, Namibia and Zambia by focusing on improving service delivery (Dodoo, 1996; Kyarimpa, 1996). The core elements of these initiatives are:

- Resuscitation of the basic ethos of professionalism, loyalty, dedication, accountability, and transparency;
- Restructuring and streamlining of the central government agencies (to ensure that they are well-focused, customer-oriented, as well as cost- and time-conscious);
- Review of personnel policies and practices (with emphasis on the introduction of new performance appraisal systems, review of the personnel rules and regulations, application of ICT to personnel management functions, and in the case of
Zambia and a few other countries, appointment of permanent secretaries on fixed-term contracts;

- Rationalization of pay and grading structures, and the introduction of performance-and productivity-related pay (including the conduct of organization and efficiency reviews);
- Labour redeployment and redundancy management;
- Improvement of records and information management systems;
- Launching of comprehensive decentralization and devolution programs.

It is our considered opinion that despite the above measures, there is need for further deliberation on the extent to which African countries has developed the capacity of their public Administration systems and structures to support the realization of the national visions and medium term strategies. This is because reducing poverty and increase living standards of the citizens depend on substantial resources and efforts.

We acknowledge that African countries have made a great effort to enhance the performance of the public sector to life up to their designated role as a key driver for developmental processes. In general, across the African region as a whole and in the world over there was, and still is, a shift in the thinking (Paradigmatic shift) on how public services are to be managed. This is essentially a shift from the neat and classical Weberian public bureaucracy to the domain of the New Public Management (NPM). Although there are different interpretations about the components of this new paradigm; there is a general consensus that the following components reflect the NPM. These are:

- Deregulation of the line management
- Conversion of civil service Departments into free standing agencies or enterprises
- Performance based accountability through contracts.
- Competitive mechanisms such as contracting out and internal market
- Downsizing.
However much still needs to be done in terms of addressing the challenges that would appropriately enable public administration systems to play a vital, effective and instrumental role toward designing and implementation of national development visions and medium term strategies in African countries. This is in terms of necessary capacity or success factors. This is important because African public administration still face a number of challenges despite the interventions so far made. (Mukandala, 2000) isolated major challenges confronting public administration in Africa. The isolated major challenges are:

- The crisis of institutions;
- Continued domination of the colonial logic in public administration;
- Poor or non-implementation of legislated policies;
- Persistent and endemic corruption;
- The articulation of structural adjustment programmes with privatization and civil service reform.

The above and other related problems and challenges suggests the need for a package of capacity or success factors for enhancing the contribution of African public administrations systems in as far as African national development planning and implementation (in the context of national visions and medium term strategies) is concerned. We propose the following package:

One, African countries need to improve the performance of their public sectors if they are going to achieve their goals of growth, poverty reduction, and the provision of better services for their citizens. Effective Public Service Human Resource Development should be addressed as part of a capacity building process towards good governance and development. This is because performance of the public service as well as its effects and impact are all pervading to every sector and segment of the nation, both public and private, and indeed civil service or public service is probably the primary determinant of the nation’s socio-economic development.\(^\text{18}\)

Two, national planning agenda needs to be investigated further and elaborated more rigorously in order to ensure that it addresses the twin goals of democratic governance and sustainable human development. This is particularly so with respect to meeting the Millennium Development Goals set for 2015, at which time the number of people living in poverty should have been reduced by a half. It is clear at this stage that a bolder developmental agenda is needed and Africa cannot continue to expect that the mere promotion of growth in the formal part of the economy will be enough to precipitate an inclusive development path toward sustainable human development.

Three, it is necessary to explore what bold and proactive strategies by the state would be feasible in the current global environment. Notwithstanding existing global constraints, it is necessary that efforts at regional and continental levels also address the need for more representative and equitable global governance structures as well, in order to complement calls for similar structures at the national, regional and continental levels.

Four, there is need for a clearly articulated synergy between national vision agenda and public administration systems for designing and implementation of the same (agenda).

Five, a more rigorous synergy must be well articulated between national Visions and respective medium term strategies

Six, there is need for elaborate and tangible indicators of the link between economic growth and social wellbeing

Seven, countries need to strengthen the research agenda on issues related to national visioning and accompanying medium term strategies.

Eight, one of the problems of public administration systems in Africa is institutional crisis. There is need for strengthening public administrations systems and institutions
Nine, In order to enhance the role of public administration systems in Africa in as far as realization of Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), poverty reduction strategies and improved quality and access to basic social services are concerned, there is need for search for an effective accountability and democratic governance system

Ten, there is need for mutual interdependence on the part of politicians and bureaucrats and at any point in time interference in the conduct of responsibilities should be avoided

Eleven, requirements for good performance of public administration systems in regard to their contribution to national visions and medium term strategies need to be redefined

Twelve, given contemporary complex policy and administrative environments, human resources capacity need to be improved so as to enhance delivery of quality goods and services by public administrators in Africa

Thirteen, public administration systems in Africa should not be regarded as mere implementators of national visions and medium term strategies but should also be involved in the design, regulation and evaluation of them

Fourteen, realization of national visions and medium term strategies entails joint effort from key stakeholders such as the government, public administration systems, civil society, private sector, relevant international stakeholders, etc. This suggests need for strategic networking

Fifteen, public administration systems and other key stakeholders involved in designing and implementing national development visions and accompanied medium term strategies should be ready to uphold the learning culture.

Sixteen, African countries and their respective administrative systems should try as much as possible to reduce donor dependency syndrome as this has been one of the main
constraints during the first and second phases of African development planning experiences

Seventeen, since many governments are introducing e-governance arrangements in many parts of the globe, African countries should also seek to introduce some forms of relevant e-governance frameworks that could facilitate easy mainstreaming of national visions and respective medium term strategies between and among various government MDAs and agencies.

5.0 CONCLUDING REMARKS

From the aforegoing account it is evident that African development planning and African public administration systems have passed through a number of transformations. The first one was an effort toward changing from colonial to national (African) development planning and public administration systems. It was also characterized by five year development planning that was heavily dependent on external donors for funding. We have noted that this first phase ended up in serious misgivings in as far as effective national development planning and effective public administration systems are concerned. This was essentially in the 1960s-1970s.

The second transformation was in the 1980s gauged in the framework of SAP and a few other initiatives. We have noted that this second transformation was also associated with formidable constraints in which the liberal market orthodoxy proved limiting in regard to national development planning. The neoliberal public administration systems reforms undertaken during the phase also proved to demand further redefinition and reforms as they resulted into limited contribution to implementation of national visions and medium term strategies.
The third phase of transformation which began in the 1990s has witnessed search for national development planning that employs the national visioning approach accompanied by medium term strategies. This is the contemporary and ongoing one. We have noted that it is grounded on the need to approach development planning more comprehensively. This comprehensive approach has also been employed in regard to reforming public administration systems and is grounded on principles of what is popularly known as the New Public Management.

It is this current transformation in which the paper has examined the extent to which there are necessary capacities and success factors for realization of national visions in African countries. An important observation from all these attempts of transforming public services, especially the two first initiatives is that they did not bring celebrated impact in terms of quality public goods and services and in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

The ongoing initiatives and reforms in the African public administration systems and national visioning are essentially driven by the need of improving the efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of public goods and services. Some success and problematic or challenging issues have been noted in this account. We argue that improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the national development planning as well as that of public administration role toward design and implementation of national visions is generally a complex and broad issue. Likewise, its scope is also wide, entailing among other things, need for promotion of equity, participation, empowerment and solidarity as well as a renewed role of the state in national development. It is our hope that the package of necessary capacity or success factors which we have suggested in this paper might contribute significantly toward elevating the efficiency and effectiveness of not only national development planning but also that of public administration systems in Africa.
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