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Yusuf Bangura and Steve Kayizzi-Mugerwa

Africa in the New Millennium

Edited by Raymond Suttner

Discussion Paper

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Indexing terms

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Introduction

Raymond Suttner

Much time has been expended in developing plans for an "African renaissance", in particular initiatives by the Presidents of South Africa, Algeria and Nigeria and at first separately by the President of Senegal. These two conceptions have now been merged in what is called the New Africa Initiative of the Organisation of African Unity, adopted at the summit of 11 July 2001.[1]

The current emphasis on African recovery is based on ideas of good governance and as with most international initiatives that depend on consensus, it is not clear how every party to the process actually understands these terms. What impact will the varying conceptions of these terms have on the implementation of this programme for recovery? How will it impact on its realisation that some of the conceptions are not understood in the same way in different states of the continent? For example, in paragraph 47 of the New Africa Initiative, African leaders will take joint responsibility, *inter alia*:

> To promote and protect democracy and human rights in their respective countries and regions, by developing clear standards of accountability, transparency and participative governance at the national and subnational levels; (See also paragraph 53.)

And in paragraph 54.1 we read:

> African initiative states will also undertake a series of commitments towards meeting basic standards of good governance and democratic behaviour while, at the same time, giving support to each other....

It also refers to institutional reforms "promoting participatory decision-making".

Admirable these goals may be, but is it realistic to expect that all signatories understand them the same way, and if not, what impact will such divergent interpretations have on their implementation?

The papers that follow represent elements of a widening debate on democracy on the African continent. Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja warns against being sanguine about the impact of democratisation. Instead of satisfying the popular aspirations for freedom, peace and material prosperity, "the democratisation process has in many areas of our continent transformed beautiful dreams into ghastly

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[1] The document 'A New African Initiative: Merger of the Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Programme (MAP) and Omega Plan', can be found on the website of the South African Department of Foreign Affairs, www.dfa.gov.za/events/afrinit.htm. It can also be found in Henning Melber, *The New African Initiative and the African Union – A Preliminary Assessment and Documentation*. 36 pp. (Current African Issues, No. 25), The Nordic Africa Institute 2001.

nightmares. Instead of joyful singing and dancing to celebrate the fall of dictators, most of our people have been totally disillusioned with the entire process, while some have become its tragic victims".

We know that democracy and multi-partyism on the continent have emerged in diverse ways, many of these involving processes favouring incumbent military leaders, who have been transformed into elected Presidents, or heads of one-party states changed into leaders of majority parties in a multi-party system.

According to Adebayo Olukoshi, Nzongola-Ntalaja's pessimism may be somewhat over-stated, and we need to count democratisation as a gain in itself and something to be measured by standards that recognise contradictory elements. It is characterised by "advances, setbacks and stalemates, as well as the negotiations and struggles, which are taking place to overcome the difficulties that arise".

Olukoshi also criticises Nzongola-Ntalaja for instrumentalising democracy, seeing the victory of democracy as measurable by whether or not it provides other goods, such as economic transformation, bettering the lives of the population and so on. While I do not myself understand Nzongola-Ntalaja in this way, it is important to stress that democracy is valuable in itself, that it is a huge gain for the people of the continent to achieve freedom from colonialism or apartheid, and subsequently to rid their countries of postcolonial dictators and have elections, to establish multi-partyism and pluralism. Certainly, the character of these gains is by no means unassailable or satisfactorily realised in most cases, but they nevertheless represent what we in South Africa call a "democratic breakthrough", on which further advances can be built.

We need to entrench in our thinking an appreciation of the importance of this terrain in its own right and the necessity for strengthening and deepening it. And deepening democracy must include further elaboration of the question of popular involvement and popular power. In Nzongola-Ntalaja's paper (and also in the New Africa Initiative – e.g. in paragraphs 43–47) there is a fair amount of generalised reference to popular involvement and popular self-empowerment. This needs to be elaborated. What is the character of popular involvement envisaged? How is it to be sustained and how does it relate to institutions of representative democracy? How is it to be resourced and sustained in situations where organisation may require extensive travel over long distances, where illiteracy is high and media very limited?

Other questions that need to be interrogated include: How should organs of popular power relate to an elected and legitimate government? To what extent does a legitimate government replace the need for popular power? If the need for popular power continues under a democratically elected government, how do the popular organs and institutions of representative government relate to one another? Must the relationship be conflictual or if it is not conflictual how do the two connect without the popular organ losing its popular character? And where do we understand organs of popular power to be located, at what level of political activities? Is it only local, or at every level?

It is also important to recognise that part of the context of the recent wave of democratisation on the continent, involved equating democracy with multipartyism. This has meant an essentially limited and static conception of democratic development and a reluctance to consider democracy as a continuous process. Naturally, the fixation with multi-party elections as the embodiment of democracy has also meant an impatience or reluctance to give weight to popular empowerment and self-empowerment as part of a nation's democracy.

Another part of the context has been massive pressure exerted by funding agencies on states to ensure they withdraw from the economy and leave more and more to the whims of the market. While the "wave of democratisation" has seen more and more elections, it has also led to the election of governments with less and less power. It has seen a negation of many of the features, which make democratic power meaningful, in terms of capacity to do something to better the socio-economic conditions of a nation.

In dealing with obstacles to democratic development, Nzongola-Ntalaja argues convincingly that access to resources of the state should not be the prerogative of whoever is in power. This he says is one of the reasons why incumbents are reluctant to leave office. There needs to be a breaking of the pattern of private control of these resources. Yusuf Bangura also argues that "democracy and development will not take firm roots in Africa if its elites are uncomfortable with the rules of the game, and express or hold fears about exclusion."

Nzongola-Ntalaja argues for power sharing as a way of resolving this problem but does not elaborate on its meaning. I do agree that it is necessary to break from the pattern where the winner takes all the "spoils" and the loser faces harassment. But power sharing is an idea that needs to be used with caution since, by its nature, it is a qualification of democracy, a sharing on a basis that usually does not correspond with what has been the proportion of votes at the ballot box. It is also important that we do not assume that what have been successful formulae in one context will necessarily survive export to any or every other. We need, in considering "power sharing" to consider the conditions that make it viable (or unviable) and how or whether it will enhance other aims of African recovery.

For me, as a South African, it is interesting the way Nzongola-Ntalaja articulates the national question, that is, mainly as the resolution of the question of minority peoples within a national state. Now we, in South Africa, have sometimes downplayed this in the face of the divisions of the apartheid era, aimed at negating majority rule. Essentially we have tended to see the resolution of the national question as entailing the majority achieving its rightful place. This is exemplified in the key demand of the Freedom Charter, adopted in 1955, which reads "The People Shall Govern!" Such key documents of our struggle also pay attention to diversity and rights of minorities, as for example, in the Charter clause headed: "All National Groups Shall Have Equal Rights!" and subsequently in the country's democratic constitution adopted in 1996 recognising eleven official languages.[1] Despite these elements of protection of minority rights, this question has

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[1] The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, sections 6, 30, 31.

tended to enjoy much less attention than majority rule, within our understanding of the resolution of the national question.[1]

In the struggle against apartheid it was essential to emphasise unity in the face of all attempts to artificially divide the population and the country. In the stark conditions of that conflict there was not always sufficient room for nuance or celebration of difference. Consequently in our emphasis on national unity, we may sometimes have downplayed the distinct components of that unity. Perhaps this is all "old hat" to writers in other countries who have long criticised the tendency of a national movement to constitute itself as "the nation" and to make the realisation of national aspirations self-evidently and fully through the national liberation movement turned state party.[2] Indeed Henning Melber in a recent contribution makes similar points generalised for postcolonial Africa. Referring to efforts to constitute national identity in the context of wars of liberation, he writes:

> In these situations, the aim was to create national cohesion as part and parcel of the struggle for liberation, which was seen as a common historical experience shared by all constituent parts of the emerging nations and which thus also would overcome regional differences. ...[3]

In the situations of the anti-colonial struggle, already defined as national, the nation became the predominantly politically determined antithesis. It confronted squarely the colonial system of an ethnic-particularist apparatus of power designed and directed by a white minority and utilising various ethnic divisions that had been fostered or, at least, furthered by colonial rule. Thus, anti-colonial nationalism was based, above all, on the negation of foreign rule by the organisation of the liberation struggle, i.e. the "national" liberation movement. The essential slogan of anti-colonial nationalism thus appeals to the one nation in contrast to manifold "ethnically" oriented loyalties (the prominent slogan "one xyz, one nation" is a special case in point). The myth of "nation" is thereby set forth as a challenge to the colonially enforced myth of "tribe".[4]

The dialectical character of what is required to avert these dangers in the postcolonial nation-building and constitution-making process, is well captured in the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance [IDEA]'s report on Nigeria:

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[1] For the text of the Freedom Charter and commentary, see inter alia: Selected Writings on the Freedom Charter 1955–1985. A Sechaba Commemorative Publication. African National Congress. London 1985, Raymond Suttner and Jeremy Cronin. Thirty Years of the Freedom Charter. Ravan Press. Johannesburg. 1986 and Pallo Jordan "The South African Liberation Movement and the Making of a New Nation" in Maria van Diepen (Ed) The National Question in South Africa. Zed Books. London. 1988

[2] On this I have benefited from the work of and discussions with Professor Michael Neocosmos, soon to take up a position at the University of Pretoria.

[3] Henning Melber "The Politics of Nation-Building A Theoretical Introduction" in Henning Melber (Ed) Namibia. A Decade of Independence. 1990–2000. The Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit. Windhoek. 2000, p. 5.

[4] P. 7.

> Constitution-making is a process by which a nation births and writes itself, its past, present and future. Throughout Nigeria, from North to South, East to West, calls for a constitutional development process resonate. Expressed in different forms and with different mutations and areas of emphasis, one thing became clear. Nigerians want an inclusive, consultative and participatory process in which the composite parts of the whole, called Nigeria, can be examined as equals and partners in the process of nation-building and continued existence.[1]

Likewise we need to consider what impact it will have that conceptions of gender equality (mentioned in the New Africa Initiative in paragraphs 47, 49, 50) are not understood in the same way in different states of our continent (and indeed within states). Is there not a tendency in some parts of Africa to celebrate the 'traditional' role of African women, something that many feminists would consider incompatible with gender equality? Must we understand references to gender equality as more long-term aspirations, or are they part of a programme that is seen as realisable within some defined time period? If this is not the case, what steps are envisaged to deal with practices and policies, which hinder women's participation in a whole range of societal activities? What is the mechanism for translating continental and global policies and agreements into the domestic sphere and national policies of governments of the continent? This is a critical issue in the light of many governments being signatories to UN and other Covenants without there being adequate processes and structures for implementation.

But perhaps here one is faced with one of the problems that inevitably arise in any effort to build consensus amongst various states. That one may have the most advanced, logical and emancipatory vision is only one element in the equation. In order to turn this into a continental vision one has to win the support of other states, whose starting points may be different. That means that there will have to be compromise and negotiation. Every state tries to win a meaning that is closest to its own vision. No one state can simply "implement" its own vision. And once there is consensus, the struggle for meaning moves to the question of future understanding of that consensus, where every state tries afresh to breathe its own meaning into the interpretation.

Taking the discussion to the question of globalisation, Yusuf Bangura's tightly argued paper questions some of the terms in which Africa's engagement with globalisation is characterised, in particular the statement that Africa is marginalized. In Bangura's view:

> There is a lack of correspondence between the low levels of connectivity observed at the levels of trade, finance, production and communication (as well as in the poor performance at the level of macro-economic outcomes), and high levels of connectivity at the levels of policy and institutional reform.

He argues that at the level of policy and institutional reforms, Africa is highly integrated in, and not marginal within, the world system. What he means by this is that Africa has in fact adopted many of the prescriptions of the International

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[1] Democracy in Nigeria. Continuing Dialogue(s) for Nation-Building. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) 2000, reprinted 2001, p. 12.

Monetary Fund/World Bank on economic policy reforms, institutional change to support the economic policy reforms and democratisation.

> What we find when we examine economic policy issues in Africa is a continent that is firmly locked into the processes of global economic policymaking as defined by the Bretton Woods institutions. We do not see marginalisation, autonomy or isolation, but high levels of dependence or integration into the policy-making processes of institutions and governments that play central roles in the evolution of the global economy.

In analysing the character of the institutional changes implemented in order to raise technocratic capacities in the economic field in Africa, Bangura notes the anti-democratic consequences:

> It is assumed by donors and governments that these technocrats do not only connect with markets and read market trends correctly; the reforms they pursue will lead to optimal outcomes for the economy and society and their fundamentals should, therefore, not be unduly challenged by the lay public. In some countries, such as those that are heavily dependent on official development finance, multilateral funding agencies have played central roles in identifying, supporting and in some cases recruiting technocrats for key policy-making institutions. Indeed, policy-making in these countries has been more prone to capture by international financial institutions than in emerging market economies.

One of the results of the public sector reforms implemented at outside-instigation in Africa is that the continent is relatively under-governed, compared with other developing regions. Bangura rightly remarks that state reform to promote efficiency and better delivery of services is not the same as downsizing. The attacks on the state, he says, "have produced the anomalous situation where the poorest region is now the least governed in the world...."

> Low levels of governance translate as limited state presence in society, especially in rural areas; fewer extension services; fewer policemen and security; and inability to strategise effectively. It explains why rebel groups have found it easy to prey on the rural populations and why the same rebel groups tend to move swiftly to the capital to overthrow governments.

Bangura (in similar words to Nzongola-Ntalaja) argues that it is necessary to develop governance reforms that regulate the struggle for access to the state without plunging societies into chaos. At the same time there seems in Bangura's conception of governance reforms to be little emphasis on popular involvement. Capacity is treated almost entirely as a technical question, abstracted from any conception of democracy, which includes popular empowerment.

Steve Kayizzi-Mugerwa, in his brief contribution, makes similar allusions to African states following prescriptions for structural adjustments but apparently without any noticeable effect in terms of growth or alleviation of poverty, apart from in a handful of countries (and one might add, with substantial additional negative effects in many of these).

In looking for a way out of the situation where Africa does not grow nor attract the investment that is needed for growth and development, he argues for the continent to market itself better, that it has to achieve more credibility at the level of policymaking. He notes the tendency for the African continent to be viewed as

a homogeneous entity and for troubles in one spot to be interpreted as reflecting negatively on the continent as a whole.

In order to deal with this, Kayizzi-Mugerwa sees the problem as lying in the way the continent markets itself, that it should takes steps to enhance its credibility.

I am not sure that the resolution of this problem of perceptions lies mainly in the hands of those who are wrongly perceived or unfairly perceived by investors. It has a lot to do with combating a lazy, arrogant and often racist, northern view of the south, an unwillingness to look for complexities. We need to continue trying to engage these countries as well as our own people in a debate about the continent's future. I think it needs to be a debate and not one side lecturing the other. There are long traditions of democratic debate in Africa, even in countries that spent decades under military rule.[1] There is something for each side to learn from one another.

This interchange must feed into an ongoing discussion that also problematises the question of democracy, which interrogates its various meanings and the character of different forms and sites of popular involvement. While democracy is valuable in itself the debate must also consider what obstacles stand in the way of democracy "delivering" a better life and how these can be overcome.

The contributions that follow were prepared for a one-day workshop on "Africa in the new millennium" held in Stockholm in May 2001. The workshop was initiated by the African Heads of Mission based in Stockholm, with the collaboration of the Nordic Africa Institute. We are grateful to Sida for covering the costs of the meeting.

The idea of this workshop was not to counter "negative" perceptions of Africa with "positive" ones. Nor was it to arrive at finalised ideas or prescriptions for governments or the continent as a whole. The aim was to raise important questions, which may help contextualise and deal with the problems facing the continent. It was an attempt to go below the surface of immediate crises and open up a debate around Africa and its international relations. It is hoped that publication of these papers will encourage further debate, and contribute towards realising the goal of African recovery.[2]

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[1] See Democracy in Nigeria, op. cit. p. xxvii

[2] I have benefited from comments made on earlier drafts by Nomboniso Gasa, Caroline Kihato and Henning Melber. They do not bear any responsibility for the final product.

Political Reforms and Conflict Management in the African Democratic Transition

Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja

INTRODUCTION

Like the independence struggle during the 1950s, the current democratic transition has given rise to popular aspirations for freedom, peace and material prosperity. However, instead of satisfying these expectations, which are known today as "democracy dividends", the democratization process has in many areas of our continent transformed beautiful dreams into ghastly nightmares. Instead of joyful singing and dancing to celebrate the fall of dictators, most of our people have been totally disillusioned with the entire process, while some have become its tragic victims.

How do we explain such an outcome? Can we say, as it was alleged with respect to some of the tragic cases of decolonization, that the countries in which violence has occurred on a large scale were not ready for democratization? A less simplistic and more useful approach to understanding the current problems and setbacks of the democratic transition is one that would focus on the contentious issues involved, the manner in which they are likely to bring about conflict and what needs to be done to prevent, manage or resolve such conflict. Of all the contentious issues of political reform, three are particularly relevant in this regard. They relate to (1) the reluctance of incumbents to leave office; (2) the national question; and (3) the problem of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion.

THE RELUCTANCE OF INCUMBENTS TO LEAVE OFFICE

The first and most important issue of political reform in the African democratic transition is the misappropriation of state power to the benefit of one individual and his entourage, who not only have privatized the state and its resources, but also are reluctant to give up power and its attendant privileges. Instead of a set of impartial institutions serving the general interest, the state has for the most part been transformed into a private property monopolized by the ruler, along with his relatives and cronies. A major objective of the African democracy movement since the October 1988 revolt against the single-party system in the streets of Algiers has been to change this state of affairs.

Although this objective is common to all transitions, whether they took place through elections or through the sovereign national conference, it was in the latter case that the issue was best articulated. For the antidote to personal rule and absolute power could be nothing less than the recovery of *popular sovereignty*. The people, as the *primary sovereign*, went to the conference – itself defined as "the people in conference" – to decide on its own destiny. In this regard, the sovereignty of the conference resided in the fact that it constituted the supreme authority of the state in this emergency or crisis period, on the one hand, and that its decisions were binding on all parties and groups, on the other (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 1998:7–8).

Unfortunately, the democratic transition has been delayed or slowed down by the reluctance of incumbents to leave office. Some have resisted change in a violent way, while others have succeeded in maintaining power by manipulating the rules of the game, buying off the weakest elements in the opposition and rigging elections.

The Great Lakes region, which is still embroiled in war today, has suffered the most as a result of the violent backlash of authoritarian rulers against democracy in Mobutu's Congo (Amnesty International, 1993) and in Juvénal Habyarimana's Rwanda. Using the ethnic card to divide the population and weaken the democracy movement, the Mobutu regime unleashed ethnic cleansing on a massive scale in North Kivu and Katanga provinces in 1992. In North Kivu, the victims were people of Rwandan origin, both Hutu and Tutsi, who were forced to seek refuge across the border in Rwanda. Between 1992 and 1994, over one million people from Kasai, whose families had lived and worked in Katanga since the establishment of the Belgian mining industry in 1906, were forced to negotiate up to 1,000 km to find their areas of origin in Eastern and Western Kasai provinces. Thousands died along the way of exhaustion, hunger and attacks by wild animals. Those who chose evacuation by train were condemned to months of waiting in unsanitary railroad stations, overloaded trains prone to derailment because of the defective state of the rail network and technical breakdowns, as well as to murderous attacks on and off trains by the armed militia of Gabriel Kyungu wa Kumwanza, the provincial governor.

The story of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda is too well known to need repeating here. Suffice it to say that extremists in the entourage of President Habyarimana were not prepared to see their control over the state and its resources diminish by sharing power with the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) and moderate Hutus as provided for by the Arusha Peace Agreement of 4 August 1993. They found it convenient to rally support around the exclusionist ideology of "Hutu Power", according to which killing Tutsi was a civic duty (Gourevitch, 1998:123).

Less ominous than the "final solution" scenarios of genocide and ethnic cleansing, other forms of violence against democracy have also marred the democratic transition in Africa. These include electoral violence and violent attacks by ruling party thugs against the opposition, the most recent examples of which

come from Zimbabwe, Zanzibar (Tanzania) and Côte d'Ivoire, and the outright overthrow of democratically elected regimes, as in Burundi, Niger, Sierra Leone, Congo-Brazzaville, Comoro and Guinea-Bissau. Unlike inter-party warfare, which is limited in the intensity of violence and the number of casualties, the coups or attempted coups have often plunged the countries concerned into ugly civil wars, with untold atrocities.

A common denominator between these situations of violence and those in which a more or less promising shift has taken place from authoritarianism to democracy, or from military to civilian rule, is the absence of a democratic culture. By democratic culture I mean a commitment to democracy as a set of three basic ideas (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 1997:10–15):

– Democracy as a moral imperative, or a permanent aspiration of human beings for freedom, for a better social and political order, one that is more human and more or less egalitarian;
– Democracy as a social process, or a continuous process of promoting equal access to fundamental human rights and civil liberties for all; and
– Democracy as political practice, or a mode of governance based on the principles of popular sovereignty, the rule of law, accountability, participation and periodic alternation of rulers.

Unfortunately, this is not the meaning that African rulers and the world powers that have made it a conditionality for assistance attach to democracy. For these two groups, who tend to make a caricatural identification of democracy with elections, all that seems to matter is the holding of elections. Incidentally, Seymour Martin Lipset, one of the major figures in Western political thought today, agrees with Joseph Schumpeter's 1942 definition of democracy as the "competitive struggle for the people's vote" (Lipset, 1993). Needless to say, this is a very simplistic view. For the question of democracy goes beyond the holding of elections to the realization of democratic principles of governance in practice and to the balance of social forces in the political community. In its fullest sense, democracy is meaningless without economic and social rights. It means nothing to people who cannot eat properly, have a roof over their heads, find a job, send their children to school and have access to primary health care (PHC).

However free and fair they might be, elections per se cannot ensure genuine democracy. In the absence of adequate control mechanisms, they can be manipulated through electoral fraud and/or through rules of the game that reduce the chances for fairness. It is interesting to note that before the advent of one-party and military dictatorships, free and fair elections were held in independent Africa, with the results generally credible and widely accepted by both the contenders and the electorate. These elections were organized and administered with little or no external supervision and required no large contingents of international observers.

Today, on the other hand, most African elections are credible only if they are certified as free and fair by foreign observers. This is unfortunate, for much of

international surveillance is superficial, as it generally intervenes late in the electoral process, usually at the time of voting, and long after the cards have already been stacked against challengers through pre-electoral processes such as the census, voter registration, the designation of polling stations and the design of the ballot itself. It is difficult to see how the observers can certify the elections as transparent when they only have limited information on the pre-electoral processes. More important than external observers is the need for electoral administration to be entrusted to a truly independent electoral commission, and one with sufficient time and material means to conduct its business successfully. Other requirements for success include close monitoring of its work by civil society organizations and judicial review.

Such mechanisms are needed to ensure the fairness of the process, prevent unnecessary violence and, in the case of the judiciary, resolve electoral disputes. Post-electoral violence either occurs spontaneously, by people who feel cheated by the unfairness of the process, real or perceived, or is instigated by the losers. When the latter happen to be in power, the result is an electoral coup, the most spectacular being the one that took place in Niger in 1996, when General Ibrahim Barre Maïnassara dismissed the independent electoral commission while it was still counting the ballots, appointed a new commission and had it declare him the winner.

Generally, there is a tendency among losers, even those in elections that are widely seen as transparent, to reject the verdict of the ballot box. This is a contempt for the popular will, and it is a manifestation of an arrogant belief that elections are held to be won, and not lost. It is a belief that is reinforced by a widely held conception of electoral outcomes as a zero sum game in which the winners get everything while losers are denied not only access to state power and resources, but also their fundamental rights as human beings, including the rights to earn a decent livelihood and to personal security. Thus, just as incumbent heads of state see no life beyond the presidential palace, losers are so concerned about being vulnerable on so many fronts that they are uncomfortable with contemplating life after elections.

This is why there is an emerging consensus today that power-sharing is the kind of political arrangement needed to ensure peace and security in the African democratic transition. There is need to avoid the politics of exclusion and a conflict-ridden transition. All the relevant political forces must have a share of executive power if the transition is to succeed. Given the current level of economic and social development in Africa, power-sharing is justified on two grounds. First, there is a broad national consensus on economic and social policy. Second, since the bone of contention in most African political conflicts is access to the state and the resources it controls (Markakis, 1987, 1991), power-sharing should reassure the losers and their followers that they will not be denied access to these goods. Consequently, they would not feel excluded from a new social contract between the state and society, nor consider their well-being and security as being threatened.

As for incumbent heads of state, security means a secure retirement without worries – physical, material and legal. Providing such guarantees may ease their exit from power, but it creates a dilemma for society when the individuals involved had come to power by illegal means or had committed economic and political crimes. Recently, a Nigerian citizen went to court to challenge pension benefits and national honors for former military heads of state, arguing that they do not deserve them because they had violated the nation's constitution by taking power by force. Granting them such benefits and honors, he argues, is to sanction impunity or reward crime. Presently, there is a bill in the National Assembly seeking to remove such benefits from former Nigerian military rulers.

On the other hand, there are many around the continent who feel that amnesty for rulers who may have committed crimes is essential to peace and a successful democratic transition. But the problem is not so simple. For if the president gets off the hook, it does not follow that his entourage is equally spared judicial pursuits. Hence the resistance of the *nomenklatura*, particularly the immediate presidential entourage, to the democratization process. This is what happened in Congo-Kinshasa in 1992 when, in spite of the fact that the Sovereign National Conference had allowed Mobutu to stay on as a ceremonial head of state with all his immunities, the generals and civilian advisers closest to him did their best to sabotage the democratic transition.

Arguments for amnesty are made in the name of national reconciliation. It is generally held that those guilty of corruption and of heinous acts like torture and assassinations need to reconcile with the nation as a whole in general and with their victims and/or the latter's families in particular. But for the reconciliation to be meaningful and to produce the needed catharsis, two things are required. First, those responsible for wrongful acts must acknowledge them publicly and request a pardon. For such acknowledgment is meant to throw the light or bring out the truth on the painful events so as to help prevent them from happening again. Second, there ought to be justice for the victims or their families. In addition to the truth, which may include knowledge of the sites of mass graves and other areas where bodies were thrown or the recovery of bodies for a decent burial, justice implies compensation, symbolic though it might be. These are some of the major lessons of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, which has served as a model for similar institutions on the African continent.

THE NATIONAL QUESTION

National reconciliation is also invoked as a means of redefining and reaffirming the coexistence of different ethnic and nationality groups within the artificially created colonial boundaries of African states. That interethnic conflict should rear its ugly head in this era of globalization and at a time when African integration schemes are being promoted at the subregional and regional levels requires a close examination of the relationship between the national question and the democratic transition. While mention was made earlier of the manipulation of the ethnic fac-

tor by entrenched rulers to weaken the democracy movement, it remains to be shown why appeals to tribalism and other sectional interests should fall on receptive ears.

At the outset, let me affirm that ethnic and other identity-based conflicts have nothing to do with the artificiality of African boundaries, for most boundaries in the world are artificial, in that they are lines whose exact position is often subject to disputes between states. Even natural boundaries may give rise to positional disputes, as when a river suddenly changes its course (Prescott, 2001). For those who assume that pre-colonial African boundaries were natural rather than artificial, Bruce Berman argues that "pre-colonial political and socio-cultural boundaries were marked by fuzziness and flexibility; and Africans existed within a reality of multiple, overlapping and alternative collective identities" (Berman, 1998:310). Thus it makes little sense to pretend that were ethnic boundaries respected, African countries would be more coherent ethnically and would not experience interethnic turmoil. Moreover, condemnation of artificial boundaries, however justified it might be, seems to imply that there could have been a better way for European imperialists to slice the African cake. And there is no way of redrawing the map of Africa to create ethnically homogenous nations.

Today, most countries in the world are multiethnic, and ethnic minorities have made their presence felt even in places where one would least expect them, such as in France, given its Jacobinical tradition of extreme unitarism. Due to a variety of historical reasons, the borders that separate countries cut across national or ethnic groups in parts of Europe and Asia as well. For example, ethnic Germans are found in nearly all countries surrounding the FRG from Belgium, where they enjoy the same status as a self-governing community like their more numerous Flemish and Walloon compatriots, to Central Europe. Albanians, Armenians, Basques, Hungarians and Kurds are just a few of the non-African groups straddling national borders whose plight has been highlighted in the world news media in recent times. There is also the problem of large immigrant communities whose full integration in the host countries creates some difficulty. Outside of Africa, the two major cases are those of ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia and ethnic Russians in Central Asia and Eastern Europe, including the Baltic republics. Ethnic Indians have also faced similar problems elsewhere, including East Africa, particularly in Uganda under Idi Amin, and more recently in the Fiji islands.

Where national boundaries have been a factor in African conflicts, they have more to do with cross-border violence than with interethnic turmoil domestically. The war in the Great Lakes region has less to do with colonial boundaries than with the expansionist aims of states and rivalry over resources in an unstable environment. Had the Congolese state and armed forces not collapsed under the weight of the corruption of the Mobutu regime, it is doubtful that Lilliputian states like Rwanda and Uganda would have dared to invade, occupy and plunder the wealth of their giant neighbor. The cross-border violence in the Mano River region is also a case of a war of resources in which domestic warlords are aligned with elements of the international financial criminality, which includes Mafia

groups, states, mining transnationals, off-shore banks, arms merchants and drug traffickers, all of whom make huge profits from crises (Le Monde diplomatique, 2000).

Since 1960, only two instances of irredentism have caused problems in Africa. The first and major case is that of Somali irredentism, which has become a dormant force since the collapse of the Somali state in 1990 and the breakdown of the Somali Democratic Republic into three state entities (Somalia, Somaliland, Puntland) and numerous warlord fiefdoms. The second and minor one is that of the Ewe of the Volta region of Ghana, who were separated from their kith and kin in Togo in the wake of World War I.

Having disposed of the boundary issue as a possible basis of the national question, what can we say about ethnic consciousness, the favorite theme of modernization theorists and the dominant world news media? In May 1994, at the height of the genocide in Rwanda, I was interviewed on the U.S. National Public Radio in Washington by a reporter who kept insisting in spite of my increasingly angry protests that the Hutu and Tutsi "tribes" have been killing each other for over four centuries. This position, according to which ethnic conflicts are simply a re-enactment of ancient enmities that were momentarily repressed under colonialism, is a reading of the African reality from the standpoint of pseudo-scientific racism, which both Frantz Fanon and Sven Lindqvist have denounced in eloquent terms (Fanon, 1963; Lindqvist, 1996). It is also a rationalization for non-intervention on the part of the international community, whose activism vis-à-vis crimes against humanity in the Balkans has not been matched with respect to the horror stories of Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Congo-Kinshasa.

Since identities are historically constructed, it is important to explain the environment in which they evolve as well as the circumstances under which they can be mobilized politically. Moreover, identities are so dynamic that they are seldom permanent, even for durable social groupings like nationalities. Like all identity groups, ethnic groups can appear and disappear historically. For example, the Luba empire, which arose in Central Africa in the sixteenth century, has given rise to several ethnic groups living today in a vast area of Congolese territory from Lake Tanganyika to the Kasai River. In spite of having the same origin, these groups have maintained antagonistic relations, the most serious episodes in the last 42 years being the 1959–60 civil war between Lulua and Luba-Kasai, two groups with identical social and political structures and speaking the same language, and the ethnic cleansing of Kasaians referred to earlier, which was carried out under the leadership of the Luba-Katanga governor of the province. These three and other Luba groups are no longer the Luba of the pre-colonial period, as new ethnic identities have evolved from the primordial group.

The Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Rwanda and Burundi follows a similar social dynamic, although it involves two separate groups that were originally differentiated on social and occupational bases. The similarity consists in the construction of separate ethnic identities out of a commonality in language, religion, culture and history. Unlike ethnic groups in much of Africa, the Hutu and the Tutsi do

not have separate homelands. For them, as for many other groups in Africa, the process of ethnic identity construction and mobilization was tied to both the colonial strategy of divide and rule and intra-élite competition for status, wealth and power.

Political mobilization along ethnic lines began during the struggle for independence, as the African élite had to mobilize the masses behind their social and political demands in order to win concessions from the colonialists. In many colonies, ethnic and ethnically based mutual aid associations were the only avenue for political action in the absence of viable political parties and trade unions. Although the major nationalist parties tended to be multiethnic mass movements, the tradition of ethnic political mobilization did allow politicians to make use of the ethnic card when it served their interests, particularly in electoral politics and in the jockeying for high state positions.

If it is true that the initiative for ethnic mobilization comes from the élite, it does not follow that the identities on which such mobilization is based can be created out of nowhere through political manipulation. For that would reduce ethnicity to an epiphenomenon. More useful for the connection between the national question and the democratic transition are questions regarding the conditions under which identity differences can lead to violent conflicts and whether there is a relationship between these conflicts and the current political situation of Africa in the world system. As forms of social polarization and antagonism, ethnic and other identity-based conflicts involve the struggle over power, physical space, or social well-being, and have to do with both the biological needs for material goods and the socio-psychological needs for identity, security, recognition, participation and autonomy (Amoo, 1997).

As indicated above, there is ample empirical evidence that identity-based conflicts are not necessarily a function of "primordial sentiments" (Geertz, 1963) or ancient enmities. Since identity sentiments are circumstantial, in that their intensity varies according to circumstances, *threat*, real or imagined, is a crucial variable in the conflict situation. Thus, in situations of relative security, the identity of a social group is not a matter of particular concern to its members. It is when a threat arises, or is perceived as arising, against a group's interests, security or its very existence, that loyalty to and solidarity with fellow group members become paramount.

The rising number of identity-based conflicts in Africa today is undoubtedly a function of the economic and political instability resulting from the worldwide economic crisis that began in 1975 and the political dislocations of the current phase of the democratic transition. The dramatic rise in oil prices and the drastic fall in the world commodity prices for African exports in 1974 had a devastating effect on the continent. Economic conditions deteriorated greatly during the 1980s and 1990s due to unfavorable terms of trade, increase in interest rates on the external debt, reduced inflow of resources, massive capital outflows and the pernicious effects of the IMF and World Bank imposed structural adjustment programs.

The social consequences of the economic crisis have a lot to do with the increasing number of ethnic and other identity-based conflicts. At least three contributing factors have made this possible. The first is the large number of unemployed young people and school leavers with nothing to do and no hope for the future. The second factor is the ready availability of small arms from an international arms market in which the major world powers and the states of the former Soviet camp are the major sellers. And the third is the ability of power and wealth hungry warlords and political entrepreneurs to exploit the first two factors in order to achieve their aims. With the Kalashnikov or other automatic rifle as their status symbol and a tool for extortion, looting, rape and killing, unemployed young men and boys can easily be lured to join the armed bands of warlords and rebel leaders. Whether recruitment is made in an inclusive manner or on the basis of ethnicity is a function of local history and the particular pattern of ethnic identity construction and mobilization in each country. It has to do with politics.

Politically, the privatization of the state, together with the resulting failure to fulfill the people's aspirations for democracy and economic development, has led to the erosion of its legitimacy and a reduced capacity for good governance. The crisis of the state thus creates an environment in which violent conflicts are likely to thrive. Whereas the breakdown of state authority creates a power vacuum that different political forces may use to advance their own agendas, the erosion of state legitimacy often compels authoritarian rulers to unleash a violent repression against the forces advocating democratic change. When the power holders themselves are defined primarily as regionally or ethnically based groups, the exclusion of other groups becomes a major ground for them to fight the system.

Thus, the very nature of the state as a regionally or an ethnically defined monopoly of power, or being identified with the president's own region of origin or ethnic group, has been a major factor of identity-based conflicts in Africa. Since the state is the primary avenue of wealth accumulation and the principal employer in most African countries, maintaining access to the state and the resources it controls is a major goal for individuals and the groups to which they belong. However, resorting to violence for purposes of changing this state of affairs leads to the destruction of existing capacity and to the further erosion of state legitimacy among the losers, who are likely to be excluded from power and state-controlled resources. The destruction of the natural environment, the physical infrastructure and invaluable social services, has reduced the capacity of the state and the economy to meet the most basic human needs. A major cause of conflict, poverty is also its inevitable result.

There is no better evidence for this than the killing and destruction of crops, livestock and dwellings, which take place in intercommunal violence and leave already impoverished villages in a most desolate and hopeless situation. The high degree of violence, even among fractions of a single ethnic group, is a testimony to the high stakes involved in intercommunal conflicts, which involve disputes over land and related resources. With land for farming and grazing diminishing steadily due to many factors, conflicting claims over land and territory have in-

creased, particularly in areas where the interests of pastoralists and agriculturalists clash, as well as those in which community boundaries are neither clear nor accepted as legitimate by one of the parties.

Numerous cases of intercommunal violence consist of rebellions by oppressed minorities. They have, as their bone of contention, conflict over land tied to the problem of identity and the recognition of the group's political, economic, social and cultural rights. In most cases, the minority groups are people who were earlier considered as slaves or migrants, and for whom the indigenous group does not recognize rights to land ownership and to their own chiefdoms. Thus, recognition of the right of a group to have its own chiefdom does entail recognition of its property rights over the land its members farm or use for grazing, together with its dignity as a grouping of human beings. The Dagomba-Kokomba conflict in northern Ghana and the Ife-Modakeke conflict in southwestern Nigeria are two cases of this kind of conflict in which land and chieftaincy are the major issues at stake. An emancipatory thrust is also part of the indigenous peoples' resistance to Hausa-Fulani hegemony in the southern region of Kaduna State in Nigeria (Suberu, 1996:48–65).

> Acts of intercommunal violence by a minority ethnic group may also constitute acts of rebellion against political and social oppression by the dominant interests. Another example from Nigeria involves the ethnic minorities of the Niger Delta, for whom the oppressors have included the Nigerian state and transnational oil giants such as Shell, Chevron, Mobil and others. As one Ijaw community leader told a reporter from the Associated Press in 1999, "We, the owners of the Niger Delta have become its slaves...We are oppressed, so we don't mind fighting to the last woman or man alive (McKenzie, 1999).

It follows, then, that intercommunal violence is in many cases an attempt at political and social emancipation by an oppressed minority. Because of its negligible weight demographically, such a group may not attract as much attention as larger groups threatening to secede or advocating greater autonomy within the polity. As a matter of fact, state involvement in the prevention, management and resolution of intercommunal conflicts is a function of the strategic importance of the area affected to the wealth extraction and revenue collection priorities of the central government. If the violence is taking place in an area rich in petroleum, other mineral resources, major cash crops or tourist facilities, the response of the central government is likely to be swift and brutal. Elite units of the military may be sent over to assist the police in maintaining law and order. When the violence occurs in areas of minor importance strategically and economically, benign neglect is likely to be the prevalent attitude in African capitals.

On the other hand, the best way to deal with the rightful claims of ethnic minorities to equality of opportunity and justice is to recognize and promote the political, economic, social and cultural rights of all nationality and communal groups. In the current democratic dispensation, a federal solution and a decentralization on a large scale are two of the formulae being proposed as a solution to marginalization and a means of ending political exclusion and impotence. At the local level, there ought to be a rejection of ancient relations of superordina-

tion and subordination, or relations of clientship, according to which there are
free people with land and chieftaincy rights on the one hand, and "slaves" who
have none, on the other. However true this might be as a reflection of pre-
colonial social arrangements, or of unsettled social processes that were rendered
rigid by the colonialists, it simply does not have a place in a nascent democracy.
Land rights and local self-government ought to be granted to communities hith-
erto denied of these rights, not simply in order to end violent conflict, but as a
matter of justice, and of their inalienable rights as human beings.

At the intermediate level between the central government and local govern-
ment areas, federal or autonomy arrangements should not discriminate against
people who are not indigenous to the province or the state. Such discrimination,
which is primarily an expression of intra-élite competition for jobs, is ultimately
detrimental to national unity and national integration. While taking into account
the need to promote regional, ethnic and gender balance, the notion of power-
sharing that takes popular aspirations into account is much more profound than
the simple ethnic arithmetic that consists of the distribution of ministerial and
other high-level government positions among the élite. In its fullest sense, power-
sharing refers to the geography of power and governmental functions, which
must be decentralized to the benefit of local governments. The empowering of the
latter as the privileged arena of economic growth and development implies that
adequate means be made available to them through a better redistribution of fis-
cal revenue and a policy of financial autonomy. Secondly, power-sharing is
meaningless in the absence of effective participation by the popular masses in
governance, which is a sine qua non for any meaningful drive against poverty,
unemployment and social exclusion.

THE PROBLEM OF POVERTY, UNEMPLOYMENT AND
SOCIAL EXCLUSION

More than half of the people of Africa live on less than one U.S. dollar a day.
Many of the conflicts afflicting the continent today, whether it is poor on poor
violence in intercommunal conflicts, food riots or resistance against forced re-
movals in squatter settlements, are a function of poverty, unemployment and so-
cial exclusion. What can be done through public policy to eradicate poverty in
such a way that people can lead better lives and ensure a better future for their
children?

The low purchasing power of agricultural and pastoral producers with little or
no productive capital prevents them from meeting their basic human needs with
respect to nutrition, literacy, health and security. Without sufficient income and
political structures which are responsive to their needs, people cannot meet their
minimum nutritional requirements, pay school fees for their children, and ensure
for themselves and their families access to a healthy environment, one that in-
cludes primary health care (PHC), clean water and decent housing. Failure to

meet these needs reinforces poverty, leads to greater social deprivation and may exacerbate conflict.

Failure to transform agriculture and other economic activities in rural areas through education, training, and agricultural extension and credit programs has meant a relative lack of innovation in production tools, methods and techniques, low productivity and the reproduction of poverty. This is aggravated when peasants are also subject to exploitative and discriminatory practices by private merchants or state agencies.

It is in pursuit of their *right to earn a living wage* that peasants migrate to urban areas, where they hope to enjoy a better standard of living. Unfortunately, African urban areas are characterized by their exploding populations in unexploding economies. The economic stagnation of the last 20 years in the context of structural adjustment has meant growing unemployment, the informalization of the economy, and the inability of large segments of the population to pay the user fees required for the social services they need. In some ways, the urban poor are far worse off than their counterparts in the rural areas, who have the advantage of producing their own food.

On the other hand, it is in urban areas that poor people are more likely to have *easier access to social services* like education, health, piped water and public transportation. This explains the proliferation of squatter settlements, a major cause of conflict stemming from the housing question. There are two interrelated aspects to the housing question, namely, housing shortage and the struggle for space. The *housing shortage* and the related issues of unsanitary living conditions and squalor are a structural problem, and one that cannot be dealt with in a technocratic manner as a simple case of improvements in habitat. For it cannot be solved without major changes in economic structure, as Frederick Engels demonstrated long ago in his 1872 book, *The Housing Question*. The *struggle for space*, particularly over urban space, is a function of the failure or reluctance of governments to promote the interests of the poor against those of the dominant groups.

The housing shortage is a structural problem because *property capital*, like commercial capital, simply buys commodities (land, dwellings, office buildings, and floor space) in order to sell or rent them at a higher price. Hence its greater interest in more expensive buildings and location, which bring in more profits. In Africa, decent housing is priced out of the reach of low income groups, most of whom find shelter in overcrowded townships or build their own in squatter settlements.

As a struggle for an economically viable space, the struggle over urban space is related to both (1) the *urban question*, or the organization of the economic, social and cultural activities on which the daily life of urban residents depends, and (2) the *ecological question*, or the relationship between land use, economic activities and the quality of life (Castells, 1972). Both questions influence the people's interactions with bureaucrats over *plot allocation*, and their political protest against the state through *squatting,* the affirmation of their right to urban space.

Squatter settlements allow poor people to avoid high rents and living under the constant threat of being evicted in case of non-payment of rent; to live closer to their place of work or trade, and thus avoid the need for costly transportation; and to have easier access to essential services such as piped water, health centers and schools. Squatters regard these as major social gains, which are worth protecting against anyone, including state authorities. They are therefore ready to use violence as a means of self-defense whenever their settlements are threatened with destruction.

As a form of self-organization by the poor to fight against the roots of poverty, squatting will remain a partial solution unless the squatters are gainfully employed and have adequate income to take advantage of housing programs like low-cost housing and sites and services. Having gained their right to earn a decent living and an easier access to social services, they need to be empowered economically, politically and culturally in order to overcome poverty and social exclusion.

Unfortunately, poverty eradication has never been a major priority for African governments since independence. Had this been the case, something would have been done to deal with the local and national structures of poverty reproduction. In general, governments have simply followed the "shopping-list" approach of international agencies in looking at issues like PHC simply as a technical package of services which deals with ill health from its origin in poverty without seeking the causes of the latter. They look at the effects of poverty rather than its roots, which have to do with economic, political and cultural problems like income generation, empowerment and education.

For PHC and other health strategies like maternal and child care (MCH) and UNICEF's GOBI (growth monitoring, oral rehydration therapy, breastfeeding and immunization) to succeed, the poor must organize themselves to seek the causes of ill health and to create the conditions to prevent them from recurring. Without this, targets such as the WHO's goal of "Health for All by the Year 2000" under the Bamako Initiative are empty slogans, however laudable the intention behind them might be. But can the African state as presently structured create an environment that would allow the poor to organize themselves to solve their problems?

For that to happen, in the health or any other sector, the state must be restructured from being a network of relations built around a dominant individual to a set of impartial institutions serving the general interest. The institutional structures of good governance must also include devolution of power to regional and local authorities and a greater role for civil society organizations and other mechanisms of popular participation in public policy making. It also requires greater equity in international economic relations.

Poverty eradication is not going to take place through ideologically loaded slogans like "poverty alleviation" and target dates adopted by multilateral agencies like the World Bank and WHO, or by spending targets set by international conferences like the 1995 World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen,

which enjoin states to spend at least 20 per cent of their budgets on basic social services (nutrition, water and sanitation, basic education and PHC). It will come about only through concrete policies and programs designed to transform those economic, political and social structures reproducing poverty in Africa, which are local, national and international in nature.

The present international division of labor has structures of decision-making, commodity pricing and debt repayment that contribute to reproducing poverty in Africa. The undemocratic nature of decision-making in the multilateral finance agencies and the lack of fairness in world commodity prices are so well known that they need no description here. With respect to the debt burden, there is far too much begging about forgiveness rather than the assertion of Africa's right to recuperate the loot stashed away in Europe and America by its corrupt rulers. In this regard, the banks, real estate companies and money markets that have bene-fited from this are just as guilty as those who stole the money in the first place. It is our duty to remind them that in Western law, buying and holding stolen prop-erty is a crime.

What, then, should be the poverty eradication and conflict prevention agenda in Africa today? From the foregoing, it is evident that major changes must take place locally, nationally and internationally in order to deal with poverty in a se-rious way. Since changes on the international terrain are not likely in the foresee-able future, greater emphasis must be placed on changes at the national and the local levels. The current democratization process has started the task of trans-forming the African state. Empowering people at the local level should remain a major concern for progressive political and social movements. There is need to provide training in modern organizational methods and techniques to leaders of community-based organizations (CBOs), as nothing will be done for the poor unless they themselves take the initiative in changing the conditions of their exis-tence.

A major aspect of this empowerment is changing the definition of what is needed from handouts from the government to the entitlements that people have as basic rights and means of increasing their capabilities to improve their lives, to use Amartya Sen's terminology (Sen, 1999). In this regard, since PHC, clean wa-ter, education, housing and other basic amenities of life are both conditions of development and basic human rights, the key question is not what the state can provide for the people, but what kind of control the latter can have on their ac-cess to these services. With respect to water supply and sanitation, for example, the real issue is water control rather than water provision. It relates to the fun-damental political dimension of development, namely conflict over power and resources. Who should control health care, water supply, waste disposal, housing, etc.: the state, private corporations, or the people?

This brings us back to the main theme of political reforms and conflict man-agement in the African democratic transition. The redistribution of resources is just as much an integral part of the democracy project as the rule of law and a better administration of justice. Economic development implies the resolution of

the social question by a frontal attack against poverty, unemployment and social inequalities, including inequality between men and women. By including poor people in the concept of power-sharing, the African democracy project, as exemplified by the sovereign national conference, has nothing to do with liberal democracy, in which citizen participation is often limited to the freedom to choose rulers from among representatives of the bourgeoisie and famous families. The democracy to which the people of Africa aspire is more attuned to a system of self-management akin to the now famous model of the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre, where neighborhood residents participate in determining how the municipal budget allocates funds to their development needs (Ramonet, 2001). It is, in the words of Claude Ake, "a social democracy that invests heavily in the improvement of people's health, education, and capacity so that they can participate effectively" (Ake, 1996:132).

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Comments on the contribution by
Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja

Adebayo Olukoshi

INTRODUCTION

The central objective of Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja's paper is to explain why the on-going efforts at democratisation in Africa which, when they began in the late 1980s, were initially greeted with a considerable degree of enthusiasm and optimism, are now mostly seen and treated with considerable pessimism and disillusionment. According to him, rather than the simplistic view that has been peddled in some circles that Africa was just not ready for democracy, a more useful approach would be to focus on the variety of contentious issues that have been associated with or highlighted by the transitional process in order to better understand the forces and factors that have prevented the generality of ordinary Africans from reaping the dividends of democracy. For Nzongola-Ntalaja, three contentious issues are particularly relevant to any effort at understanding the limited achievement and, in some cases, tragic outcomes of the African quest for democracy. These issues centre around the reluctance of incumbents to leave office, the persistence of ethnicity/the National Question, and the worsening problem of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion. The bulk of his paper is devoted to expatiating on these issues and the ways in which they stymie democracy and development in Africa.

The solutions which Nzongola-Ntalaja proposes are built around his analysis of the problems he identified. The issue, for example, of the reluctance of incumbents to leave office – and, by extension, of losers in a manifestly free and fair electoral process to accept defeat – can, according to him, be tackled by the empowerment of an independent electoral commission monitored by civil society and the judiciary; the promotion of power-sharing formulae; the encouragement of a democratic culture both as a moral imperative and as a social process and political practice; and the pursuit of a project of national reconciliation underpinned by truth and justice. With regard to ethnicity and its employment by the elite for the achievement of narrow political ends, he proposes the adoption of federalism and far-reaching decentralisation as the way forward for Africa. Within the federal system and decentralised structures of governance, it should be possible to guarantee the rights of minorities and reject all ancient relations of discrimination, subordination and superordination among various ethnic groups.

Finally, with regard to the worsening problem of poverty, there is a need for the empowerment of the poor not only through the strengthening of community-based organisations but also a re-definition of governmental intervention in a direction based on Amartya Sen's notion of entitlement which enables the poor to increase their capacity to improve their own lives. This would basically call for the endowment of the structures of political participation with a strong popular content that not only takes full account of the perspectives of the poor but also restores sovereignty to the people.

UNDERSTANDING THE AFRICAN QUEST FOR POLITICAL REFORMS

The paper is generally well-argued, with the issues identified by the author as being central to the difficulties of the African transition very clearly laid out in a manner which is both succinct and coherent. Precisely because the perspectives are so well articulated, it is easy to join issue with him on a number of matters in order to stimulate further debate on the problems and prospects of democratisation in contemporary Africa. A useful starting point in this regard is to problematise the issue of democratic dividends the alleged absence of which is cited by Nzongola-Ntalaja as evidence of the failure of efforts at democratic political reform and the popular disillusionment that is now widespread across Africa. Two questions arise here: firstly, how are the dividends of democracy to be measured in Africa given the background against which the transition from authoritarianism was attempted from the late 1980s? Secondly, should democracy be understood in its own terms or in relation to the "goodies" which it is supposed to produce? These are questions which have been central to the discourse on political transition in Africa and it would seem to me that in assessing the contemporary African experience, Nzongola-Ntalaja severely underplays the *political* component of the democratic dividend and, in focusing one-sidedly on the failure of the political reform process to deliver improvements in social and economic conditions, unwittingly *instrumentalises* the democratic project.

The struggle for political reforms in Africa during the 1980s and 1990s may have been given an additional context and sharper edge by the experience of prolonged economic crisis and structural adjustment which the continent was going through; it is, however, not completely accurate to suggest that the struggle was primarily about social and economic goods. For, in many countries, serious issues of political rights and resistance to one-party or military authoritarianism were posed as part of a wider struggle against unaccountable and repressive governance. The success which was recorded in most countries in winning back basic political rights that were eroded by the post-independence ruling elites, represents a major dividend of the struggle for reforms that should neither be underestimated nor underplayed. Evidence of this dividend abounds: the constitutional reforms that were effected in many countries to permit electoral pluralism; the collapse of the *ancien regime* in several countries; the restoration of the freedom of open political association and organisation – manifested, in part, in the revival

and spread of multi-party politics; the emergence and expansion of a variety of civil society-based associations, including those devoted to the pursuit/promotion of human rights, civic awareness, and civil liberties; the flowering of the independent media, both print and electronic, in many countries where sources of information were few and what existed was monopolised by an increasingly unrepresentative state; the increased freedom, scope, and popular capacity which an expansion and pluralisation of the political space confers on the citizenry to challenge and resist unpopular governmental policies; and the possibility, which has been exercised in several countries, to achieve an alternation of power between parties or blocs of parties. These are not minor achievements and they should be factored in much more centrally into any overall assessment of the African transition.

These political aspects of the democratic dividend were as much the issues around which resistance to authoritarianism was organised as any others. For many of those who were in the vanguard of the struggle for reform, they were central to the enthronement of a democratic political system and so were worth fighting for in their own right and not simply in the expectation that they would produce economic dividends. There is, consequently, no reason for economically-deterministic yard sticks to be used to assess the outcome of the transition to the exclusion of other factors that were integral to the visions and praxis of the bearers of the democratic struggle, as well as the theory of democratic transitions. Were this not to be the case, it might be difficult to understand why authoritarian regimes which succeed in delivering the economic goods to the populace over which they rule are still subject to the democratic pressures of the citizenry. It would also be difficult to understand why, in spite of continuing economic hardship, many of the upholders of the democratic struggle continue to enjoy and celebrate their newly-regained political space as much for the freedoms it offers as for the context it provides for the open resistance to unpopular economic policies or the pursuit of alternative strategies for national development.

The tendency among scholars to instrumentalise democracy is one which is understandable given the problem of widespread poverty which is so evident in Africa today. This is so in spite of what some have referred to in the literature as the "Indian paradox" – democracy co-existing with widespread poverty. But the challenge which the problem of declining social and economic livelihood in most African countries poses, relates more to the conditions under which democracy and popular participation in the democratic process may be consolidated. And this is where Nzongola-Ntalaja's arguments could probably have been nuanced a bit more to strengthen our understanding of the conditions under which democracies, such as those that have emerged or are emerging from the African transition, can expect to become more rooted. For, quite clearly, the robustness of a democratic system is bound to be affected by the social and economic context that prevails in a polity. Widespread poverty, with all the implications which it carries, bears directly on the quality of the democratic process. Still, the political openings which have taken place over the last decade would seem to suggest that

the record of the African transition might not be as ghastly as is asserted by the author. The challenge for us is to better understand the transition in terms of its contradictoriness – of advances, obstacles, setbacks, and stalemates, as well as the negotiations and struggles which are taking place to overcome the difficulties that arise.

Nzongola-Ntalaja is right when he talks extensively about the many ambiguities and contradictions that surround the ethnic question in Africa. Indeed, in the light of these complexities, it is sometimes puzzling that ethnic conflicts are so easily generated on the continent. And yet, the reality on the ground in many African countries today is that ethnic conflicts are rife and need urgently to be redressed. For Nzongola-Ntalaja, federalism, decentralisation and power sharing offer the way forward for the continent in this regard. But while these approaches to tackling the ethnic issue may offer some way forward to African countries, it is important to acknowledge that they are not without their own problems. This is especially so when we realise that the linkage between ethnicity and patterns of inclusion and exclusion in a polity touches directly on the issue of citizenship and citizenship rights in contemporary Africa. These rights, which have as much to do with group inclusion as individual participation and liberties, are not necessarily or automatically secured merely by the adoption of a federal arrangement. The example of Nigeria and its difficult federal experience is a case in point: precisely some of the federalist measures introduced to take account of ethno-regional and minority concerns have also been the source of serious political disempowerment not only for individual citizens but also for groups which turn out to be excluded or are transformed into new minorities in the context of the changed political equation brought about by experiments in federalism and decentralisation.

The extreme approach represented by the current Ethiopian federal arrangement with its foundations built on narrowly-defined ethnic boundaries certainly cannot be recommended as a model for the rest of Africa to emulate. In prescribing solutions to the problem of ethnic conflicts, care must be taken not to unnecessarily elevate ethnicity to the level of the sole or determinant principle of political organisation. For, in addition to the ambiguity issue to which we referred earlier, it would seem that the root of the frustration which a majority of the citizenry faces centres around the fact that citizenship rights continue to be abridged. The challenge, therefore, is to build political systems which would ensure that side by side with the protection of the rights of minorities, including ethnic, religious and minority ones, the rights of every citizen can be guaranteed and defended wherever they may be as residents in their country. Once this constitutional/political guarantee is given and operationalised, then questions of decentralisation and power sharing can begin to be placed in a more meaningful political context that does not simply glorify mediocrity and penalise merit – as the ethnic calculation of power-sharing, also known as federal character, has tended to do in Nigeria – or reproduce the power of ethnic barons who profit from the perpetuation of ethnicity as an instrument of political mobilisation. In sum, Africa scholars and governments cannot and should not be indifferent to the reality

of ethnic pluralism on the continent but in attempting to ensure that the state re-
flects this pluralism, care must be taken to ensure that it simultaneously tran-
scends ethnicity and is not simply captured by it.

Once we begin to focus more broadly on citizenship issues and the ways in
which they bear on the political process, our horizon is likely to go beyond eth-
nicity to include other relevant identity questions that are central to the fortunes
of African countries today. In my view, two of these questions stand out at the
present time and they centre around youth and youth identity on the one hand
and, on the other, the impact which internal population movements, both rural-
urban and intra-rural as well as intra-urban, is having on various facets of life.
Widespread youth disaffection in the context of an accelerated pace of urbanisa-
tion and a continuing economic crisis has had a direct impact on national politics
in many countries, sometimes producing or sustaining violent challenges to the
state as it is constituted, deepening the atmosphere of political disillusionment
and alienation, or in other instances, helping to bring about an alternation of
power. It seems evident from numerous case-studies that have been published on
various national experiences that the youth question can only be neglected at
great expense to the stability and integrity of the polity.

The various dimensions of internal migration, most of it feeding into an inexo-
rable process of urbanisation, have also brought to the fore questions of citizen-
ship rights within a given national-territorial space. In particular, the spate of in-
ter-communal and intra-communal conflicts generated by the arrival of new mi-
grants, both voluntary and forced, has served to focus attention on the question
of the rights of "indigenes" as compared to those of "non-indigenes", "settlers"
as compared to "natives", and rights of access to and control of resources such as
land, water, labour, and a variety of minerals. The conflicts associated with or
generated by the shifting population dynamics are not all, *ab initio* at least, neces-
sarily ethnic in origin or by definition even if they eventually become "ethnicised"
as the conflicts become prolonged. Indeed, in many cases, they arise from non-
ethnic considerations, including occupational ones associated with a broad system
of division of labour in a country. It is not at all self-evident that decentralisation
and/or federalisation in such a context will help solve the range of citizenship is-
sues which are posed by the process and politics of population movement; indeed,
in some cases, it might simply translate into the decentralisation of the politics of
inclusion and exclusion.

One final comment on the paper and it concerns the issue of democratic cul-
ture and personal rule. Nzongola-Ntalaja suggests that one of the main short-
comings of political life in Africa today is the absence of a democratic culture and
the persistence of personal rule. It would seem to me, however, that at least in the
terms in which he defines it, the problem is not so much the absence of a democ-
ratic culture but the difficulties encountered regarding its institutionalisation. All
across Africa, there is often sufficient energy reserved for resisting the worst
forms of personal rule and authoritarianism; however, making the transition be-
tween successful resistance to tyranny and the institutionalisation of a stable de-

mocratic system has been the missing link in many countries. And this is where the main intellectual and political challenge lies. Politically, Nzongola-Ntalaja is right that some degree of elite consensus on the basic rules of the political game cannot be avoided. Institutional strategies for ensuring that winners do not simply take all and losers are able to live with defeat need to be devised. Clearly, there are no easy, one-size-fits-all solutions that can be prescribed, not even the various models of truth and reconciliation that are being recommended to different African countries emerging from situations of prolonged dictatorship and conflict. For, in the end, no political order can endure which is not founded on justice and no solution, which is not home grown, can be sustainable.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The paper by Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja certainly raises a number of very important points which merit further discussion. It is to the credit of the author that he is able to provide a compact, bird's eye view of the contemporary African political landscape and, in so doing, give the reader sufficient material to reflect upon. Perhaps this, more than anything else, is the chief strength of his contribution. My own overall assessment of the future political prospects of Africa is probably somewhat less pessimistic than his but one is, of course, always conscious that, in dialectical terms, moments or phases may arise when setbacks exceed advances so as to produce a more sobering outcome than is anticipated. It is, however, to the credit of Africans that their resistance and resilience has been able over the years to put dictatorship and tyranny on notice no matter how long it takes for the forces of change to triumph.

Globalisation and African Development

Yusuf Bangura

INTRODUCTION

Globalisation has been associated with what many in the development field have described as Africa's marginalisation in the world economy. I mean by globalisation, trends in integration of national economies into a single, even though uneven, world economy in such areas as finance, trade, production, and communication.

One can quarrel about whether globalisation is a new phenomenon; whether current patterns of globalisation yield more or less integration than previous patterns; and whether the globalisation trend itself is irreversible. I do not wish to get into this set of arguments in this lecture.

Social change does not happen instantaneously. The world system has been evolving since the mercantilist period, which spurred European global expansion, the industrial revolution, and colonisation. On the basis of findings by palaeontologists and genetic prehistorians, the evolution of a single world system can even be traced to humans' first migration from Africa and subsequent colonisation of the rest of the world between 50,000 and 100,000 years ago.

What is certain is that the liberalisation of trade and finance, and the communications revolution, gathered significant pace in the 1990s. This is leading to new forms of integration among countries and recasting, indeed, redefining conceptions of space and time. They are changing global and national patterns of income distribution, the way business is conducted around the world, as well as how elites, governments and many social movements interact.

The benefits of globalisation are unevenly spread. And in many cases, globalisation has inflicted heavy costs on those not well placed to compete or exploit its opportunities. A major concern is Africa's marginal role in the process. Recent data suggest that global inequality increased between 1988 and 1993 from a Gini coefficient of 62.5 to 66.0. This is a very large increase especially given the very short period involved. It is reckoned that most of Africa, rural China and rural India account for this sharp increase in global inequality.

Analysts have highlighted two problems of Africa's marginality in the global economy: low levels of connectivity in key areas that drive globalisation; and poor macro-economic performance.

Several indicators can measure connectivity, but I select only four to highlight the point:

– By 1989, the amount of world trade accounted for by Africa had dropped to about one per cent.
– The African share of private capital flows to all non-OECD countries was only about 10 per cent in 1999; it received only about 6 per cent of net direct foreign investment to non-OECD countries; and registered negative net portfolio investment (US$ -0.2 billion) when the non-OECD share of portfolio capital was about US$ 42 billion during the same period.
– Excluding South Africa, Africa accounts for only about 0.6 per cent of all stocks in emerging markets, despite recent expansion of stock markets in some countries.
– Telephone and Internet access has been appallingly low. Data from the International Communications Union for 2000, suggest only one in 8 of the world's fixed telephone line subscribers were in Africa; in the same period, it had only one in 60 of the world's mobile cellular phone subscribers; it had only one in 70 of the worlds' personal computers; and only 1 per cent of the world's Internet users.
– Africa's macro-economic and social performance has also not been in good health since the 1980s. This can be captured by looking at growth and employment figures; the debt problem; and social indicators such as education, health, and food security. Real GDP growth between 1990 and 1999 was only about 2.8 per cent. And employment in the formal sector is reckoned to have fallen to record levels. A higher proportion of workers are reported to be in the informal sector in Africa than in most other regions.

Averages can, of course, be misleading for a continent the size of Africa, with more than 50 countries, and varying experiences and resource endowments. For instance, during the past thirty years, Botswana has been one of the fastest growing economies in the world; and Equatorial Guinea's current 15 per cent GDP growth rate is reckoned to be the fastest in the world. Mineral resource-based countries, such as Nigeria, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon continue to attract fresh capital largely in the mineral resource sector. Nigeria, with its huge domestic market and human resources, does not suffer from the same type of marginalisation as countries with small and stagnant economies. And South Africa is an industrial society in many respects, whose ability to realise its full potential is constrained by the legacy of apartheid and the two-nation society it created.

ARGUMENT

I want to make one central argument on global integration and marginalisation as it relates to Africa's development.

There is a lack of correspondence between the low levels of connectivity observed at the levels of trade, finance, production and communication (as well as

in the poor performance at the level of macro-economic outcomes), and high levels of connectivity at the levels of policy and institutional reform. In other words, if one focuses on policy and institutional reforms, Africa is highly integrated into, not marginal within, the world system. These policy and institutional reforms can be observed in three key areas: economic policy reforms; institutional change to support the economic policy reforms; and democratisation.

On the basis of arguments to be developed to support this observation, I will highlight the need for re-examination of policy and institutional reforms if Africa is to face the challenges of globalisation and resolve the contradiction between its high levels of integration in policy and institutional reforms and marginality in trade, finance, production, communication and macro-economic outcomes. I will discuss these issues under three areas: state capacity for autonomous policy-making; governance reforms for political stability and democratisation; and social welfare and dialogue.

Let me demonstrate what I mean by high levels of integration of Africa in the field of global policy and institutional reform.

Economic policy reform

I start with economic policy reform. Debt and aid dependence have exposed virtually every African country to the multilateral lending programmes of the IMF and the World Bank. Policy reforms have focused on a standard set of macro-economic issues: reductions in public expenditures, carried out largely through cutbacks in capital expenditures, the wage bill, employment and administration; liberalisation of trade, domestic commodity prices and exchange rates; privatisation; and financial market reform. Policy reforms were first pursued by the IMF through its Structural Adjustment Facility and subsequently its Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility, which was targeted at low-income countries. By 1997, about 80 countries were eligible for ESAF loans and 35 ESAF arrangements were in operation. The World Bank relied on its Structural Adjustment Loans and Sectoral Adjustment Loans to induce policy change in developing countries. Between 1979 and 1994, about 250 of these loans in 86 countries addressed fiscal reforms. Fifty-one per cent ofthe loans went to Africa and 23 per cent to Latin America.

A World Bank evaluation report in 1997 on fiscal management reported that "low-income countries tended to face more binding conditions than high-income countries, and conditions tended to be stronger in AFR (Africa) and ECA (Eastern Europe and Central Asia) than in LAC (Latin America and the Caribbean)". Recent data compiled by UNCTAD, which are based on IMF evaluation reports, confirm what academic researchers had known in the 1980s and 1990s: despite fears of policy slippage, very far-reaching changes have occurred in the economic policy regimes of developing countries generally, and the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) specifically. About two thirds of LDCs are in Africa.

The most profound reforms are in exchange rate, interest rate and domestic price liberalisation, and the easing of quantitative controls on international trade.

Progress in financial sector reform and privatisation has been much slower; and reduction of fiscal deficits has been mixed.

One interesting finding is that the record of policy reform in the Least Developed Countries is not much different from that of developing countries in general. Indeed, the former set of countries matches those of the latter in all areas of reform except privatisation and financial sector reform; and they have even gone further than other developing countries in liberalising domestic prices and markets.

The policy-based lending programmes of the multilateral organisations have influenced those of the bilateral agencies. Programme aid for debt relief and import or balance of payment support has assumed importance despite the fact that it constituted only about 20 per cent of aid to developing countries in the late 1990s. Aid for balance of payment support was contingent upon recipients adopting the policy reforms of the multilateral institutions. Thus, since the early 1980s, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies have jointly exerted pressure on aid recipient governments to implement major changes in the way they manage their economies.

One crucial way in which joint or cross conditionality among donors has been strengthened is through debt relief: only countries that have signed up to the IMF's Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility would expect to enjoy debt relief through the Paris Club of bilateral donors. The Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative on debt relief and the IMF's new Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) in 1999, which has replaced ESAF, have reinforced trends in conditionality. Under HIPC, among other conditions, countries must demonstrate commitment to the IMF's ESAF programme over a six-year period. Under the new PRGF, which is explicitly oriented towards poverty reduction and national ownership of programmes, the IMF and World Bank may still influence the process through staff assessment of country programmes, macro-economic performance monitoring, and the operational links between PRGF and HIPC.

What we find when we examine economic policy issues in Africa is a continent that is firmly locked into the processes of global economic policymaking as defined by the Bretton Woods institutions. We do not see marginalisation, autonomy or isolation, but high levels of dependence on, or integration into, the policymaking processes of institutions and governments that play central roles in the evolution of the global economy.

Institutional change

I move on to the second issue, which is institutional change. Economic policy reforms are associated with institutional reforms. Here again Africa is integrated into the dominant global trends of institutional change. Two issues are worth pointing out.

The first relates to trends in creation of technocratic approaches in policymaking. Governments are being forced to raise their technocratic capacities in the

economic policy field in order to be able to implement the market reforms and send credible signals to investors and donors. Increasingly in a large number of countries, a small pool of experts, often found in finance and trade ministries as well as in central banks, is vested with extensive powers in navigating economies and shaping public policies.

It is assumed by donors and governments that these technocrats do not only connect with investors and read market trends correctly; the reforms they pursue will lead to optimal outcomes for the economy and society, and their fundamentals should, therefore, not be unduly challenged by the lay public. In some countries, such as those that are heavily dependent on official development finance, multilateral funding agencies have played central roles in identifying, supporting, and in some cases recruiting technocrats for key policy-making institutions. Indeed, policy-making in these countries has been more prone to capture by international financial institutions than in emerging market economies.

It has been reported recently that the finance minister of Malawi receives his salary in foreign exchange under an agreement supported by the World Bank. This caused a stir in the Malawian parliament and the wider public concerned about the distortionary effects this may have in the highest policy-making institution in the country. It has also been reported that the Benin government sends its budget to the IMF for approval before it sends it to parliament.

These institutional reforms resonate in the wider public sector, although results have been relatively patchy. A new kind of managerialism is taking root in African public sectors even though issues of incentives, recurrent costs and professionalism remain largely unresolved.

Public sector reforms have been pursued at two key levels. The first relates to cutbacks in central government expenditures and employment as part of donor designs to trim down the African state, whose activities are believed to distort price relationships and crowd out private sector investments. Central government expenditures as a percentage of GDP fell from 26.3% in 1990 to 22.3% in 1997. By 1997, African governments were spending less than other developing regions. The central government wage bill as a proportion of GDP declined from 6.1% in the early 1980s to 4.8% in the early 1990s – again recording the sharpest decline among developing countries. The same goes for public employment. The available data suggest that Africa had fewer people working in the public sector than other developing regions in the 1990s: this was 1.9% of the population compared to 4.6% in Latin America, 4.9% in the Middle East, and 3.1% in Asia and the Pacific. The end result is that today Africa is the most under-governed region in the world.

The second type of public sector reform relates to efforts to introduce market principles in the management of public bureaucracies. Under new public management principles, bureaucracies are to be transformed into decentralised management systems by converting them into a number of executive agencies. Those who are put in charge of these agencies will be employed on fixed term contracts, and will enjoy flexibility in carrying out tasks, including in hiring and firing staff.

Directors or managers of the new agencies will be given fairly autonomous budgets and will be assessed on the basis of their output – to be determined by detailed performance indicators. The new agencies will be headed by independent boards of directors, who are expected to operate like corporate governors, with minimum interference from elected authorities, interest groups or the civic public.

These reforms are most advanced in OECD countries. In the 1980s and early 1990s, new public management reforms were rare in Africa. They were restricted largely to the health sector and revenue generating ministries, such as customs and excise and internal revenue or tax offices. Autonomous hospitals with independent hospital management boards were established in a number of countries, including Ghana and Botswana. The creation of executive agencies in revenue generating departments was associated with tax reforms for increased revenue piloted by the IMF and supported by the World Bank under ESAF programmes. The tax offices of many adjusting countries are now autonomous of national civil services, and enjoy different rules of employment as well as better incentives that are linked to performance.

In recent years, African countries, especially aid dependent ones, have started to embrace more extensive forms of decentralised management reforms. Bilateral donors and multilateral agencies have been the main drivers for these reforms. Managerial reforms were initiated in Tanzania in the 1990s. The aim was to separate the core policy-making and regulatory functions of ministries from those dealing with implementation. Implementation was to be handled by executive agencies, not the ministries. The result has been a 25 per cent reduction in the number of ministerial departments. Activities that were unsuited for privatisation or provisioning were transferred to 47 executive agencies, which would be concerned with delivery. A review of these reforms in Uganda suggests that 54,000 civil servants would lose their jobs after the reforms.

Democratisation

Africa has also been well integrated into the global processes of democratisation. Interestingly, donor agencies have been involved in this process as well. Donor governments with global and regional influence and those with a social democratic tradition took the initiative. In the early 1990s, the United States, Britain, France and the Nordic countries signalled an intention to make democracy and human rights cardinal principles of their foreign aid programmes.

The use of development finance for democratisation differs, however, from its use in promoting economic policy reform in three significant ways. First, the resources available for democratisation and institution building are miniscule compared to those for economic policy reform. Indeed, among international agencies, the United Nations plays a much more active role in promoting democratisation than the Bretton Woods institutions. Most of the funds for democratisation are oriented towards electoral support – not long-term institutional development.

Second, even when they express interest in the subject, donors tend to adopt an instrumental view of democratisation. As adjustment programmes are perceived to be failing because of the behaviour of recipient governments, democratisation is seen as an instrument to curb corruption, change non-performing governments and advance the economic reform project. Populist forms of democratisation that question the market reforms are viewed with disfavour. The commercial and strategic interests of bilateral donors also affect their commitment to democratisation. Thus, pro-Western oil producing countries in the Middle East with oligarchic systems of government have never been pressured to democratise. Third, by the mid-1990s, the unqualified enthusiasm for democratisation began to wane; the use of aid to influence democratic outcomes has become more selective; and many donors have scaled down their policies on democratisation to the promotion of basic human rights – not whether countries are democratising.

At one level, the record of Africa in democratisation compares favourably with that of other regions. Over the period 1990–99, 300 competitive elections were held in 160 of 185 states – an average of 1.9 elections per country. On the average, there was more electoral activity in Africa than Asia, the Pacific, and the Middle East, which recorded the lowest level of activity for all regions. The structure of African parliaments is also not very different from those of other regions. The average number of parties in African parliaments is 6.4; South and Southeast Asia 8.7; Latin America 9.4; East and Central Europe 9.4; and Western democracies 8.5.

However, Africa trails other regions when we examine the intensity of plurality: the percentage share of seats held by parties other than the largest party. It is 34.8% in Africa; 46.3% in South and East Asia; 56.9% in Latin America; 56.7% in East and Central Europe; and 59.8% in Western democracies. Alternation of governments through elections is also less in Africa than in other regions with high electoral activity, suggesting resilience of authoritarian structures and practices. Military coups, contestation of election results, and civil wars, although not restricted to Africa, also tend to be high.

COMMON EXPLANATIONS

Let me recapitulate the key argument: high levels of integration of Africa into global strategies for policy and institutional reforms stand in stark contrast to the low levels of integration in the crucial fields of finance, trade, production and communication – the forces that drive current forms of globalisation. Institutional and policy reforms have also not produced consistently favourable macroeconomic results – principally seen in low growth rates and employment.

The tendency in dominant policy circles is to put the blame on five factors:
– *insufficient pursuit of reforms:* My previous analysis has shown that, in general terms, Africa is not very different from other regions; it has not pursued fewer reforms than other countries; indeed, in some cases it has done more than others that are considered to be well integrated into the world market.

– *terms of trade shocks*: The interesting thing is that this argument was dismissed in the 1980s by the multilateral institutions that were keen to point to domestic policy failure as the primary cause of the African crisis. Recent assessments recognise external shocks as a cause of the problem. Commodity prices experienced a -3.8% growth in 1989–93; -13% in 1998 and -14.2% in 1999. There was a commodity price boom in 1994–97 (6% growth and all individual commodities registered positive growth), which prompted the multilateral institutions to argue that adjustment was working. Africa has not been able to diversify the composition of its external trade. Manufacturing products, which experience fewer shocks and better returns, remain very miniscule in the export sector.

– *debt overhang:* This is a very serious problem for Africa, given its high debt service ratio. Recent calculations have shown that from 1978 to 1991, the critical period of debt build-up, average interest rates on new loans to Africa doubled and were more than those to Asian LDCs.

– *risks associated with civil strife:* Inability to send consistently credible signals to investors, which has resulted in low investments and poor productive capacity despite the acknowledged high rates of return in Africa.

– *and corruption:* This is associated with the misallocation of resources.

MISSING ELEMENTS

Most of these arguments are important and would have to be taken into account in designing strategies for productive engagement with the world system. What is often missing is a strategic view of engagement. Strategy requires planning, autonomous capacities for policymaking and resolute commitment to the pursuit of goals. History shows that countries that have bridged gaps in development have always done so through purposeful and consistent strategies. They have not left things to chance, the forces of the market, or outsiders. This holds for the US, late industrialisers in Europe, Japan, and newly emerging economies in East Asia.

At the heart of the problem is governance capacity: the building of effective state capacity for policy design, monitoring and implementation; compromises that will yield cohesion or basic agreements among competing elites; and some measure of class solidarity to ensure popular or national support for development goals. I would like to spend the rest of the time to explain these issues, which I consider fundamental if strategies for effective engagement with the world economy are to yield positive and lasting results.

State capacity

Let me start with state capacity. It is now an accepted axiom that no country has ever developed under conditions of weak state capacity. Despite earlier beliefs that globalisation will lead to the withering away of the state, it is now very clear

even to multilateral institutions that in order to participate effectively in, and gain from, globalisation, countries should build their state systems.

The policy and institutional reforms that Africa has pursued under global guidance have not sufficiently focused on state capacity despite the lip service that words like capacity building have enjoyed in recent years. The reforms have in general been deeply suspicious of, and antagonistic towards, the state. In the context of Africa's ethnic fragmentation, low levels of state formation and short period of political independence, African policymakers made one of the greatest blunders in development history by allowing the Bretton Woods institutions to lead them down the dangerous path of anti-statism especially during the 1980s when critical choices were made about the adjustment path the continent should follow.

State reform to promote efficiency and better delivery of services is not the same as downsizing. As I have shown in the previous section, the attacks on the state have produced the anomalous situation where the poorest region is now the least governed in the world. The least integrated continent in the world economy had the misfortune to absorb a high dose of adjustment medicine that had not benefited from any successful trial runs. It is a pattern that can be observed in other fields, such as those relating to the world of medical research itself. Some of the terrible mistakes made in Africa were corrected when Asian and East European countries (stronger economies) later embarked on adjustment.

Low levels of governance translate as limited state presence in society, especially in rural areas; fewer extension services; less infrastructure; fewer schools and hospitals; fewer postal and other public services; fewer policemen and less security; and inability to strategise effectively. This explains why rebel groups have found it easy to prey on the rural populations and why these same rebel groups tend to move swiftly to the capital to overthrow governments.

African policymakers and donors believe that official development finance is important in building state capacity and better utilisation of existing capacities. This is true in conditions where development finance is well integrated into domestic budgetary and planning processes, and where governments enjoy sufficient autonomy to define public policies and engage their civic population in the policy-making process. The technologies, knowledge and resources that are often associated with development finance and foreign capital in general will have positive effects on bureaucracies and economies if the right conditions exist.

Unfortunately, conditionality and current patterns of aid delivery systems tend to undermine state capacity and autonomy in defining policy agendas. The problems are compounded in aid dependent countries. Two interesting findings by UNCTAD indicate that aid has experienced a higher level of fluctuation than export or government revenues in LDCs; and that contrary to donor expectations about aid plugging deficits or gaps in the external and fiscal accounts of these countries, it has instead tended to have a pro-cyclical relationship with export and government revenues. This means that aid has reinforced rather than alleviated the effects of short-term external shocks on LDC economies. When export

revenues decline, aid either also declines or does not increase sufficiently to make up for shortfalls in export and government revenues.

Delays in aid disbursement associated with conditionality, the non-complementarity between the budget cycles of donors and recipients, and donor preferences for stabilisation of aid flows over concerns for stabilisation of LDC external accounts, explain the negative macro-economic effects of aid. Current styles of disbursing aid, when set against the background of diminishing access to real resources by recipient governments, pose additional costs with implications for state capacity.

The proliferation of donor agencies, the increasing tendency to channel aid through international NGOs rather than the budgetary systems of governments, further erode the capacity of governments to provide the counterpart funds that will enable them meet the recurrent costs of donor-financed projects. The incentive structures of LDC bureaucracies are distorted: donors and NGOs can offer competitive remuneration for their projects whereas governments are unable to pay their staff living wages; scarce skilled employees migrate from disadvantaged arms of the public sector to donor and NGO projects; and the remaining staff in the core service become overworked. James Wolfensen of the World Bank stated in 1999 that Tanzania prepares about 2,400 progress reports quarterly every year for all its donor partners.

Most bilateral donors and multilateral financial agencies are currently aware of this problem. The language of national ownership of policy-making has gained wide currency. However, the rhetoric of ownership is often different from the reality of donor behaviour. A recent IMF evaluation report on ESAF singled out ownership as one of the most important problems that work against Fund programmes in low-income countries.

Donor representatives are reported to have said they saw ownership as "acceptance by the recipient country of what donors want" and that "ownership exists when they do what we want them to do voluntarily". Even if donors are sincere about transferring ownership of programmes to recipients, nothing substantive will be achieved if current styles of aid disbursement continue, and governments do not have resources to adopt and implement independent decisions. Decision makers in national bureaucracies will continue to behave in ways that give priority to the views of donors rather than exercising independent judgement or privileging the views of their citizens in decision-making.

Restoring or building state capacity cannot be done if governments are unable to adequately remunerate their public servants and supply basic inputs for administrative and social services, and if incentive structures of government establishments and donor agencies continue to be lopsided. If the distorted incentive system of the public sector is corrected, governments should be in a better position to strengthen their administrative institutions and avoid potentially costly "new public management" reforms. Introducing market-based reforms in the public sectors of poor and crisis-ridden countries without a professionally devel-

oped service risks further fragmentation of their state systems and corrupt behaviour by powerful groups with superior access to the state.

Governance reform

I move on to the second issue, which is governance reform for elite consensus. One does not need to stress the salience of ethnicity in African societies. Yet it is only in South Africa, Nigeria and Ethiopia that elaborate efforts have been made to craft institutions that reflect this reality. Most countries have adopted only minimum rules, such as a ban on ethnic and religious symbols, in regulating competition for power and formation of governments. Governments are sensitive to ethnicity but prefer to respond to it by informal methods, such as inclusion or cooptation of members of key ethnic groups in governments. Inclusion is often at the discretion of the government leader. It is hardly institutionalised, raising fears about exclusion, marginalisation and manipulation.

Let me first spell out the nature of ethnic diversity in Africa. We have calculated that the average number of ethnic groups per state in Africa, Asia and the Pacific regions, using language as an indicator, is about 50. The average for European states is about 9.5 and for Latin America and the Caribbean 21.

However, the structure of ethnic group distribution illustrates an interesting pattern. In Sub-Saharan Africa, if the small island states are excluded, it is only in 12 of 34 states that a single ethnic group accounts for more than 50 per cent of the population. In Asia, despite its very large number of ethnic groups – more than 2,700 – 34 of 46 states have ethnic groups with more than 50 per cent of the population. This is also the case for the Pacific region, where 19 of 26 states have ethnic groups that constitute the majority population where they are located. In Latin America and the Caribbean, it is only in six countries that a single ethnic group does not account for at least 50 per cent of the population. And all states in Europe have ethnic groups that constitute the majority group.

Paradoxically, despite the large number of conflicts in Africa only one fully recognised new state has been created here (Eritrea) though two others (Anjouan which seceded from the Comoros in 1997) and Somaliland (which has become a separate state within Somalia) have been courting recognition. The low incidence of state formation in Africa may reflect the fragmented character of the ethnic systems of most states in the region. Most ethnic conflicts in Africa take the form of competition for control of the state apparatus rather than for self-determination and formation of alternative states. Indeed, since 1960, there have been only 8 major ethnic movements that have explicitly been committed to national independence. Even the genocidal horrors in Rwanda and Burundi have not led to calls for separate states by the Tutsi and Hutu groups, but for control of the existing states.

The challenge in the study of governance reforms in Africa is how to create institutions that can regulate the struggle for access to the state without plunging societies into chaos.

I have recently developed a typology of ethnic structures to help throw light on this issue. I have argued that a useful way of understanding the ethnic structures of different countries is in terms of polarity. I classified African countries into five categories. A unipolar structure refers to cases where one group enjoys an overwhelming majority. The clear cases in Africa are Botswana and Equatorial Guinea. A bipolar ethnic structure may have either only two main ethnic groups as in Rwanda and Burundi, or, as in Sierra Leone, a multiplicity of groups in which two roughly equal groups account for more than 60 per cent of the population. In a tripolar setting there are either only three ethnic groups or three large groups in a multi-ethnic setting. In Africa the clearest case is Nigeria.

The more fragmented countries are multipolar: either concentrated or fragmented. In the concentrated multipolar cases, one ethnic group may constitute half or 40 per cent of the population, but still not be large enough to outnumber and dominate clusters of smaller groups. Examples include, Niger and Congo-Brazzaville; they also include cases where four or more groups each account for about 10 to 20 per cent of the population (Kenya, Togo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Zambia). In the case of fragmented multipolarity no group is large enough to dominate the political system if voters are allowed to express their preferences through free and fair elections. Examples are Tanzania and Cameroon.

The conflicts that are often difficult to manage are those that occur in bipolar or tripolar settings. In fragmented multipolar structures, where ethnic groups are relatively small, electoral politics will throw up a different dynamic. Ethnicity may still be important in the politics of these countries, but the rigid polarization of the bipolar and tripolar settings may be much more muted. In ethnically fragmented settings where most of the groups are small and relatively equal in size, such as in Cameroon and Tanzania, local level ethnicity may become important. Note, for instance, that in Cameroon, the three largest groups only account for 11 per cent ofthe population. The single largest group is barely more than 5 per cent of the population.

When dealing with dissent and conflict, governments, opposition parties and civic groups have tended to be influenced by conceptions of government that are based on homogeneous nation states or states with highly fragmented ethnic groups. In the first case, ethnicity is unlikely to enter into the calculations of decision-makers in public policies and affected groups are unlikely to give ethnic interpretations to such policies. In the second case, barring regional polarisation, ethnicity is also less likely to feature as a major problem in public policy and governments are by definition bound to be ethnically heterogeneous.

Majoritarian solutions have thus been the preferred form of government in transitions to democratic rule. Africa's types of electoral systems have helped to produce plural parliaments, but executive government is based on the principles of majority rule. With the exception of South Africa, countries that operate the proportional-representation electoral rule system require a second round of voting for presidential elections in order to produce a clear winner; and for those that operate the first-past-the-post system, presidential candidates only need a

plurality of the votes to govern. For instance, Kenya's Arap Moi governs with a minority of the popular vote.

There are ample reform instruments available, ranging from electoral rules for moderation and proportionality to institutionalised power sharing arrangements, that countries can draw on in crafting institutions for governing their plural societies. I have discussed these reforms elsewhere in terms of their compatibility with the five ethnic clusters. My conclusion is that standard parliamentary or presidential systems of government are unsuitable for much of Africa's ethnically plural societies. Both have winner-takes-all features, which will have to be discarded in favour of institutions that promote the widest possible co-operation. Arthur Lewis, the West Indian Nobel economist, also arrived at this conclusion more than 35 years ago when these countries started to embark on the path of nation building. Democracy and development will not take firm roots in Africa if its elites are uncomfortable with the rules of the game, and express or hold fears about exclusion. They may be tempted to adopt the kinds of opportunistic strategies that have plunged many of these countries into multiple crises.

Social welfare and dialogue

Let me conclude by discussing the third issue, which is social welfare and dialogue. In addition to elite consensus, the construction of competitive advantage in the world system also requires the building of solidarity at the wider societal level. Participation, dialogue and welfare protection are essential for the consolidation of democracy and spurring development. They provide legitimacy to public policies and encourage citizens to accept democratic forms of rule as "the only game in town".

Economic crisis, globalisation and structural adjustment dealt a blow to social pacts, such as tripartite institutions, that sought to manage relations between the state, employers and workers. In countries where they operated, tradeoffs often involved offering of better working conditions and a minimum wage, in exchange for wage restraint. Governments became less able or unwilling to control their economies and deliver on commitments made to social partners, who were seen as obstructive of the fundamental goal of meeting stabilisation targets set by the Bretton Woods institutions. Trade union membership fell and unemployment rose to very high levels. Increasingly, governments saw very little need to involve unions in decision making, which they believed required technical skills and quick decisions.

However, as a result of pressure from unions and civil society groups, the multilateral institutions, especially the World Bank, now speak the language of civil society participation in economic policymaking. One effort in promoting such participation is the World Bank's Structural Adjustment Programme Review Initiative Network (SAPRIN). Launched in 1997, SAPRIN involves review of adjustment programmes in several countries, which in Africa include Ghana, Mali, Uganda and Zimbabwe. National governments, the Bank and civil society groups

participate in the reviews. Even the IMF's new lending programme to poor countries, the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility, incorporates participation as a criterion for granting loans to applicants.

The construction of social pacts at the national level has been most evident in countries trying to build more stable and more democratic political systems. The South African government established the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) – a multilateral body designed to reach consensus on economic and social policy between organised labour, organised employers, community groups and the government. One of its most important achievements has been the Job Summit in 1998. This created possibilities for a social pact on wage and price increases, distribution of the benefits of productivity gains, and agreement on macroeconomic policy, social welfare and the investment regime.

However, these new efforts at involving unions in policy-making have come under considerable stress because of the privileging of economic policy reform over institutional development and dialogue. South African unions are dissatisfied with NEDLAC, which, they complain, has not been very effective in translating union demands into effective policies. Civil society groups also complain about the lack of interest shown by national governments and the tendency of the Bank to be represented by low-level staff in the SAPRIN reviews.

Lack of effective progress in involving civil society groups in economic policy-making has implications for the promotion of social welfare and may threaten the long-term sustainability of the new democracies. Governments pay lip service to social welfare protection and poverty eradication but the real drivers for achieving positive outcomes in the social field are not fully integrated in the policy-making process. Przeworski and Limongi have come up with a very interesting finding on the connections between economic development and democracy based on data for 224 regimes. Levels of income and economic growth do not determine whether countries will democratise, implying that poor countries can, and do, experience waves of democratisation. However, the chances of democracies surviving in low income, low growth economies are very limited. On the other hand, if countries raise their average incomes above the USD 6,000 level, the chances of such democracies collapsing are very slim.

The nominal 6,000 dollar figure can be interpreted in sociological terms: the maturing of social classes, the development of interest groups and civil society, and capacities to discipline policy-makers and state institutions. The problem for most African countries is that democratisation is taking place under conditions of low growth and low incomes as well as widespread poverty. Democratisation has not been a good servant of high growth and poverty eradication. Part of the problem is associated with the types of social policies the new democracies and multilateral institutions seem to favour: residualism and targeting rather than comprehensive social programmes.

African countries may need to devote more resources to policies that will redistribute assets and incomes in favour of the poor and protect losers from the negative consequences of integration into world markets. In the context of de-

mocratisation, social welfare policy can only be effectively pursued when those who are most likely to benefit from it are given autonomous spaces to influence its content and direction. The top down, social welfare path of authoritarian regimes of East Asia and former communist countries may not be viable if policymakers are also serious about the need to build their fledgling democratic institutions. As much of globalisation is driven by information technologies, African countries will need to spend more on education and communications infrastructure if they are to realise higher levels of global connectivity.

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Globalisation, Reforms and Growth in Africa:
Some Comments[1]

Steve Kayizzi-Mugerwa

INTRODUCTION

The polemics surrounding the subject of globalisation indicate that it has come to mean different things to different people. For an increasing number of countries and business conglomerates in the richer world, for example, it symbolises the ever-expanding frontiers of human endeavour in the fields of education, technology, finance and the provision of better services buttressed by shared knowledge and rapid communication. It is seen as the basis for the eventual eradication of poverty and inequality of income and opportunity. In the poorer regions of the world globalisation is seen by many as yet another catchword for progress. This is especially so in Sub-Saharan Africa but like many catchwords before it, it has little concrete benefit for the continent's poor.

IS AFRICA TRAPPED IN ITS PAST?

Sub-Saharan Africa has, at least since the Second World War, been highly integrated into the world economy, with high trade/GDP ratios. On the face of it, this level of integration should have led to higher and sustained growth at least in comparison with Latin America, Asia, as well as the OECD member countries, which had much lower trade shares in total production. However, apart from brief growth spurts during the past decades, global integration on its own does not seem to have led to sustained development in Africa. While other developing regions have been able to lift their populations from abject poverty over the past decades, in some cases even reducing income inequality, this has not happened in Africa to any large extent.

A number of explanations have been advanced for the continent's relative failure to catch up during the era of globalisation, including those relating to paucity of institutions, poor assets distribution, persistence of civil strife and disease and even inclement weather. All tend to make Sub-Saharan Africa unattractive not only to foreign, but also domestic investors. But perhaps part of the problem lies

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[1] These comments draw partly on a paper I presented at the OECD Development Centre in Paris, December, 2000, entitled: "Globalisation, Growth and Inequality: The Sub-Saharan African Experience".

in the uneven nature of Africa's integration into the world economy, exemplified in some cases in capital flight and brain drain. In spite of the rapid changes in the composition of world trade in the past decades, Africa remains stuck in a niche of low value added exports, notably agricultural commodities and minerals, which it exchanges for manufactures. Besides the exposure to international price fluctuations, the enclave nature of mineral production implies that financial and technological flows to mining have few dynamic impacts on the rest of the economy. On the other hand, high shares of agriculture in total production expose African economies to frequent climatic and price shocks. However, on their own structural impediments or initial conditions do not explain African performance adequately, since some "hopeless" cases have made spectacular recoveries, while more "promising" ones have sunk into chaos.

It is noteworthy, that aside from South Africa, few countries in Sub-Saharan Africa can claim to have a self-sustaining industrial base. It is sometimes assumed therefore that the effects of globalisation on the region will be mild or absent. It is argued for example by some that this "old" type of integration in the world economy helps shield African countries from external shocks, notably the recent Asian financial crisis, whose effects spread all the way to Latin America, but left Africa relatively untouched. However, this view discounts the fact that in an interrelated world, an Africa not benefiting from global prosperity is losing something to the rest of the world, albeit in relative terms.

ECONOMIC REFORMS AND GROWTH

The stated goal of the economic reforms of the 1980s and onwards was to limit Africa's structural vulnerability by integrating it more favourably, in terms of trade and capital flows, into the world economy and ensure, thereby, sustained growth and poverty reduction. Although African countries had embarked on economic reforms much later than the more developed Latin American and East Asian countries, their efforts were in some respects quite extensive, signifying a marked departure from the control stance of the 1970s. The first generation of adjustment policies focused on macroeconomic stabilisation, with emphasis on exchange rate adjustment and fiscal consolidation of government expenditure. Subsequent reforms saw graduation to more structural concerns and included market deregulation, public sector restructuring, including civil service retrenchment and privatisation, and trade liberalisation.

During the first half of the 1990s, the economic reforms of the earlier decade seemed to be paying off. Although there had been much variation in the quality of implementation, a number of countries, from most regions of the continent, had posted positive growth rates and relatively low or declining inflation. Crucially, the rates of investment were also picking up. There was wide agreement that African countries were on the verge of a sustainable reforms-generated growth process. The so-called "Washington consensus" seemed to be vindicated.

The optimism did not last, however. By the end of the 1990s, domestic as well as external developments, including poor weather conditions, continuing civil strife and the Asian crisis, had led to a sharp reversal in performance. Of the more than 30 countries that had posted positive per capita growth in the early 1990s only a few, including Ghana, Mozambique, Uganda and Tanzania, had maintained high growth levels by the end of the decade. In retrospect, it is doubtful how much real structural transformation had happened as a result of the reforms. For many countries, the impressive growth spurts earlier in the decade had resulted from the one-off effects of the liberalisation of commodity marketing, buttressed by favourable world prices, which brought peasants back into the formal markets, and the sizeable aid inflows that had accompanied the economic reforms. There was also something of a "peace dividend" as South Africa was brought under majority rule, with positive impacts on the whole of the Southern Africa region, peace returned to Mozambique and Ethiopia and other "trouble" spots calmed down. However, the serious disagreements with donors, as in Kenya, Zambia and Malawi, often ending in aid embargoes, indicated that in many countries, reform of ownership had not been attained.

On the issues of poverty and inequality it is not easy to isolate the impacts of domestic factors and external shocks from those of globalisation. However, a defining feature of inequality in Africa has always been the huge rural-urban gap – a colonial legacy rather than one resulting from globalisation. Post-independence attempts to tackle it via rural development programmes and direct policy interventions had met with little success. During the long period of socio-economic crisis, urban economies were eroded and, in a number of African cities, pockets of poverty emerged that were worse than anything comparable in the countryside. Still, poverty remains concentrated among rural dwellers and African inequality is among the highest in the world.

Ironically, the crisis had, in some countries, an equalising tendency, at least in thesense that it affected the richer urbanites more negatively than rural dwellers, especially since the latter could always resort to subsistence farming. Trade liberalisation, by boosting export commodities actually reversed rural decline in some countries. In countries where export commodities were grown on small peasant holdings, the impact on rural welfare was clearly positive. For example in the coffee and cocoa growing regions of Uganda and Ghana, respectively, peasants were able to reclaim their trees, which had gone to bush, as gate-farm prices improved. With urban areas recovering slowly from the shock of the contracting public sector, African rural-urban inequalities have not increased dramatically.

In trying to assess the impact of globalisation on poverty and inequality, it is important to keep in mind a number of important factors. Many countries had embarked on reforms in the 1980s when the situation was already very desperate: civil service wages were only a fraction of what they were in the 1970s, government services had likewise deteriorated, while external indebtedness had increased. Many economies were clearly in a downward spiral. Did globalisation

aggravate the situation further or were the outcomes merely the continuation of this downward spiral?

CONCLUSION: AFRICA SHOULD MARKET ITSELF BETTER

In the past, the task of removing Africa from abject poverty seems to have been assumed by donors and the multilateral agencies. There is general agreement that such efforts have borne little fruit. A missing ingredient has been Africa's own input, at least at the level of political leadership. There has been, for a variety of reasons, a serious lack of credibility at the centre of Africa's policymaking. Widespread civil wars, hunger and poor economies have not helped improve the image.

Thus what Africa needs most in this age of globalisation is the ability to market itself to the rest of the world. As in traditional marketing models, four issues need to be considered: product, price, place and promotion. The product to be sold, which also subsumes the policy agenda, is credibility. What price are African countries willing to pay for credibility? Africa is seen by outsiders as one whole, with incidents in one country, via neighbourhood effects, seeming to affect the credibility of its neighbours as well. In other words, what price are African countries willing to pay for collective credibility for the continent? Keeping in mind the price the continent has had to pay over the past decades for lack of it, credibility should be highly valued.

The "place" is all the countries of Africa that desire to improve their lot in the 21st century, while "promotion" refers to all the political acts that will be necessary to help Africa get back on the path of growth and into the loop that will ensure convergence with the richer world. However, if the product is not visible to Africans it will be difficult to sell to anybody else and its value will thus be zero. Credibility must first be sold at home. Credibility is a fickle product, however. It demands high launching "costs" as well as those related to promotion, but once acquired and sustained ensures real returns.