

## **Good Leadership and Governance in Africa: A Case Study of Nigeria**

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**Abstract:** The quest for good leadership and good governance in Africa are two key elements that will ensure that Africa is a worthy, respectable and net-contributing player in the global arena. The phenomenon of leadership and good governance has assumed greater interest in Africa. Good leaders globally guide governments of nation-states to perform effectively for their citizens. The central idea behind leadership is to influence members of group or society in a bid to achieve set goals. The study looks at leadership and challenges of good governance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Nigeria. The study discovered that political leadership has been seriously constrained by corruption, mismanagement of resources, electoral fraud and poor infrastructural development and this has posed dangerous threats to the development of the country. The research paper which relies on data from secondary sources, found that good governance is the positive or progressive outcome of symbiotically integrated leadership. This article unequivocally recommends that the opportunity to participate in the democratisation process should be accorded the citizenry in the choice and selection of credible representative through periodic elections. Fight against corruption should be taken seriously. Also building a functioning judicial system, freedom of the press and free speech are inevitable in the sustenance of good governance anchored on economic reforms aimed at socio-economic development.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Good governance, Issues, Prospects, National Development.

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### **Introduction**

Good leadership and good governance in Africa are two key elements that will ensure that Africa is a worthy, respectable and net-contributing player in the global arena. It goes without saying that we must avoid the devastating consequences of the nineteenth century scramble for Africa- its partition and balkanization. Leadership is essential to improved governance. Good leaders globally guide governments of nation-states to perform effectively for their citizens. They deliver high security for the state and the persons, a functioning rule of law, education, health, and the frame work conducive for economic growth. They ensure effective arteries of commerce and enshrine personal and human freedoms. They empower civil society and protect environmental commons. Crucially, good leaders also provide their citizens with a sense of belonging to national enterprise to which everyone can be proud. They knit rather than unravel their nations and seek to be remembered for how they have bettered the real lives of the governed rather than the fortunes of the few.

Positive leaders in Africa stand out because of their adherence to participatory democratic principles and their clear-minded strength of character. Transformational leaders improve the lives of their followers and make those followers proud of being a part of a new vision. Good leaders produce results, whether in terms of enhanced standards of living, basic development indicators, abundant new resources of personal opportunity, enriched schooling, skilled medical care, freedom from crime or strengthened infrastructure. Bad and dangerous leaders tear down the social and economic fabrics of their countries. They immiserate their increasingly down trodden citizens. Despotic rulers, particularly, oppress their own fellow nationals, depriving them of liberty, prosperity and happiness. We have recognised that leadership, especially in Africa is difficult. There are many challenges, particularly of political culture, poverty, illiteracy and disunity. However, Africa seeks only the best and most uplifting leadership.

On the other hand, governance refers to the emergence and recognition of principles, norms, rules and procedures that both provide standards of acceptable public behaviour, and that are followed sufficiently to produce behavioural regularities ( Keohane and Nye, 1989). Governance can also be seen as both processes and arrangements that ensure orderliness, acceptable standard of allocation of resources (both human and material) and a legal framework within which national behaviours are shaped and controlled. Governance is performance - the delivery of high quality political goods to citizens by governments of all kinds. In Africa, as everywhere else, those political goods are security and safety, rule of law, participation and human rights, sustainable economic opportunity and human development. The better the quality of that delivery and the greater the quantity of the political goods being delivered, the higher the level of governance everywhere and at every jurisdictional level, not just in Africa (Roberg, 2009). Delivery and performance are synonymous in this context.

Governments and nation-states exist primarily to provide for their tax-payers and inhabitants. Governments exist to perform for their citizens in areas and in ways that are more easily and more usually managed and organised by the overarching state than by private enterprise or collective civil collaborations. The provision of physical safety and national security are prime examples. Modern nation-states deliver political goods to persons within their designed borders. It is according to their performance in governance realm that states succeed or fail. Stronger states are distinguished from weak states according to the levels of their effective delivery of political goods. Political goods encapsulate citizen expectations and bundles of obligation, as well as inform the local political culture and give content to the social contract between ruler and the ruled that is at the core of state and citizenry interactions (Pennock, 1966; Oslen, 1965).

Good governance on its own refers to “broad reform strategy and a particular set of initiatives to strengthen the institutions of civil society with the objective of making government more accountable, more open and transparent and more democratic” (Minogue, 1997). Good governance has been closely linked to “the extent which a government is perceived and accepted as legitimate, committed to improving the public welfare and responsive to the needs of its citizens, competent to assure law and order and deliver public services, able to create an enabling policy environment for productive activities and equitable in its conduct” (Sharman, 2007). The holistic perception of good governance by the World Bank largely illuminates the hidden virtues of the concept. It views governance as “the means by which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development” and good governance as synonymous with broad sphere of public sector management, accountability, legal framework for development, information and technology, the legitimacy of government, the competence of government to formulate appropriate policies, make timely decisions, implement them effectively and deliver services (Cheema and Maguire, 2004).

### **Leadership and Good Governance In Africa**

Is contemporary Africa blessed with leadership and governance to ensure successful, rewarding investment and beneficial trade with the Asian and Western super-powers? The answer is a putative yes. In what may pass for a twenty-first century scramble for Africa, China, India, Europe and the US are vying for Africa’s resources with increasing intensity. For Africa to weather this storm, survive and prosper, wise, able, visionary, ethical and compassionate leadership must prevail. Measuring what governments do is not new. Benchmarking and preparing report cards on various kinds of performance is well established. Indeed, with regard to national governments, indices and ranking systems of all kinds have proliferated. There are indices of happiness, global peace, global integrity, economic freedom, press freedom, economic competition, corruption, accountability, child welfare and many others. There is even a “dirty war” index (Hicks and Spagat, 2008). There are other efforts with similar complete country coverage such as Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index, the United Nations Development Programme’s Human Development Report and Freedom House’s Freedom in the World Report. Among analogous projects on governance, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa’s African Governance Report, for example, provided data on twenty-six sub-Saharan countries in its first report in 2005 and thirty-three in 2008 (African Governance 2005).

African governance is improving. That was the major surprising finding of the Second Annual Index of African Governance. In his book, *Africa: Altered States, Ordinary Miracles*, released recently, Richard Dowden concluded the 576- page book with one sentence, “Africa is finding itself”. This path of discovery is most profound in the remarkable changes that occurred in Africa’s landscape in the early 1990s. The systematic shift took a gradual but steady trajectory. Thus in 1989, 29 African countries were governed under some kind of single – party constitution or military rule. By 1994, not a single *de jure* one-party state remained and by 1995, most countries in the continent had met the initial demand of multi-party democracy and embraced the idea of holding free, fair and competitive elections.

The wave of democratization and progress toward constitutionalism had begun. Indeed, while only three Heads of State voluntarily relinquished power between 1960 and 1992, the number of leaders that have left power voluntarily since 1992 is estimated to be over 40, some of these leaders left after serving their constitutional terms, other lost elections and accepted the outcome. We have recent examples in Sierra Leone, South Africa, Ghana and Nigeria. In the 1970s, the number of democratic governments was in units. Today, the number is closer to 50 while the wave of political reform is catching up even in countries with absolute monarchies. Against the backdrop of the single party political system, it is significant that the notion of being voted out of power has become an increasing possibility. This has, in turn, reinforced a continent wide belief in the democratic process and signal a new dawn for visionary and effective leadership in Africa.

The optimism and high hopes for democracy and good governance in Africa received a boost when Commonwealth Heads of Government met in Harare in 1991 and issued the Commonwealth Harare Declaration which reaffirmed commitment to fundamental political principles earlier agreed upon at their meeting in

Singapore in 1971. In the Harare Principles, Commonwealth members committed themselves to a set of fundamental values at the core of which is belief in and adherence to democratic principles. These principles include “democracy, democratic processes and institutions which reflect national circumstances, rule of law and independence of the judiciary, just and honest government”. Since then, the Commonwealth has been in the vanguard of promoting democracy through advocacy of democratic principles and practical action to help make them a reality in the 18 Commonwealth African States (Oke, 2008). One such practical step is the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) established in 1995 which remains the most tangible expression of Commonwealth’s commitment to fundamental political values to which all members subscribed. The CMAG has a direct mandate to suspend a member state in the event of an unconditional overthrow of a democratically elected government. It suspended Nigerian in 1995, Pakistan in 1999 and again in 2007, Fiji in 2000 and 2007, and Zimbabwe in 2002. It is noteworthy to mention that the Commonwealth example of promoting democracy and constitutional rule has resonated well in Africa.

### **New Partnership For Africa’s Development (NEPAD): A Practical Manifestation Of Good Leadership**

In July, 1999, the then Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Summit in Algiers adopted a policy against “unconstitutional change of government”. This policy was later consolidated in Article 30 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) which declares “governments which shall come to power through unconstitutional means shall not be allowed to participate in the activities of the Union”. Togo was indeed suspended in 2005 following the attempt by the military to impose Faure Gnassingbe after the death of his father, Eyadema. At the turn of the century the OAU reorganised and re-lunched itself as the African Union with a view to being more proactive in the task of fighting colonialism. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) under the NEPAD is designed as a voluntary, self-monitoring mechanism for assessing a participating government’s progress in meeting the commitments, goals and standards contained in the Declaration of Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance. It is a bold vision and strategic framework for Africa’s renewal. The concept of good governance is very much interlinked with institutionalised values such as democracy, observance of human rights, accountability, transparency and greater efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector. These initiatives are clear pointers to the fact that important changes have occurred since the 1990s to date in the democratic evolution of Africa and that this trend will continue to be strengthened in the future.

Through NEPAD, Africa Heads of State committed their respective governments to provide for peace, democracy, security and good governance, to develop key physical and social infrastructures, institutional capacity and human capital, and implement effective strategies for sustainable development. Some 200 companies doing business in Africa signed the Business Endorsement of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development in partnership with the World Economic Forum (African Region) and the NEPAD Secretariat in Durban, South Africa, in June 2002. Broadly, this committed them to developing best practice standards of corporate governance, improve the quality and effectiveness of social responsibility and skills development programmes and support Africa governments in achieving best practice in economic governance. A NEPAD Business Group-now called the NEPAD Business Foundation was formed to develop effective ways of honouring these commitments.

### **In Defence of the “African Condition”**

Africa has struggled under a multitude of crushing burdens that many have come to regard as a matter of course, as afflictions rather than effect. Those without a historical perspective of the degradation of the continent as a result of slavery and colonialism call it “African condition”: congenital, without hope and without remedy. However, there are those who appreciate the deep-seated impact of the historical imposts of slavery, colonialism and imperialism and currently globalisation and the venality of some African Leaders. This group does not accept this as being ordained, inevitable, nor even characteristic of the continent, but rather as transient African crisis, the result of reversible and remediable circumstances, however intractable they may seem. Fortunately, those days are seemingly gone. Everywhere in Africa today, there is a recognition that governance matters, that governments are responsible for uplifting, not oppressing their people. Few Africans want more Mugabes or Mobutus. Most Africans want what Botswana and Mauritius and now Ghana and Senegal, have achieved through better leadership and governance. The road to prosperity and social improvement, Africans now understand, is through strengthened governance. The ingredients of positive change are there, despite HIV/AIDs, continued internal warfare and poverty. Africans are demanding more from their governments, with civil society in many countries at the vanguard of these movements for change.

Africa is capable of producing iconic commendable leadership, a leadership that stands for the truth and affirmation of the good and whose primary pursuits are noble causes and the common good. This leadership is epitomised by late Nelson Mandela, an example of what we might call “at your service leadership”. This quality is not unique nor is it the result of pre-ordination. It is the result of choice and application. Meanwhile, a leading African businessman, Dr. MO Ibrahim Prize to stimulate debate on good governance across sub-Saharan Africa and the world, to provide objective criteria by which citizens can hold their governments to account, to recognise achievement in Africa leadership and to provide a practical ways in which leaders can build positive legacies on the continent when they leave office. In the main time we must encourage the emergence of a new breed of African leadership. A leadership that is, in the first instance, ethical and imbued with a sense of efficacy, integrity and accountability. Leaders who will be known less for what they proclaim and more for what they deliver, less for their clamouring for title and position and more for their expertise and competence. Leaders who will be known less for what they control and more by what they shape. We are confident that the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will witness compassionate and visionary leaders who care about their followers and who are dedicated to Africa’s humane and noble cause. It is our belief that nothing, simply nothing, is more important for Africa than good leadership and good governance. “Without good governance, Africa will go nowhere”.

### **Leadership and the Challenges of Good Governance in Nigeria**

Leadership is setting aside personal short term vested interests and working for the national and public interest instead. It is doing the right thing for the country and for all the people. There is a wise African saying that “a leader is he who tell his people what they must hear, not what they want to hear”. For a precise understanding of leadership, it represents the driving-wheel of any organisation or forum. Leadership is concerned with fostering change and is inherently value-based. Leadership is all about godliness, proper planning and getting the right people to execute the plan. It is also judicious management of resources and the leadership must be exemplary and transparent. The question is: Is contemporary Nigeria blessed with leadership and governance to ensure successful, rewarding investment and beneficial trade with the Asian and Western superpowers? The answer is putative yes. Many might be surprised at this assertion given that many Nigerian leaders failed, some even dismally.

On the other hand, good governance is the positive or progressive outcome of symbiotically integrated leadership; it is not a product of one stakeholder, it is rather the result of constructive and purposeful interaction between two or more stakeholders. The UNDP defines governance as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country’s affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. Good governance is, among other things, participatory, transparent and accountable. It is also effective and equitable. And it promotes the rule of law. Good governance ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of resources (Diamond, 2005). Governance, the UNDP further notes has three legal legs: economic, political and administrative. Economic governance includes decision making processes that affect a country’s economic activities and its relationships with other economics. It clearly has major implications for equity, poverty and quality of life-Political governance is the process of decision-making to formulate policy. Administrative governance is the system of policy implementation. Encompassing all three, good governance defines the processes and structures that guide political and socio-economic relationships (UNDP, 1997).

Characteristics of good governance and leadership defined in societal terms include the following:

**Participation:** All men and women should have a voice in decision making, either directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their interests. Good governance encourages inclusion in all aspects and bridges the gap between the leaders and the led; it breaks the dichotomy that has long characterised governance. Such broad participation is built on freedom of association and speech, as well as capacities to participate constructively.

**Rules of Law:** Legal frameworks should be fair and enforced impartially.

**Transparency:** Transparency is built on the free flow of information. Processes, institutions and information are directly accessible to those concerned with them, and enough information is provided to understand and monitor them.

**Responsiveness:** Institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders.

**Consensus Orientation:** Good governance mediate differing interests to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interest of the group and where possible, on policies and procedures.

**Equity:** All men and women have opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being.

**Effectiveness and Efficiency:** Processes and institutions produce results that meet needs while making the best use of resources.

**Accountability:** Decision makers in government, the private sector and civil society organisations are accountable to the public, as well as institutional stakeholders.

**Strategic Vision:** Leaders and the public have a broad and long-term perspective on good governance and human development, along with a sense of what is needed for such development. There is also an understanding of the historical, cultural and social complexities in which that perspective is grounded.

Looking at leadership and good governance as defined above, it will therefore mean that fostering positive change for the good of the whole, based on inherently acceptable values as outlined in the characteristic of good governance presents us with the desired leadership for attaining governance that is participatory, accountable, transparent, responsive, equitable, effective and efficient and based on the rule of law. As good as all these may sound, to the so called ordinary Nigerian, there should be free and fair elections, effective public service delivery rooted in public financial management, creation of employment opportunities, access to basic infrastructure, security of lives and property and timely dispensation of justice (Waziri, 2009).

### **Leadership and Governance in Nigeria**

Improving good political governance in Nigeria is of central importance and it underlines the basis for sustainable development. Major areas of concern include human rights violations, absence of rule of law, lack of democracy, corruption, weak democratic institutions, lack of transparency and accountability in management of public resources. While there may be no best way of achieving good governance, the following stand out as the most common elements. These are accountability, transparency, combating corruption, participatory governance and an enabling legal/judicial framework. Judged against these key elements, one can argue that, in a broad sense, Nigeria's record in improving governance remains, at best, mixed. It is therefore not surprising that in terms of economic and human development, the picture is gloomier. As a way forward, it is imperative to ensure that governance assessments and initiatives by various agencies are coordinated and prioritised in order to maximise their impact by building the capacity and effectiveness of state institutions to support effective public and private sectors. Supporting and strengthening of oversight institutions such as the ombudsman, auditor-general's office, on human rights commissions and electoral commissions, and civil service reforms and other state institutions so that they become more efficient, accountable and transparent. This is the cornerstone of good governance (Oke, 2008).

One commodity the world is in short of supply is good leaders (Adeboye, 2011). Leadership is not for all comers. It is bestowed on those individuals and nations that deserve it and have proven the mettle among their peers in whatever area they must have demonstrated their leadership qualities. Nigeria met this threshold to attain the continental status enthusiastically bestowed on her by foreign leaders. Nigeria was providentially born to lead and thus provided leadership role in Africa after independence because she was destined to be courtesy of her size and natural resources as no other nation had the wherewithal to play that role or otherwise compete with her as Africa's pre-eminent leading nation south of the Sahara. Apartheid South Africa provided the litmus test for Nigeria's leadership role on the continent. Nigeria as the leader of the frontline states spearheaded the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. It was in recognition of that leadership role that Nigerian leaders worked their tails off to secure independence or majority rule for such states as Namibia, Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and of course, Angola, as well as her numerous internationally recognised peace-making and peace-keeping roles in troubled spots in Africa and beyond. The numerous international awards and letters of commendation received from the UN and other international organisations bear eloquent testimonies to Nigeria's leadership role in Africa, and by necessary implication, the world in general.

The conceptualisation and crafting of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as well as the AU's Peer Review Mechanism, had the leadership imprimatur of Nigeria during her headship of the continental body for three consecutive terms in deference to her leadership position on the continent. Again Nigeria's leadership was, in the main, responsible for the transformation of the moribund Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into the modern, agile African Union (AU) in tandem with similar geo-political bodies such as the European Union (EU), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Organisation of American States (OAS), just to name but a few. As the chief proponent and promoter of the peer review mechanism therefore, Nigeria had to condemn, and, indeed, intervene in certain African countries when the actions of their leaders fell short of the democratic ideals and principles enshrined in both the AU and ECOWAS Charters subscribed to respectively by member states. For example, the condemnation of the coup de tat and its bloody aftermath in the Republic of Guinea, and expulsion of the Niger Republic from ECOWAS under Nigeria's leadership over the undemocratic power grab by its leader, President Mamadou Tandja and recently asked President Gbambogo of

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Cote d' Ivoire to hand over power to Quattara who won the Presidential rerun elections in that country, is a clear indication of Nigeria's leadership role.

### **Crises of Good Governance in Nigeria**

However, the foregoing represents only the positives. However good and exemplary these efforts might be at the regional and international levels, Nigeria has no discernible records of good governance at the home front.

### **Credible Elections**

In a democratic government like ours, leadership derives its power from the mandates of the people who ideally set the tasks and appoints an elected few to implement the set tasks on their behalf, therefore making the elected few accountable to the people who selected them. This process is however flawed where leaders are selected and forced upon the people by a privileged or self-appointed kingmakers or Godfathers as the case may be. The implication is that such leaders are not answerable to the people from which genuine mandate is derived, but to the whims and manipulations of those that put them in power. In such situations, selfish desires and protection of personal and selected interests form the basis for policy priority settings, as against the clearly articulated needs of the citizenry. This has over the years produced leaders that have plundered the commonwealth of the people rather than apply same to their development.

Leadership transparency and accountability must of a truth begin from very credible electoral system and processes, that ensures that the will of the people is respected and their popular choice of leaders are rightfully enthroned. Only then can such leaders be brought to book and be effectively held accountable. Should they be found wanting in the course of their stewardship to the people. Civil Society Organisations and the Media can indeed do a lot to ensure that the votes of the people are carried, through voters' mobilisation and education campaigns in their various constituencies. Legitimacy in a democratic government can only be conferred by the majority (Astin and Astin 2000). The new Independent National Electoral Commission Chairman under the Leadership of Professor AtahiruJega can help by actions. The voters need to change from apathy to enthusiasm. They need to feel that their votes will really count. The register of voters needs to be overhauled and updated urgently to ensure that the vote is open to everyone eligible. Internal democracy among all the political parties should be introduced. The voter wants a fair and honest process in which every vote counts and vote is not stolen. This requires the police and other security agents to give impartial and good security for all candidates and voters. Violence, intimidation, rigging, fraud, hate speech as it used to be must be avoided and should be denounced by all politicians.

### **Corruption**

Corruption fuels bad governance, erodes public confidence, undermines public service delivery and entrenches square pegs in round holes in leadership positions. It is major impediment to governance. While insatiable wants and human greed are obviously drivers of corruption, inability to hand out prompt penalties to corrupt leaders and individuals often, is due to prolonged court cases. Administrative and bureaucratic procedures involved in the apprehension of corrupt elements and the retrieval of looted funds is a further clog in the fight against corruption and a major leadership challenge. Besides, the country has made corruption a way of life and her second nature to the extent that a man who refuses to dip his hands into the public treasury is being looked upon as an abnormal individual requiring a psychiatric evaluation, while kleptomaniacs have become our nation's role models who run around the country delivering 'lectures' on good governance and democracy. Our leaders have perverted every institution of government and appropriated all governmental apparatuses and placed them at their service. The name Nigeria has become the byword for corruption in the international arena. For we live in a country where governance, at almost every level, has been largely degraded to an enterprise in mass deceit (Obasi, 2010:25). The recent confirmation that the legislators, supposedly making laws for the police to enforce, are themselves mindlessly milking the country to death has further diminished whatever confidence many Nigerians ever had in senior public officials. Again, the long-term failure of the Nigerian authorities to address police bribery, extortion and wholesale embezzlement threatens the basic rights of all Nigerians. The problem of corruption in Africa's most-populous nation, in both the police and in politics, has long been acknowledged but little concrete has been done to address the issue (Dufka, 2009).

### **Unemployment**

Nigeria as a nation prides itself as the most populous nation in Africa with an estimated population of about 180 million people and of this lot, it is estimated that a whopping 70 percent comprises of the youth. However, population growth by itself does not equal prosperity, unless young people are educated and job opportunities created, we will only be raising a population that is fast becoming a liability rather than assets. The

development of non-oil sector is the key to improved and sustainable productivity. The increasing application of modern technology and non-availability of basic services sees increasing migration of the youthful population to urban areas in search of employment. Leadership must be proactive and innovative in the provision of viable alternatives, programmes and policies that would see to the effective accommodation of this impressionable population (Waziri, 2009).

Indeed, the Nigerian landscape is crawling with a rapidly mutating population of jobless, able-bodied men and women who are angry, ill, frustrated and whose disempowerment accounts largely for the reign of cynicism in the land and a high mortality rate. The unemployment crisis in Nigeria is linked to galloping poverty and of course, this should be obvious. But to put Nigerians to work, the solution lies in a reinvention of the nature and purpose of government. Nigeria is no longer a productive country; it is a dumping ground for imports. Its economy provides jobs for outsiders not the people at home. It has since exported many of its best hands to other countries in a corrosive brain drain syndrome. The unemployment situation is so bad that university graduates stay at home for upward of ten years unable to find a thing to do. There is a gross abuse and under-utilisation of human resources in Nigeria with direct impact on national productivity and competitiveness.

Part of the leadership challenge is to ensure that states and local councils become centres of productivity in order to raise the national competitive index. In the country's 36 states and 774 local councils, there is not much productivity activity. The states are at best rent collection centres. Every month Commissioners for Finance travel to Abuja to collect their state's share of Niger Delta and Federal Revenue. This culture of dependency has robbed the state governments of the resolve to create job opportunities for the people. In desperation, a large population of young Nigerians has taken to the riding of motorcycles or to crime. To make a difference, Nigerian government must take practical step to resolve the country's energy crisis. A government that cannot provide regular electricity, something that is taken for granted in Mali, Ghana, Niger, Gambia, Cote d' Ivoire and elsewhere, lacks the moral justification to complain about unemployment. Measures should be put in place by the government for the people. Mostly the unemployed to explore opportunities that the agricultural sector holds for creation. The country's overdependence on oil should be put to a halt. There are basic questions that serious nations ask in seeking to address the unemployment challenge. But Nigerian leaders seem to be more interested in form rather than substance. In the meantime, the country's education system continues to produce millions of graduates for whom there is no market demand. With determination, dedication, commitment and sincerity of purpose of those at the helm of the country's affairs, the unemployment challenge can be surmounted. A National Action Plan on Employment Creation or not, what is required is not rhetoric, but action. The time to act is now.

### **Poverty**

Poverty has become a major socio-economic problem in present day Nigeria. A disturbing observation about it is that it is on the increase, both in incidence and intensity despite the wide variety of national and international measures undertaken to eradicate it during the last three decades. While some talk of poverty in quantitative terms, that is, in terms of calories intake per day or in terms of a given level of income, others discuss it in qualitative terms which is in terms of the inability of certain people in society to attain a given economic, cultural, social or other level (Muzaale 1987, Onuoha 1995, Abiodun 1998).

The poor in Nigeria are found in every group or class or profession. One thing common among them is that they are powerless. This means that they do not have access to "state power". The point to be noted here is that even if one owns and controls the means of production in Nigeria without having access to state power, one cannot make it to top of one's profession. The poor in Nigeria have been excluded not only from the corridors of power, decision making and distribution of the nation, but for participating and shaping the political and economic future of their country (Onuoha, 1995:52). It is also pertinent to note that rural development can hardly be achieved as long as the majority of the rural population continues to remain unproductive and underdeveloped and the traditional social support from extended family being rapidly weakened on account of rural/urban migration (World Bank, 1995). The laying of infrastructures such as roads, water, electricity, health care, housing, education, food production and distribution are basic to the realisation of genuine rural development efforts. Urgent action is therefore needed to alleviate poverty among the rural population. Failure to acknowledge these facts and effectively ameliorate the suffering of the rural masses could become a potential time bomb of civil discontent leading to unexpected public disorder.

### **Internal Colonialists**

When we look at the world around us, we are bewildered by the tremendous progress made by nations that share political, economic and cultural experiences with us in the same period. Countries like Malaysia,

Indonesia, and South Korea were colonised, plundered and brutalised just like ours, yet their leaders have been able to move their nations to economic levels much higher than our own. Malaysia practices parliamentary democracy while Indonesia operates presidential system, yet both countries have been able to record significant changes to their economies and society in the post-colonial era. The military-turned civilian dictator, General/President Suharto of Indonesia, in the period 1967 to 1998, was able to turn around the economy of his country and significantly improved the living conditions of the average Indonesians. South Korea was transformed into an industrial giant essentially by military dictatorship that seized power in 1961 and governed the country directly until 1979. Within a period of about 20 years, the military government transformed South Korea from an agrarian to an industrial economy under the leadership of General Park Chung Hee. Malaysia under a democratic parliamentary system of government led by Dr Mahathir Ibin Mohammed who was elected Prime Minister in 1981 and led the country for 22 years until his resignation in 2003, is today not just one of the top twenty economies of the world, it is also the country which, perhaps, has the largest number of Nigerian students abroad- nearly ten thousand are in secondary schools and university.

The 2010 UNDP Human Development Report shows the Nigeria lags far behind those three countries. For example, while life expectancy in Nigeria is 48.4 years, Indonesia enjoys life expectancy of 71.5 years and South Korea has 79.8 years. While less than 2 percent of South Koreans and Malaysians live on less than 1.25 per day, 64.4 percent of Nigerians are in this category. This is true in spite of the fact that Nigeria is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest producer of crude oil in the world.

Between 1999 and 2007, the revenue of the federation of Nigeria was a whopping 27.7 trillion naira. This amount of money is more than 80 percent of Nigeria's federally-collect revenue from 1970 to 2007. Who will not expect Nigeria to be a transformed country by 2007 with this gargantuan revenue and the leadership enthroned in 1999? One area, which is critical to the economic development of our country, in infrastructure, particularly roads. However, this critical area of the economy has remained in terrible conditions even after the Federal Government is said to have invested hundreds of billions of naira. The Federal Government, through a publication titled "WORKS AT WORK": Media Portrait of the Activities, Achievements and Challenges of the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing, June 1999 to May 2003, claimed to have invested N200 billion on road rehabilitation and construction from 1999 to 2002. After the public expenditure, the conditions of the Nigeria roads remain virtually as they were before 1999 or even worse in some cases.

The power sector reform in which wide-scale corruption of all sorts was reported is another area of concern. This prompted the House of Representatives to ask its Committee on Power and Steel to investigate the huge sums of money spent on power generation, transmission and distribution between June 1999 and May 2007 without commensurate results. The Committee established that a total of \$13,278,937,409.94 was spent on power. It also discovered an additional outstanding unfunded commitment of over \$12 billion. The Committee concluded that "Recognition of these unfunded commitment would bring the total (funded and unfunded) FGN expenditure commitment in the Power Sector to over US\$24.5 billion between 1999 and 2007". The committee also found hard and widespread evidence of systematic over-scoping of projects in order to inflate cost both in the PHCN and the NIPP, which involved at least 15 transmission lines and substations. The initial estimated aggregate costs inflation identified for the transmission projects above was over N20 billion, to be recovered from the contractors. What is most interesting is the sordid acts of these government officials with regard to the road and power sectors scan between 1999 and 2007 and the fact that they were done despite the due process regime, which was introduced to make the award of contracts transparent, by a government which had established the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) supposedly too fight corruption. Till today, only a few of the critical officials responsible for these acts of corruption and the embezzlement of public funds have been asked to account for their misdeeds. This is at the heart of our governance crises, which undermine our ability to transform our economy and society (Yusufu, 2010).

This situation of declining quality of leadership can also be seen in our current political hot bed, the South-South. Indeed, the Niger Delta is the epitome of the paradox in our governance crises. This region is in turmoil because its political leaders at the state and local government levels have failed to meet the minimum aspirations of the electorate, in spite of the very high revenue collected in the past ten years. Information available on the website of the Federal Ministry of Finance indicate that between the years 2000 and 2010, except for 2002 and 2004, where data is not available, the six states of South-South geopolitical zone collected a total revenue of N3.7 trillion from the federation account. When this is added to the Federal Government expenditure in the South-South through the NDDC and now also through the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, it will be realised that trillions and trillions of naira have been collected by the political leaders of the South-South on behalf of their people. The four main oil-producing states (Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta and Akwa Ibom) jointly received about 90 percent of all derivation of oil payments, or about N265 billion (US\$2 billion) in 2005. The fact that despite all these additional revenues, the oil producing states of Nigeria did not perform better than the rest of the country in terms of service delivery, and human development indicators suggests that major

efficiency gains still remain available through improvements in the expenditure management and accountability systems of these states. It is unfortunate that the huge revenue has not translated into prosperity and improved living conditions of their people. The bomb blasts in sWarri in 2010, and subsequently in Abuja on October 1, 2010, December 25, 2010 in Jos and January 1, 2011 in Abuja are eloquent testimonies of bad governance.

The absence of good governance in Nigeria is a direct product of our colonial heritage non-observation of democratic ethics (Dahl, 1987). The continent of Africa has a different kind of enemy altogether whose colour is black-the enemy at home. Nigeria is still under internal colonial bondage and that is the war we must now wage and win. She must defeat the internal colonialists as she did the external. The leaders holding down this nation and our people are Nigerians and not the whites. The leaders looting the resources of this country and stashing them abroad back to the colonialists are Nigerians. The leaders who refused to develop this country and allow diseases and malnutrition to disseminate our population while they live in obscene opulence are Nigerians. The leaders who oppress their people and imposes reign of terror like Sani Abacha and Ibrahim Babangida and all those tin gods who have reduced this country to fiefdoms and mere satellites of Western nations that once colonised this country and plundered her resources, are not whites but Nigerians. The wreaking of havoc on the political leaders of the country by sponsoring military coups and assassination of progressive leaders such as Murtala Mohammed, for instance, have been linked to external forces seeking to promote their ideologies by Nigerians.

These are the forces that have conspired to undermine good governance in the country. Nigeria exemplifies a rendezvous or convergence of these negative forces in their starkest manifestations in the country. This is a country that has managed to turn her blessings into curses, oil wealth into poverty, her population into destitution, her roads into death traps, her buildings into time bombs, her youth into kidnappers, armed robbers and prostitutes because of unemployment, her students into cultist and bandits, her university lecturers into extortionists and handout salesmen, her bankers into spare parts and stock fish importers and round tripper, her generals and lawmakers into emergency contractors, her degrees and certificates into cash and carry business, her justice into commodity, her policemen into highway robbers, and her leaders into pen robbers. The list goes on and on ad infinitum. The nation has hit the very bottom of negativity in leadership and governance, and has nowhere else to go but up (Held and McGrew 2004).

### **The New Dawn**

The good news about Nigerian citizens is that they have become sensitised to issues of good governance and they are demanding same from their leaders. The bad leaders are beginning to discover that it is no longer business as usual and they cannot hide under the cloak of ethnicity to perpetuate and perpetuate bad governance in the nation. The Yoruba, Ibo, Ibibio, Hausa, Fulani, Ijaw, Urhobo, Edo, Efik, Tiv, Isoko, Itsekiri, and the Anang, people, and all the ethnic groups in the nation have, in one accord, risen up to demand good governance from their leaders and the pressure is on. Nigerians are demanding governmental accountability and good governance like never before and the results are trickling in. And someday these trickles will turn to gales of mass discontent that will sweep bad leaders out of power at the pools. Inch by inch that is the direction Nigeria is heading just as Tony Blair indicated, "As Nigeria goes so goes Africa" (Otorofani, 2010).

The question then is how is it that a nation with such unenviable records could purport to promote democracy and good governance in other member states of African regional bodies like ECOWAS and AU, which it does not practice at home? On what moral high ground does Nigeria stand to scold other deviant states on the continent on good governance and democracy? On the face of it, the answer is not apparent. But it can be found in the fact that she had a fairly long run on democracy since 1999 when the military quit the stage, grossing thus far, no less than eighteen unbroken years in the democratic experiment for the first time in her history. And even with all its imperfections manifested in sundry electoral malpractices that had tainted her democratic credentials, the fact that she has had such staying power in the theatre of democracy seems to have entitled her to throw weight around as the new kid on the block to add to her already impressive leadership resume on the continent. And it appears that other member states of both ECOWAS and AU have accepted her self-appointed role as the regional and continental policeman of democracy which is not altogether unexpected given pedigree. This could be seen in the intervention by ECOWAS Chairman, President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria in the political turmoil and crisis between the Ivoirian incumbent Leader Laurent Gbagbo who resists demands by African Heads of State to step down for the internationally recognised President Alassane Quattara over the presidential re-run elections in that country. On January 4, 2011, four African Heads of state were sent to ask Laurent Gbagbo to step down or legitimate force by ECOWAS will be used to unseat him.

### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

The world over, it is servant leaders that have made the difference in the lives of their people and advanced their governments over time through vigorous and sacrificial pursuit of positive change with great respect for acceptable societal values. Wise leadership at all levels is needed in the country, whereby leaders are leaders for all the people, irrespective of individual background or ethnicity or religion, where the rule of law and fair play is extended to all and where effective and productive leadership must be seen to be transparent and accountable to the citizenry. This increases goodwill amongst the people and the chances of elected leaders succeeding in their endeavours. This also promotes legitimacy, acceptance and most importantly role modelling. Available resources must be properly harnessed and used based on the principles of equity and equality so that the impact is felt through the rank and file of the society. The government must be service oriented and promote effective delivery of public services so as to enhance local and small scale economic development aimed at improving the lot of the youth and the poor. Information must be made available to the people especially to non-state actors for enhanced purposeful engagement with leadership.

Good governance is now synonymous with development and has won a global outlook. Governance has been internationalised, and transcends local domain. Nigeria's engagement in promoting and enhancing effective governance in support of democracy and human rights point in the right direction and must be sustained. Since standards are by their nature susceptible to the laws of gravity, the international community must continue to support Nigeria in efforts to make her government more transparent, capable and responsive to the will of the people. Any claim to democratic regime or state must essentially embrace a high degree of popular participation, competitive choice and openness, the enjoyment of civil and political liberties by the citizenry in concrete terms and accountability of the leadership. The opportunity to participate in democratisation process accords the citizenry the choice and selection of credible representatives through periodic elections. Also building a functioning judicial system, freedom of the press, free speech are inevitable in the sustenance of good governance anchored on economic reforms aimed at socio-economic development. Fight against corruption also should be taken seriously. The rule must be potent enough and impartial to punish corrupt officials to serve as deterrent to others and reward good conduct in public offices. If leadership can be reformed by focusing on governance and underlining its critical importance, and if governance can truly become central to the thinking of leaders and administrations, then Nigeria's inhabitants may join the citizens of the rest of the globe in their economic, social and political advances and accomplishment.

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