

A TRANSFORMED LEADERSHIP MANAGING NATIONAL RESOURCES TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE OF AFRICA'S AGENDA 2063

BOOK REVIEW

Sustainable development is no longer a distant objective for Africa that is heralded by continental and global institutions and forums. It is now an imperative to the stability and future of each country in Africa. The African Association of Public Administration and Management (AAPAM) is a continental organ that among others promotes productive exchanges among and between practitioners, policy makers and scholars in and about Africa to influence positive changes. Its recent output the Book edited by George Scot and Urketor Moti is an admirable endeavor that pitches together the leadership question –an ever-important agenda, and the sustainable development objective that continues emphatically to be a central issue of world's concern.

The Book (2020) is an outcome from a continental conference whose theme was “A Transformed Leadership Managing National Resources to Achieve the Objective of Africa's Agenda 2063 and Sustainable development Goals (SDGs).” The theme is reflective of the serious concerns that arise from ineffective use and management of our natural resources as a consequence of ineffective leadership. It also trumpets the benefits to accrue from a leadership context that values sustainable development. The editors, George Scot and Urketor Moti, opine that sustainable development in Africa is a function of a leadership that is transformational and context sensitive. African countries and leadership are cajoled to metamorphose from passive to active protagonists in the global urgent quest to mitigate and adapt to climate change imperatives.

After the comprehensive introduction, Professor Moti delves into the most profound hurdle to transformation. While analyzing the issue of poverty amidst plenty of natural resources in Africa, only one country is mentioned to have escaped the resources curse. In both the resource poor and resource rich Africa, positive change is limited by factors that include: weak institutions, vested interests, autocratic regimes, conflicts, unpredictable revenue, rent seeking behaviors and corruption. Improved governance and leadership are provided as the ingredients to the ‘magic portion’ to transform Africa toward a sustainable development path. Improved regulatory quality, rule of law, transparency and control of corruption are necessary to effective leadership and good governance objectives for sustainable development to be obtrusively the agenda in the continent.

Florence Nyokabi points that the Vision 2063 is a strategic development framework that envisions Africa's development to be people centered and inclusive. Africa's development potential is underscored but is said to require collective efforts. Nyokabi show cases a Kenyan experience of programs that involves public and private stakeholders that work for inclusion of the youth including females and

people with disabilities. Gender equality and inclusion are said to catalyze sustainable development efforts in Kenya and the continent.

Dr. John Mary Kauzya observes that sustainable development is embedded in national development frameworks of most African countries. Nonetheless, what is absent is leadership that is transformational at all levels of governance frameworks: within the national and subnational governments and the civil society. African leaders are urged to leverage on the diverse potentials available in country and beyond through enhancing the local capacity to innovate, effectively mobilize resources, instilling values of professionalism, promoting ethical conduct and integrity and promoting accountability. The leadership actions have to seek better today whilst having in sight a better tomorrow –leading and transforming countries for sustainable development.

Teferi Hailemichael suggests that Africa is deepening in poverty and degradation of natural resources. To achieve a leadership that is transformation a whole system change is important – a change that starts with personal values and beliefs that are to influence others’ cultural values and beliefs. There must, however, exist supportive structures, systems and processes. Accordingly, it is propagated that innovative solutions to mitigate climate change effects, land degradation, deforestations and to promote sustainable development is a leadership issue as much as is the people issue.

Kenyan Experience on water management provided by Patrick Gagachua is reflective of the situation facing many other African countries. It is advocated that protection of water sources and efficiency in the management of water resources are essential to a sustainable eco system and survival itself. Water management thus links climate systems, human society, and the environment. Good governance is described as the upholding of policies, legislations, and strategies that support water management.

Sospeter Muchunguzi provides an experience of potential positive transformation to ethical leadership for effective management of natural resources. The fifth phase government (2015-2021) in Tanzania is lauded for efforts to promote leadership ethics in the country: policies, directives and actions, governance related, taken include; eliminating wasteful and unnecessary public expenditures, fighting impunity in the public service and tackling corruption. These leadership actions are said to epitomize the visions of the founding father of the nation Julius Nyerere. An example is provided of the initiatives to increase control of mining resources in the country as previous contractual agreements were reviewed. Muchunguzi centers ethical leadership in the sustainable development equation.

Linking poor social economic development in Africa to global capitalist system, Robert Kemepade offers that transformation leadership is needed today that can effectively engage the global capitalist system so that national resources can contribute to socio-economic development. The founding fathers such as Kwame

Nkurumah and a few others are categorized as transformational leaders; some leaders mostly failed dictators are said to be transactional leaders – described as fear inspiring personality cult figures – such as Mobutu Sese Seko. Learning transformational leadership is emphasized while providing examples of possible success stories supported by democratic principles and keen leadership. Kamepade posits that Africa has to better itself in the management of the following: social capital resources including the diverse ethnic and social groups; financial capital resources; technological and human capital; and long-term strategic visioning.

The Book almost wholly links the determinant for sustainable development by African practitioners and scholars to internal circumstances as opposed to the blame game often touted. Where colonialism and neo colonialism and external originating factors are often cited as causes of the continents poverty and predicaments in today's post-modern world. Even when external factors are considered such as the global capitalist system, African leadership is challenged to be transformative enough to manage issues effectively. An underdeveloped Africa is implicitly said to play a very insignificant role in promoting sustainable development and the global community and African leaders are to engage each other effectively to improve Africa's socio-economic conditions.

However, there are issues that were not exhaustively covered by the authors in some respect. Creating strong institutions at local and national level is a historical undertaking and requires strong leadership at national level. But we are yet to see numerous examples of the Lee-Kuan-Yew, Mahadhir Mohammeds, and Park Chung-hees, etc. How did these strong leaders managed to achieve as much while we have few similar examples? How can the issues of democracy and good governance create room for transformational leadership and vice-versa? For example, Tanzania had a strong leader as mentioned by Muchunguzi and some achievements recorded but democracy and good governance were given the back seat. Because institutions were compromised new work is now on to rebuild the institutions of democracy and good governance. There is need to find a remedy to the vicious cycle of building and demolishing governance institutions that may characterize most of Africa. Again, if the founding fathers were transformational leaders how then is desired development elusive? If Africa is not a failure and Botswana can sustainably develop, what lessons can other African countries learn from it?

"We either unite or collectively perish, as no single country or region can be an island of prosperity in an ocean of poverty, insecurity and underdevelopment."

Nkozasana Dlamini-Zuma, African Union Commission

Source: <https://www.scidev.net/sub-saharan-africa/editorials/sdgs-mdgs-transform-africa/>