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Re-imagining governance in Africa through a people driven developmental approach - with specific reference to Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Prof Isioma ILE
School of Government
University of the Western Cape
Cape Town, South Africa

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Background & Introduction

- SDG's and AU Agenda 2063 are critical guiding documents
- SDGs (2030) - “**leaving no one behind**”.
- Agenda 2063, “**Africa we want**”
-Agenda 2063 will not happen spontaneously, it will require conscious and deliberate efforts to nurture a *transformative leadership* that will drive and defend Africa's interest”. (AU, 2015)
- Such transformative leadership will trigger the desired change across sectors
- And re-imaging governance could assist in translating that vision in real and concrete terms



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Key questions

- What does this aspiration “Africa we want ” mean specifically in relation to AU Aspiration 6?
- How is IKS and people driven development (A6) linked?
- Does IKS present an opportunity for people driven development and improved governance?
- How can people driven development be hinged on solid research capacity and capability to attain our aspiration?





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Question 1 - What does this aspiration “Africa we want ” mean specifically in relation to AU Aspiration 6?

- Key Agenda 2063 Aspirations:
- **Aspiration 1** - A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development
- **Aspiration 2** - An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of African Renaissance
- **Aspiration 3** - An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law
- **Aspiration 4** - A peaceful and secure Africa
- **Aspiration 5** - An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics
- **Aspiration 6** - An Africa whose development is people driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women, youth and caring for children
- **Aspiration 7** - Africa as a strong, united and influential global player and partner



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Making sense of the Aspiration 6(A6)

- An Africa whose development :
- 1. is *people driven*
 - All - Inclusive of rural & urban populations (closes divides)
 - Recognizes and integrates culture & development
 - Deeply rooted in sustainable practices(tried and tested).
- 2. relies on the *potential* of African people
 - Culture/IKS presents opportunity in governance
 - The pursuit of that opportunity actualizes the “potential”
- 3. targets especially its *women, youth and children*
 - These groups particularly present immense resources and potential to be utilized for Africa’s development (youth – about 60%)





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Question 2 - How is IKS and people driven development (A6) linked?



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- Indigenous Knowledge (IK) in this presentation refers to culturally rooted and appropriate local knowledge applied for developmental purposes:
 - Knowledge with depth not just for the sake of knowledge
 - Knowledge that is developmental oriented & improves society
 - Knowledge that has strong application grounding/problem solving
 - Promotes inclusivity as knowledge not seen as the preserve of the West
 - Knowledge that is culturally relevant & has a better contextual fit
 - Accessible especially to rural populations, where majority of Africans live.
 - Knowledge that could be geared and adapted towards innovation with practical societal value
 - Contribute to a Decolonized education (re-orientation...)
 - Affirms our identity
 - is empowering
 - pursuing valid knowledge and that is appropriate



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**IK holds deep truths that are still relevant today!
e.g. has always recognized nature needs a break.**

Examples of Environmental & Agricultural practices :

Fish ponds to avoid over fishing, rotational farming, crop rotation, spacing techniques, bio diversity conservation (beauty & medicines)





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Question 3 - Does IK present an opportunity for people driven development (A6) and improved governance?

- Yes! How so?
- The pursuit of IK presents an opportunity to be unleashed because:
 - it recognizes Africa's most important resources – its people and **their** knowledge is valid! (Governance and Ubuntu).
 - IK is not alien, it is accessible to all across the continent
 - IKS hook can be used to mobilize majority of Africans behind appropriate visions
 - IK can be adopted and adapted, reoriented into innovative ways
 - IK provides pathways that connect communities with the AU aspirations and various governance reforms
 - IK is deeply rooted and sustainable





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In pursuit of an IKS governance framework?

Knowledge based
Culturally relevant
Accessible
Decolonized-
IKS



governance principles;

- Contextually relevant
- Culturally sensitive
- Outcome based
- Value based (Ubuntu)
- Evidence based/lived experiences
- innovation focused
- Sustainable

Governance Processes;

- Community driven
- Citizen driven

Combine top down and bottom-up approaches
co-owned



People based
-transformative leadership
Whole society
Collaborative
Committed partnerships
Aligned visions





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How can we (as Africans) use IK for improved governance ?

- Actively seek and recognize the IK opportunities as value add (e.g accountability sanctions by peers (e.g age groups), varied levels of accountability – public reprimand by Elders, extended family/kinship sanctions, Ban from leadership etc)
- Document evidence of IKS best practices through sustained research across various sectors
- Leverage IK pathways for desired governance outcomes
- Mainstream IK opportunities and innovations into governance, especially at local government level
- Increase research output - Sub Saharan Africa accounts for 13.5% of global population yet our research spend is about 1% of global research expenditure. Quartz Africa (2018)
- Consume our research and minimize consumption of other research that are not relevant to our context



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Question 4 -How can people driven development be hinged on solid research capacity and capability to attain our aspiration?

- Varied strategies to strengthen R & D capabilities and capacities
 - Strengthen networking capacities (links with and amongst universities, think tanks, continental and national governments, other spheres)
 - Develop talents (research awards/scholarships/grants)and minimize brain drain
 - Seek development partners & philanthropists committed to our research agenda,
 - Strengthen national capacities (research institutes (e.g NRF in SA), National departments of Science and innovation) especially its focus on IK e.g. Indigenous Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation.
 - Strengthen link between research, innovation & entrepreneurship (numerous opportunities e.g., resource management (land use, indigenous plants eg Rooibos, solar panels)
 - Seek analytical, solution driven and localized research skills (use IM&E)



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Recommendations...

- Seek, document and affirm IKS governance best practices (Shared knowledge even at community level)
- Innovate and adapt relevant governance insights
- Re-energize the call for transformative and Afrocentric leadership agenda
- Build sustainable linkages and pursue whole society wide approach to AU aspirations and implementations (multi-stakeholder)
- Pursue Bottom up/community IKS based approach with strong participation
- Increase commitments to decolonized and inclusive education





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Concluding remarks

- Let's create opportunities for **the Africa we want** and the world that **leaves no one behind**.
- All hands on deck...to unleash and actualize Africa's fullest potential!





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Questions

Thank You!





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