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PAN-AFRICANISM, LEADERSHIP PROSPECT AND THE AGENDA 2063

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ABSTRACT

The idea of development has always been nurtured. It is as old as the history of Africa itself. Even though the continent is believed to host the starting point of development, man has struggled to continue doing so there. Shying away from reality will not be the solution, but facing reality with all its encumbrances. Perhaps, many people are ignorant of what pan-Africanism can offer; hence, they relegate pan-Africanism and the African development prospect to mere academic studies. Against this backdrop, the paper seeks to substantiate the significance and role of pan-Africanism in the development of Africa.

INTRODUCTION

The African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 project is aimed at achieving a united and prosperous Africa. To realise our vision of a united and prosperous Africa, there is the need to adopt a paradigm – a practicable theory about how things should be rightly said and done. Our people, especially the youth, must understand the importance of pan-Africanism and work selflessly towards promoting it. Africa has found it difficult to evolve a consistent ideology. The cultural multifarious nature of African nations occasioned by the arbitrary partitioning by their erstwhile colonial masters is not helping matters. Change is only possible when the people are united. Stalling attitudes have threatened the development of our continent.

African development has been stunted by crises of ideologies. The struggles by different ethnic groups indigenous to nations for political and social domination of others have also created fear, emotional attachment and resistance to rational synthesis of the diversity which could promote the nation's development. The Biafran emancipation struggle in Nigeria stemmed from this same perceived political domination; whereas this ethnic group would have held onto unity and contributed from a strategic position to the country's development. This diversity has cost us so much. Nelson Mandela understood it and revealed his dream of an African continent that is at peace with itself. For him, the realisation of a united Africa where leaders work in synergy is the surest way to the continent's development. Perhaps, Kwame Nkrumah had better words to pass the necessary message. He opined: *"It is clear that we must find an African solution to our problems, and this can only be found in African unity. Divided we are weak; united, Africa could become one of the greatest forces for good in the world."* I beg to rephrase Nkrumah's 'could' to 'would'. This is rather a statement of fact applicable to any part of the globe. How can a united and multitalented people not prove formidable? Even God had to dispel such threatening unity at the Tower of Babel. I wish to state the fact that it is the ideology and values of a people that direct their development.

What has been the case before now? Africa's underdevelopment has been largely blamed on colonialism. Walter Rodney's "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa" also lent credence to the

truth of this claim. But whilst we may yet ponder, what has been the impact of our self-governance over the last ive decades? Professor Kwasi Agyeman tells us more: “ If we were to be honest with ourselves, we surely would not ind it too difficult to be convinced of the fact that Africans have been irresponsible and harmful to Africa in terms of self-governance. I would like to stake out the case that we have failed ourselves.”²

Intently, anyone would agree with Professor Agyeman. Governance in Africa has suffered several hangovers. This governance, however, does not only refer to political governance. Our actions as lead individuals at different levels of the African society have also contributed to this failure which Professor Agyeman emphasized. Now that we have gotten to the point of introspection, we realise that the continent’s development can best be geared by its people. Instinctively and in a timely fashion, the African Union (AU) took to its pedestal and initiated a vision plan which provides a general platform for everyone to foster our collective development. Africa has now set a target for itself for 2063. Our aim is to propel an African continent which will be rightly seated amongst other continents in the First World status. This paper urges all Africans, especially the youth, to work more unitedly and exude utmost believe in themselves (and Africa) as having the ability to manage their problems and chart a course for their development using African resources.

PAN-AFRICANISM: ITS TRUE MEANING

It is not surprising that the idea of pan-Africanism thrives mainly in the context of political alienation. But when we look at its etymology, the term “pan-Africanism” originally depicts an all-inclusive Africa. It is the idea that people of African descent have common interests and should be united. This unity, however, should not be limited to the political space. It ought to reflect in other spheres of our society as Africans. The slogan ‘Africa for the Africans’, popularized by Marcus Garvey, lays more emphasis on the fact that pan-Africanism is rather a movement for cooperation between all people of the African descent. This cooperation aims at strengthening the bonds of solidarity and fostering the collective progress and development of the people. Pan-Africanism is a shared positive feeling amongst Africans. It arouses the consciousness that one is an African and his allegiance lies with Africa. It is the sense of unity and oneness people of the African descent exude, when they meet, interact and work together. Pan-Africanism transcends the realm of ideology, it is practicable and ought to reflect in all our dealings as a people.

Unfortunately, the essence of pan-Africanism has been devalued by Africans. Disunity has proven to be the worst barrier for the continent. The absence of unity, even amongst African leaders and the youths, shows the lack of understanding of the power and significance of pan-Africanism. Real leaders must be willing to sacrifice all for the welfare of their people; hence any leader who places self-aggrandisement above the citizenry debases the essence of pan-Africanism. It is not enough to originate from Africa, we must do so much together in order to promote the status of our continent and improve its perception. The future of pan-Africanism lies in the strength of our society and our ability to bring together young people, social workers, political organisers, trade unionists, activists, scholars and women’s right promoters behind a common vision of moving Africa to the First World status. Our history as a people is history that needs to be told, that needs to be learned and that needs to be recorded; as such we must selflessly work together so as to fulfil the goals of the Agenda 2063 and create the Africa we want. Every African, including the reader, must show responsibility towards the continent by doing as little as can be done in order to promote its status. Pan-Africanism is faith in Africa. It does not deny the fact that Africa has

its numerous problems and leadership challenges, rather it proffers solutions and denies the fact the ability to lord it permanently over Africa. We can work out the Africa we want if we believe, work and stay together.

IDEA OF DEVELOPMENT

It is the social will of the African people that their standard of living be improved. Our struggle as a continent is geared towards achieving a prosperous Africa conducive for Africans and for our visitors. Our collective wish is to enjoy the dividends of development, but this can only be realised when we experience a great range of development on different spheres. Development is an unavoidable datum of life. It was defined by Michael Todaro as involving: *“The reorganisation and reorientation of entire economic and social systems. In addition to improvements in incomes and output, it typically involves radical changes in institution, social and administrative structures as well as in popular attitudes and sometimes even beliefs and customs.”*³ This definition of development hinted on the need for ‘radical changes’ even in the attitudes, beliefs and customs of a people. The essence of pan-Africanism is to raise the belief of the average African about the prosperity of the continent whilst inculcating inherently values of responsibility towards this prosperity. Thus, pan-Africanism remains the vital ingredient needed to successfully achieve the development of Africa and the agenda 2063 vision plan.

As soon as Africans start exuding the spirit of pan-Africanism, there would be a massive unfolding of inner potentialities which will undoubtedly promote our development. In this line, the African Philosopher, Pantaleon Iroegbu explained development to be: *“...the progressive unfolding of the inner potentialities of a given reality. It is to de-envelop, that is to bring out to light, the existential, functional and epistemic, which was enveloped, folded or hidden. As it applies to a people, development is the integration of different givens: national, physical, acquired and human, of a people towards the full working out, permanently and cumulatively, of their being as persons of their community and of their real productivity.”*⁴

Four major types of development affects a continent positively. They invariably boost a people’s standard of living and protect their freedoms, rights. These developments are: economic development, social development, political development and individual development. Let us attempt brief explanations:

Economic Development

This type of development is greatly influenced by the industrial advancement of that society. It refers to the sustained, concerted actions of societies and policymakers that improve the standards of living and economic health of a people. It improves the quality of life by creating or retaining jobs and supporting or growing incomes. For B. Ohiani, economic development is *“the qualitative and quantitative increase of factors of production and goods and services produced with these factors, equitable distribution of wealth produced by a given population of an area and increase in the standard of living of a given population over a measurable period of time.”*⁵ This type of development adopts new technologies, transits from local agriculture-based to industry-based economy and improves living standards.

Social Development

This type of development places people at the centre of development. It is defined as prioritizing

human needs in the growth and progression of the society. Again, Ohiani explains social development to be *“the continuous increase in the consciousness of the people about their environmental and human factors, promote their wellbeing and their ability to control these factors so as to control their standards of living.”*⁶ The focus of social development is to improve the lives of regular citizens, especially the poor, to make the society a better place for everyone. To a large extent, it involves listening to poor people and promoting their voices in development.

Political Development

This is best described as political modernisation. It may be defined in terms of the capacity of the political system to satisfy the changing needs of the members of the society⁷. This type of development involves the moral maturity and discipline of the operators of politics. It is important because there must be political order for progress to exist in any society. For a nation to experience order, it must have an agent of order which is the government in power. This agent of order controls or determines the economic and social development of the society, thus, any development without political development is no development at all.

Individual Development

This type of development is also known as personal development. It is paramount as it provides the foundation for development. Man is the bedrock of the society, and without first solving the problem of the individual, it is impossible for any nation to develop. Individual development covers activities that improve awareness and identity, develops talents and potential, builds human capital, enhances the quality of life and contributes to the realisation of dreams and aspirations. This type of development involves both the moral courage and intellectual adroitness of an individual. Its nature determines the nature of the society as man is the measure of all things.

Since the economic, social and political types of development all rest on individual development, it suffices for Africa to lay more emphasis and give more primacy to individual development. There is need for our continent to invest more in the development of its people, especially the youth and future leaders, who will in turn promote the economic, social, political and other types of development.

PAN-AFRICAN LEADERSHIP

The foundation of a nation's development is individual development. The extent to which an individual can affect a nation or continent depends on the position occupied by such individual. A leadership that is personally developed has the moral courage to live up to expectation and understands the dynamics of a changing world. Such a leadership will place the interest of the people above that of the self, and exude competence in the face of technical challenges. Whilst describing the challenges faced by Nigeria, the prominent African scholar, Chinua Achebe, had asserted that *“the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership.”*⁸ This failure which Achebe talked about was and is still traceable to the lack of personal development. Our goals and visions as nations within Africa can be best achieved when our leaderships are anchored by individuals, with character and competence, who are committed to promoting the social will of the people they serve. Since we have now unanimously agreed to project ourselves to the First World status by 2063, there is the need to institutionalise what is called pan-African leadership if sustainable development is to be indeed sustained in Africa. By pan-African leadership, I mean unified and codified continental governance and leadership system, modus

operandi which will help spread the dividends of development throughout all African nations in record time. From different fronts, this kind of system would undoubtedly promote the living standards of Africans and help project the continent to the First World status. When taken into serious consideration, the following points and activities will help us realise that Africa we want. Firstly, the rate of citizenry living below poverty line is a barrier to our legacy as a people; but since political development is the determining factor for both economic and social developments, it suffices to pay detailed attention to the emergence of successive and progressive African politics. This kind of politics can come to stay when Africa indoctrinates the principle of personal development by systemically establishing a firm political institution which will be headquartered in any African nation and supervised by the African Union. The most important task will be to establish efficient governments and effective spirited leaders – with competence and character – who are devoted to development, and have the ability to promote it. Genuine development cannot afford to sacrifice the well-being of the majority; hence without first strengthening good governance in Africa, it is impossible for the continent to achieve our Agenda 2063 vision plan.

Secondly, education remains the best legacy and it is necessary we make huge investments ahead of 2063. In order to automatically install personally developed individuals into strategic leadership positions in the continent, the AUC, ECOWAS, AFDB and the likes must invest thoroughly in the education of youths, especially those showing thorough understanding of the rudiments of pan-Africanism and the Agenda 2063. Already, the African Union's Pan African University scheme and the ECOWAS Fellowship Programme, amongst others, serve as platforms for the preparation of Africa's future leaders, but more can be done in the educational sector, and swiftly, to meet up with our target in 47 years.

Thirdly, because we live in an age of sophisticated orchestrated designs by nations, companies and individuals to position themselves in such a way as to become colossal and powerful with myriads of tentacles of domination, our integration, which is an expression of pan-Africanism, is highly necessary. Civil societies, companies, government agencies, development organisations; NGOs and NPOs alike are required to work together to build up sustainable development projects from the grassroots all over Africa. The agenda 2063 is an open call for all Africans to lend a helping hand to lifting Africa; thus it is needful for all Africans (even the diaspora) to support motions which are geared towards improving the standards of living on African soil. If we are to be a bit cynical, we would realise that the spate at which NGOs, civil societies struggle to survive in Africa has somewhat contributed to some of the internal crises within our borders. For instance, when indigenous youths come up with a fantastic development idea and approach a prominent, powerful body in the continent and are turned down, they eventually seek support for their ideas from outside the shores of the continent. Such experiences often build negative momentum and the belief that these foreigners are more dedicated to the development of their communities. This could possibly spur the naive ones into rebelling against their own leaders, governments in the name of "fighting for the development of their country". Inasmuch as I agree that somethings are not right with African leaderships, I do not believe in violent resolutions. Rather, I believe in diplomacy, negotiation and the sharing of that feeling of belonging which could peacefully pave ways in even the most difficult matters against the government. However, many young people do not think the same way but believe in violent outbursts. Not looking too far to the death of Muammar Gaddafi, a recent case study was the #SHUTDOWNZIM and #THISFLAG campaigns in Zimbabwe which was reportedly claimed to be sponsored by some foreign influence. Whether sponsored or not, African big bodies, governments, companies and organisations need to show full support to the youth and carry them along if we are to raise young

people with pan-African consciousness who would not be used like pawns in a chess game. Several 'African' NGOs, NPOs partook in the #SHUTDOWNZIM exercise and were ready to create chaos which would have thrown negative spotlight on Africa, whereas we should be more united in the spirit of pan-Africanism and seek better ways to project the agenda 2063.

Fourthly, the common idiom, "as you make your bed, so you must lie on it", reminds us of the fact that the future has its foundation in today. To prepare a more formidable ground for Africa's future leaders, our present leaders (presidents, heads of state) ought to exude the spirit of oneness and speak from one voice. How do we expect the globe to take our concerns into serious consideration when we don't speak as one authentic voice? Of course, pan-African leadership is a nitty-gritty for Africa's development; and this is why one of the foremost goals of the agenda 2063 vision plan is to build the much needed unity in the continent. Imagine that Africa seeks permanent representation on the UN Security Council so as to effectively tackle our problems of peace and security issues, but only few of our leaders have been passionate enough to declare our collective aspiration before the globe. Yet, we are classified as one of the world's most populated continents and every year our leaders attend the UN General Assembly. One is tempted to ask, where does the allegiance lie?

Finally, the outgoing AUC Chairperson, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma's email dated January 24, 2016 must continue to serve as an encourager when we lose the zeal to individually carry on the torch of development in our diverse communities. Not only did it reveal that the agenda 2063 plan became successful when pan-Africanism had its root amongst the early generations, it also appraised the roles played by successive generations of African youth. This goes to show that the togetherness of African youth is key to the realisation of agenda 2063 and the eventual development of Africa. We ought to be overwhelmed by communal jingoism as our development as a people can only be bolstered when we stop acting as fifty-five fragmented individual countries; and start acting as one powerful group.

CONCLUSION

Pan-Africanism is key to our development as a people. Our abundant natural resources are sufficient to place our nations on the forefront of global development, but good governance enshrined in the ideals of pan-Africanism is essential to carry all African nations along. In buttressing this point, Professor Obi Oguejiofor rightly asserted that: *"From whatever angle the solution to the problems of the continent may come, it is evident that proper governance or management of the available resources of all kinds is essential in moving the continent forward and in ensuring that the proper atmosphere exist to enable what could be done to be done in order to advance on the way of progress".*⁹

Africa's present and future leaderships must reposition their various nations on the threshold of a new pan-African orientation which will recognise our collective future in the agenda 2063, call for changes in attitudes and mindsets as well as inculcate the right set of African values – like honesty, transparency, discipline, integrity and the love for Africa and its people. This is imperative because only pan-Africanism can synthesise different African cultures, ideologies and information, and help us build a formidable society.

God bless Africa!

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