DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

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CONCLUSIONS AND PAPERS PRESENTED AT A CONFERENCE OF THE AFRICA LEADERSHIP FORUM

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Ota, Nigeria
29 November – 1 December 1991

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Introduction

The current wave of pro-democracy movement that is sweeping through most parts of sub-Saharan Africa is undoubtedly a welcome development. Of fundamental essence is the fact of its being a process and movement that is internal to Africa.

It is, therefore, necessary to examine the nature and forms of this welcome development to allow for the sharing of relevant lessons and experience. Again, such an exercise would encourage the need to identify the problematics of governance in Africa.

These were part of the issues participants at the Africa Leadership Forum International Conference on *Democracy and Governance in Africa* deliberated upon during this meeting.

This report is a summary of what transpired within those three days and the subsequently adopted recommendations and suggestions.

It would be interesting to note that as the conference was winding up its proceedings, the military struck again in Togo. Participants naturally found the development reprehensible and objectionable and issued a statement to that effect.

Conclusions and Recommendations of the Conference

Summary of Main Conclusions

A conference organized by Africa Leadership Forum took place on 29 November – 1 December, 1991 to examine the topic Democracy and Governance in Africa. Some forty-five eminent individuals from twenty African and non-African countries participated at the Conference in their personal capacities.

Opening remarks at the Conference were made by Olusegun Obasanjo, Chairman, Africa Leadership Forum. Aristides Maria Pereira, former President of Cape verde and Marvyn Dymally, USA Congressman (D-California). A keynote address was delivered by Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo, former Prime Minister, Portugal and member of the European Parliament and Inter- Action Council. Specific country experiences were presented on Benin, South Africa and Zambia respectively by Albert Tevoedjire who was a Presidential candidate in the 1991 Benin Republic multiparty elections; Dr. Frederick Van Zyl Slabbert, Opposition leader and president, Institute for A Democratic Alternative for South Africa and Daniel Lisulo, former Primer Minister and founding member of the Movement for Multiparty democracy in Zambia which recently won the multiparty elections in his country.

Prior to the specific country experiences, the conference considered Africa's experiences in democracy and governance; the nature and requirements of the kind of democracy and governance desirable by Africa; and, the role of the international community in the enhancement of democracy and governance in Africa. Each of the topics were discussed by the participants extensively. Opportunity was also given to specific participants to relate evolving transitional situations in their respective countries. In this connection, the conference was briefed on current developments in the Central African Republic; Equatorial Guinea, Bangladesh and South Africa.

Democracy and Governance in Africa: Its Nature and Experience and The Role of International Community:

The Conference reviewed the fundamental ingredients of democracy and recognized that democracy in Africa as elsewhere, must derive from a constitutional structure which guarantees fundamental freedoms and rights and serves as the only basis of governance in a state of law. It was, however, noted that it is only through a vibrant civil society that constitutional structures can be adapted to and sustained. In other words, democracy cannot be "Imported" or taught to countries. It must be a bottom-up process that allows for popular participation and accountability and must be routed in the cultural fabrics of society in a manner sufficiently dynamic to galvanize the process into a positive social force.

The globalization of problems and interdependence of issue call for redesign of new forms of democracy to provide the mechanisms for a search of rational process as mankind traverse through a time of enormous complexity. In this context, the North and the South, must learn from each other. The emerging democracies, in particular, should avoid the mistakes of the older democracies by adopting the positive elements form the latter.

It is important to recognize that major challenges to democracy were evident in the North particularly, the apathy of the electorate with an increasing absenteeism in elections, the role of the media and opinion polls, the problems of short term mandates and the perversion of fundamental democratic conditions through the advancement of the views of a few who either dominate national political power structures or participate in non-elected councils of bodies responsible for integration among sovereign states. In Africa, on the other hand, existing or emerging democracies as well as democratic forces in countries in transition are facing new challenges to their democratic process through the powers of multilateral institutions and terms and conditions of capital flows or technological choices, in addition to the excessive fragmentation of political groupings.

The challenges to democracy in Africa, as elsewhere, is mainly in the practice of equating freedom not only with better human treatment but also with better life. Democratic freedom, is thus all encompassing as an instrument for meeting the needs of society. This translates into conditions where democracy and development must be two sides of the same coin. In consequence, the sustainment of democracy or any other form of good government is a matter of bread and butter.

The challenges and all other inhibitions notwithstanding, the tide of democratization in Africa is now irresistible. The major question is an earth for appropriate strategies for a peaceful realization of such a democratic process as well as its sustainment. The forces of democracy in Africa, must therefore endeavour to build consensus that would enhance a gradual and a lasting process of democracy in the continent in preference to what may immediately be desired in total.

Africa as part of democratizing process in the modern context, has to view its slow pace of change in historical terms. Indeed, the achievements of Africa so far, even in political terms, were beyond prediction as late as during the pre-independence generation only thirty years ago. Africa cannot underestimate the anguish and brutalities of slavery and colonialism and the disruptions of the cold war. These developments constitute the major source of the legacy of socially imposed disabilities in Africa such as poverty, disease, ignorance, squalor, etc. These disabilities cannot exist side by side with democracy.

It is, however, not only the social disabilities, but also, the poor governance in Africa which is most glaringly manifested in the denial of fundamental human rights, lack of accountability, the absence of political pluralism or basic democratic institutions and above all, dehumanizing poverty which, have all combined to prompt the demand and clamour for democracy and better governance in Africa.

The democratic movement in Africa is therefore not an end in itself. Political democracy must develop side by side with economic democratization entailing a qualitative and quantitative resource management within the framework of a mixed economy as well as in building national processes and autonomous mechanisms for equity, empowerment and capacity building. In short, dictatorship and poor

governance in Africa must be replaced by an era of tolerance for dissent and equal opportunities for all through democracy, social and economic justice.

Africa like other societies embodies the vitality necessary to provide the dynamism and sustainment of democracy. The emergence of the democratic movement in Africa through *National Conferences;* Patriotic Forces or *Groupings for Multipartyism,* demonstrate the existence of a vigorous civil society to nurture and sustain the institutions of democracy and good governance.

But Africa must not embark on this process as if our people and the continent have just come into existence. Africa, after all is the cradle of the human race and traditional African societies practiced democracy that was suited to the culture and realities of African people. While African societies have undergone a considerable transformation and inevitably must be increasingly integrated with the rest of the world, some traditional democratic processes in Africa such as the principle of consensus and representation based on the genuine support of the people, to mention but only two, must be re-kindled and sustained. Differences in democratic practices are in fact not peculiar to Africa. In the North, we notice differences even within Western Europe, not to mention North America and Japan. Like wise, in the case of Africa, democratic principles and structures must be rooted in the realities of individual African countries.

The crucial issue of the direction and the nature of democracy that Africa aspires to ahs already been outlined in the Kampala Document for the proposed Conference on Security, Development and Cooperation in Africa 9CSSDCA). The process of CSSDCA not only encapsulate the democratic dynamics in Africa, but also provides for overarching structures on security, development and cooperation which play the dual role as the anchor as well as the basis of sustainment of democracy. CSSDCA fully defined Africa's democratic direction and CSSDCA's implementation remains a keystone for the realization of Africa's pluralistic society and socio-economic transformation.

But in an increasingly interdependent world, Africa must learn from all directions. Political parties must continue to emerge as organized expression of the views of all represented. But, institutions at the

constituency level must be built to guard against the tyranny of political parties; Africa must strive for majority of ideas rather than party loyalties; elected leaders operating on the basis of the evolving needs and the direction of the electorate; a system that takes cognizance of the rights of minority; and the crafting of relevant democratic principles of traditional African societies to present requirements of democracy in Africa should be the pillars of the evolving democratic processes in Africa.

Africa must be clear on the issue of multipartyism. This is necessary in order to avoid the danger of multipartyism being automatically equated or considered synonymous with the practice of democracy. Indeed, CSSDCA is deliberately silent on multipartyism. The critical necessity must be a constitution that does not forbid the existence of other parties and which should be structured to avoid ethnic rivalries or religious fundamentalism and other negative forces that can destroy the stability of society. As Africa advances on the democratic road, Africa should not confuse the principles of democracy and its institutional manifestation.

Issues in Democracy and Governance:

The lead paper on this sub-theme was presented by Prof. Eme Awa. The paper generated a lively discussion among participants.

Awa's paper started off by suggesting that Joseph Schumpeter's conception represents the main thrust of liberal democracy. This conception sees democracy as the institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power of decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote. In this respect, competition for political leadership is the distinctive feature for democracy.

The philosophical and practical issues that arise from the fore-going definition of democracy Awa listed as: representative government; number and structure of political parties; electoral systems and elections; the major philosophical questions; democracy as a way of life; the problem of economic justice in a democratic society etc.

Bringing the notion of the State into the liberal view of democracy, Awa surmised that this implies the three branches of government (either in the United States or in the United Kingdom or in any liberal democracy for that matter) are dominated or controlled indirectly by members of the upper classes in society, to the virtual exclusion of members of the working class, farmers, small businessmen and women and the intelligentsia. He noted that elections in these societies are no longer about who governs but who presides as Chairman and members of the three branches of government.

In a critique of the liberal notion of democracy, Awa stressed the point that such a government is not expected to achieve any ethical programme. In particular, economic justice is avoided and the question of whether people meet the basic needs of food, shelter and clothing is not at issue once freedom equality and fraternity are guaranteed. Awa regards the omission of concern for justice as a fatal flaw for liberal democracy in an African setting.

He noted that even equality, freedom and fraternity suffer from various practical restraints. For instance, while everyone should be equal in the expression of opinions on various public issues, he noted that some opinions tend to carry more weight as a result of differences in the intrinsic values of each opinion, the criteria available for evaluating such matters and the value position of the policy makers.

On equality of opportunity, Awa noted that even if it were possible to give equality to all at the beginning of certain courses of action, the end result has always been inequalities which then grant the entrenched further opportunities to become masters of society. And this is in spite of statutory regulations on behaviour, statutory measures to redistribute wealth and erode the trend towards monopolies and oligopolies.

He also noted that a number of constraints hamper the exercise of freedom and fraternity. For instance, there is the need to go beyond the restrictive rules of society which actually constitute negative freedom before one can enjoy positive freedom. He noted that people can only be free to vote for A or B i.e. exercise real choice after they have gone beyond poverty, squalor or ignorance as the latter problems constitute constraints on freedom. Fraternity, he noted, is also easily vitiated by sex, ethnicity, colossal injustice etc.

Awa illustrated the upper class bias of policies emanating from the liberal democracies with the example of a white woman with a child begging for alms on the street in San Francisco, United States i.e. in a country with such abundance that it can feed the whole world.

Awa went further to point out that the penchant to create a middle class as a bulwark for democratic practice under liberal democracies is contradictory to the ideals of equality and fraternity. And this striving for the creations of a middle class in developing countries like Nigeria has meant immoral if not illegal use of public funds to build up such middle class at the expense of the masses.

It is the foregoing notion of democracy that the West has been trying to foist on Africa through cultural and communication penetration of Africa; the formulation of theories and recommendation of these by Western social scientists and the tying of foreign aid to the copying of American practices irrespective of considerations of social justice and participatory democracy which are of high value to Africa.

In examining the heritage bequeathed by African ancestors, Awa suggested that there was a well ordered government system in which various levels based on age, sex and professional competence deliberated on all issues and reached decisions without autocracy. More importantly for Awa, however, was the attention Africa in the past paid to economic justice in the ordering of society. In that society, everyone was his brother's keeper. There were no class divisions. The relatively richer gave the poorer a helping hand so that the poorer could work hard and be on his feet without becoming indolent. The receiver aspired to be in a position to give to others. Land was easily available for use within the limits of stipulated regulations and practices that were meant to ensure sustained fertility of the land.

In the discussion session that followed Awa's paper, it was agreed that while we could not go back to the African past for which we have nostalgic feelings we can graft some of the important elements of that society in a creative fashion into modern day practices in Africa. In particular, it was suggested that when ever we discuss democracy in Africa, it must be geared towards solving developmental problems. In this respect attention was called to the African Charter on Popular

Participation which has tried to conceive democracy along these lines Popular participation, accountability in leadership, social and economic justice were emphasized as essentials for Africa's conception of democracy. Nonetheless, it was agreed that there are bound to be difference in the practicalization of the democratic ethos in the different countries of Africa based on socio-cultural differences as is the case in other parts of the world.

Debating the relevance and number of parties deemed essential for democratic practice, it was largely agreed that parties are essential for the complex societies that Africans have currently found themselves. But then, there is nothing in fact that supports the impression that multi-partyism ensures democracy. Nonetheless, it was agreed that it will be undemocratic to constitutionally legislate the number of parties for a country.

There was the suggestion that more effort need be made by the elites to involve the grass-roots, not by dictating policies under a trickle down theoretical assumption but by the elites really going down to learn at the grass-roots level.

It was also noted that a vibrant civil society is essential for the sustenance of democracy. It was generally agreed that here is a need to reconstruct civil society in a purposeful way that can allow democracy to thrive in Africa.

The need to teach and inculcate the values of democracy and democratic practice from the infancy was also stressed.

Some cautions were raised on the African embrace of the current fad in the West. It was pointed out that a democratic experiment that cannot deliver on the basic needs of the people will be short-lived. In this respect, it was emphasized that there is some need to ensure that Africa gets some debt relief in order that the fledging democracies may thrive. Also democracy must be made to deliver some economic empowerment and higher state of living for the people.

It was also stressed that there is a need for the trend towards democratic experiments to be seen as home-grown and not externally foisted with all the monetary votes for national conferences in the West and democratic conditionalities by the IMF and Western governments.

The feeling was also expressed that the continuous un-democratic nature of international institutions cannot augur well for the possible thriving of democracies in the nations of the world.

Specific Experiences in Transition to Democracy In Africa:

1. The Experience of the Republic of Benin:

The experience of the Republic of Benin can be better understood and appreciated when placed within a specific context. It can be regarded as a laboratory of sorts. It is a small country of about seven million people with an area size of about 12,00 square kilometers.

At independence, the trio of Hubert Magai, Ahomadegbe and Emile Zinzou representing the three main regional poles were elected to the French Assembly from where they dominated the politics of Benin for considerable length of time. They, in effect, played a crucial role in the formation of the modern Benin State. Worthy of note is that a leading role was played by France in all these developments. It must also be said that Nigeria equally plays a daily role in the political and economic life of Benin Republic. Porto-Novo, for example, is closer to Nigeria than it is to Cotonou, the capital city of Benin Republic. In addition, Benin is a country saddled with perennial conflict and many doubting Thomases or cynics. It is addition very weak economically and with a lean budget, few mineral resources and palm oil as its main product. It is a country of civil servants somewhat comparable to Switzerland in terms of its service orientation.

As a country, it underwent a dramatic political evolution that significantly explained its being first to undertake the democratic change in the West Coast of Africa. It had ten coups in three years. The trade unions and poor civil servants played crucial prominent roles in the democratization process. They came mainly from the South and are

well trained. Northerners have however being clinging to power since 1972. Former President Kerekou came to power with young officers and other opportunists who brought forward the idea of Marxism. In the process, the country became difficult to administer as some of the intelligentsia were unable to participate in the government.

With the entry of President Kerekou, Moscow took over the role of training civil servants. A strong internal secret service was created, re-entry and exit visas were made compulsory for all citizens. For all practical purposes, Benin Republic became a Police State. Banks and other institutions were nationalized and in no time, the banks were empty. Money disappeared without trace, funds were frozen and the monetary system was severely disrupted.

The crisis would have come earlier if it were not for facilities from Moscow, Prague, North Korea etc. Such funds came but had their own conditionalities. Then came Structural Adjustment Programme which hastened the end of former President Kerekou. There were also instances of human rights abuse and voluntary exile. However, more prevalent occurrence was torture rather than murder. The reference to how SAP hastened the fall of former President Kerekou must be seen in the context that Benin went to IMF to negotiate, contrary to what takes place everywhere – in that there was insistence on a global contract. Conditions had been such that people were out on the street from December1989 and called for the suspension for the activities of the revolutionary party. This led to a democratic agreement with the government allowing for the release of all political prisoners and declaration of a general amnesty. People started making statements that would not have been possible earlier. From that time things started to move. The President then decided to look for a government of consensus9. Against this background, and at the suggestion of France a conference involving people from all walks of life took place. It was an era where state secrets were openly sold in the market. So President Mitterand advised dialogue with various forces which was the path the Conference was treading in which all leaders participated including President Kerekou. France wanted to maintain Kerekou.

Certain basic conditions were established. The sovereignty of the National Conference, the Chairmanship of the Conference, the appointment of a rapporteur and the Agenda. The Conference produced

a Charter for national unity which in reality represented a civilian coup. Since participants were representing the trade unions, they felt that was exactly what they wanted.

Against the resistance of the military, the sovereignty of the conference was proclaimed and President Kerekou had to give a Decree for the declarations made, the conference insisted that its decisions had to be implemented. It was a particularly tense moment when President Kerekou refused to resign. Although in the end, he saw reason and bowed to the call of the Conference.

More specifically, critical psychological moment came when the decisions of the conference were presented and in a very dramatic style. President Kerekou had the option of either accepting or rejecting the recommendations. He actually discountenanced the recommendations of the Conference, especially, since he was yet to complete the term of office. However, he accepted the recommendations and demonstration ceased.

The transition otherwise went very well, although there were problems of individuals not sticking to originally agreed conditions, for example, those that participated were not to be candidates in the elections. But they did not adhere to the position. Some errors were therefore committed.

In the end, the Conference succeeded in creating a competitive democracy. But in elections, money bags could carry out campaigns. This is not democracy. It is plutocracy. Participants are also often a restricted group. The poor must be given a hand and become involved if democracy is to succeed. We must ensure that consensus does not end up compromising the interests of those who will never be present. The question we must ask is, do we have capacity to say no and, how do we manage democracy so that the daily life of the people can be improved?

Participants commended the gentlemanly role of President Kerekou. Questions were also raised as to the grip he may have had at the time and also the impact of the changes which had taken place in the countries of his main allies. In the end, however, President Kerekou for all his past errors was considered to have been pragmatic for accepting the decisions of the Conference by holding down his military and the

non-use of security forces. In fact, it is considered that what saved Keredou was the feeling of people that he was well meaning but rather 'native' and a poor economic manager. Finally, it was emphasized that the application of national Conference is bound to vary from country to country.

2. The Experience of South Africa

South Africa shares the problems of negotiating an agenda for its own national conference with most African countries. However, in discussing the South African situation, it is important to keep the three basic issues in mind as a point of departure from the specific experiences of other Africa countries:

a. South Africa is not a case of a regime in a colonial transition. Nonetheless, there is a crisis syndrome. De-colonization was part of the dynamic transformation in many countries but not in South Africa. The presence of a mediator with an international influence is lacking in South Africa as was the case in Namibia or Zimbabwe.

b. There is no prospect of any massive exodus of white minority to colonizing homeland. All South Africans will be part of the process. There would not be any colonial flag down, no ceremonies which accompany regular decolonization, in a nutshell, "the white people are not going anywhere".

c. The major players – that is, President de Klerk and Mr. Mandela have decided on a process of negotiation. The negotiation is expected to cover issues such as:

   i.   composition of the national negotiating body
   ii.   agenda
   iii.   who calls the national conference or negotiating body and who is going to take responsibility for the management of the negotiations. The key problem in this process are:

      a. who monitors the process,
      b. who decides that it "is fair and equitable?

Therefore, political factors compelling transition pertaining to legitimacy and relevance are paramount. The ANC has pointed out that the De Klerk government cannot be a referee and a participant. On the other hand, the regime sees external monitoring as a threat to its sovereignty essentially inherited over the years with a fiercely partisan military. It would therefore consider such a move as the first fragile step. The question therefore is, what is the status of the incumbent regime going to be? One thing is clear, South Africa cannot escape the legacy of its past when it begins to negotiate for its future. The basic realities are:

a. Colonial heritage 1910 – 1984 Most whites fear colonial transition and blacks hope for it. Fear and hope underlie negotiation for transition.
b. 1984-1979: period of entrenched apartheid

i. problems of a huge bureaucracy that has to be created by the system.
ii. Deep feeling of anger/hostility on part of the majority.

c. Security system that was used to persecute and prosecute opponents of the regime. Hence, a fiercely partisan army with a young and militant opposition.

South Africa is now at a stage where it is seeing an emerging coalition centred syndrome that is showing progress in dealing with question of violence, Criminal, ideological, factional and tribal rivalries, all have emphasized the inadequacies in the security system which has been contaminated in the past by partisanship. There is also a slow process in negotiating and admonishing the transition which is increasing the burden of the security problem. The expectation may thus be an interim government to administer negotiation. In particular, 1994 is the year that the current constitution stipulates that there be an election. With this in mind, from 20-21 December 1991, parties in the negotiation process will decide on the next multiparty conference. This may carry the possibility that by mid 1993, the different parties in a future interim government will feel more confident to call for a plebiscite. In order to maintain the transition and avoid a possible clampdown and a downturn in the present process the government will have to:

a. priotise development;
b. the government must provide acceptable stability in order to drive the process of growth and development through access to attract international capital investment;
c. growth of a civil society.

It was suggested that the major implication for Africa may be that South Africa cannot have a vigorous role in continental African politics right now. It will be caught up pre-occupied with problems of domestic reconstruction. If South Africa turns inward, it will serve the rest of Africa well. It must not allow itself to get into a state of self imposed exile. South Africa is caught up in the usual problems of transition.

On the whole, the general problems in South Africa were highlighted and the conclusion was that the process will be carried out in phases. But more importantly, the current trend that seems to indicate an attempt to decouple economic negotiation from political negotiation is a source of concern. It must be borne in mind that political negotiations cannot be made to achieve instantaneous solution. For instance, it is not possible to decree education for the under-privileged, or employment for unemployed, or housing for the homeless. It must be understood that such issues have gestation periods and must be planned for. The essence of change is to deliver some meaningful results.

The important point is how to get the acts together in order not to put economic gestation in hold? There is of course the need to make economic progress now so that improvement may coincide with time for change at the political level. One immediate consideration should be the possibility of expanding middle and upper class drawn from the black society. Change in South African is not going to be an event. It will have to be an on-going process. The poor, the unemployed need an economic forum to discuss socio-economic transformation. Constitutional and economic changes have to go hand in hand. The civil service is totally inappropriate for the process of transformation to democracy. There must also be a commitment to transition if they are not included in transition or necessary action taken early enough.

3. The Experience of the Republic of Zambia:

It was noted that problems inherent in government are not definite as in science. Zambians as in most colonies, were not exposed to democracy during colonial rule hence, at independence, they were beginners in democracy. However, democracy was on the right course at the beginning. At some stage, multi-partyism was seen as an obstacle to the implementation of policies of government and good leadership. The one party regime came about as a result of a breakaway of an original major party.

The middle class in Zambia is not effective, probably due to the effects of development. Otherwise the middle class could have challenged the system and demanded political rights, etc. In order to legitimize the coming into force of the one party state, a commission was established and came out with recommendations based on some concepts of checks and balances. The best recommendations for the commission were rejected and the consequent net result was that the President became very powerful with absolute powers.

Over time the need to democratize became obvious. The refusal made the citizens organize for change and pressure was exerted on President Kaunda until he give in to a multi-party system. This led to a formation of a movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) along with other small parties. They were subsequently able to secure a free and fair election which was won by MMD. In conclusion, on the sustainment of the fact that democracy is like a seed which has to be planted in Zambia, it was pointed out the right soil to enable its growth. Issues of economic conditions in Zambia were considered as posing the greatest danger to the sustainment of democracy. This also involve the nature of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which must continue.

4. The Experience of Central African Republic:

Although, the current experience of the Central African Republic has a deep historical backgrounds. The sudden death in an aircrash of the charismatic leader, Bartholomew Boganda created a political vacuum which was not properly filled. His successor was 29 year old and lacked experience. He was a relatively spiritual heir who was supported by the former colonial masters. He stopped pluralistic democracy, dissolved

legal associations, imprisoned principal political leaders and set up a single party system. The young president asked for executive powers from his monolithic parliament.

By 1965, he had misappropriated public funds and had plunged the nation into chaos. In 1979, he relinquished power to his uncle Jean Bedel Bokassa who was in the army. The dictatorship that followed did not spare the economy. The youths revolted and a massacre followed. Following the Baracuda repression, Bokassa was removed and replaced by his cousin, President Dako, who, as it turned out, learnt nothing from the past.

Eventually the CAR people teamed together to oppose President Dako with little or no results. The national economy was in ruins and the situation eventually became very explosive. This precipitated a crisis out of which the opposition adopted a memorandum in 1980 calling for a referendum to reflect on the national crisis. President Dako convened a national conference tagged A Seminar of Reconciliation to reflect on the problems. The participants at the conference were drawn from all walks of CAR life.

In the main, a democratic constitution was approved; there was a call for plural democratic practice to which members of the executive would be limited to two terms of office.

The President was mandated to convene a national conference. The mandate gave him three months within which to call the conference, he reversed the demand. Court action was taken to enforce the demands. In response, however, the President declared a state of emergency. Six months after the state of emergency was declared, the President handed over power to the military thus ending the democratic process in CAR.

The military government committee stayed in power from 1981-85, all senior officers who served in the former government were sent back to barracks. Another nine years of autocratic rule with instances of corrupt practices, gross violation and abuse of human rights followed. 100,000 people sent open letters to the President calling for a national conference.

The government reacted to the open letters, dismissed civil servants, arrested people and clamped them in detention without trial. The Supreme court declared the detention illegal. National and international pressures mounted on the government. In 1990, the principle of convening national conference was accepted mainly to appease the international donors. Government engineered series of delay tactics. Political parties were legalized, but bottlenecks were raised to quash their effectiveness.

The economic situation was badly affected with no income coming in from customs duties and civil servant's salaries have not been paid since May 1991. Of course the educational system has been in shambles. The President, it appears, is prepared to throw the country into state of abyss and has apparently developed despondency.

In addition, the President has appropriated to himself entire resources of the country and promoted clandestine activities all of which led to the break down of administrative institutions and processes.

5. Specific Experience of Equitorial Guinea:

After independence all political groups that fought together worked towards presidential elections and there were no real hardships because everyone was just trying to get away from Spain. After the first elections supervised by Spain, it was discovered that the President was a candidate of the former colonial masters. He distanced himself from the people of Guinea and was thought to be unbalanced because of his violent activities.

The President abolished all political parties and declared himself life president. You were an enemy if you didn't belong to the single political part – a threat to the state. Equitorial Guinea went through a bloody period – many people were killed by nationalist movements and by soldiers. After, the president's nephew eliminated his uncle (the president), he took over power in 1979. Picked up an olive and promised to handover power. After 13 years, he is yet to deliver. Has asked all exiles to come back, and, therefore perpetrated a fearful system. It was a very repressive regime. There was no accountability. Exiles on return, split into camps against 13 years of dictatorship but all

firmly convinced that the dictator can only be displaced when his gun is taken from him. That was the main reason why internal and external opposition decided not to use violence to bring about change. In the main, the belief was that the wind of change (democracy) blowing throughout the world would melt the resolve of the President. Guinean opposition are waiting for the dictator to realize that he has to accept the will of the people.

On the other hand, while avoiding dialogue the government is attempting to consolidate power by inviting Moroccan and German dissidents to protect it. In addition, Draconian laws giving absolute immunity from the consequences of the atrocious crimes committed before and after the assumption of power by the President have been enacted.

Lessons From Outside Africa:

Democracy and governance is a phenomenon that is relevant to the entire third world. In terms of political background and the antecedent of present government, Bangladesh gained independence in 1971 after a bloody struggle and the leaders established a one party regime. The party was eventually overthrown by the military. After sixteen years of military rule, the military government declared elections, formed a cabinet, infused a modicum of the party with civilian membership. Even then, military and civilian bureaucracy manipulated elections, won such elections and established control. In a nutshell, the experience was similar to that in most African countries.

By 1987, opposition had gathered momentum and tried to overthrow the government of President Ershad. When the political movements failed ot effect a change, it became apparent that President Ershad had to go as he was politicizing the army. Realising the inability of the political movement. The students actually utilized the military to effect the overthrow. President Ershad was put in custody and currently faces charges of murder and corruption. Certain critical elements of democratic sustenance became obvious, these include:

a. The need to form a national government during transition period.
b. Cabinet should be distributed according to parliamentary representation.
c. Empowerment of people
d. Reduction of the power of government form economic activity
e. The need to limit the activities of government to that of acting mainly as coordinator, and
f. Reduction of the financial incentive of elective power.

All of these can be achieved through a process of planned privatization decentralization of political economic entities which must be freed from government in power.

The Conference adopted the following:

Recommendations

1. The Conference recommends that a study be undertaken of the Characteristics of, and Experience with, National Conferences and other Transition Processes Toward Democracy and their Potential Implications for or Wider Application in Africa. (The terms of reference for the study are annexed).

2. There should be a continuous exchange of experiences in Africa between countries or parties that have crossed the critical stage of democratic transition and those which are still in the transition of achieving a democratic process. This can be done under the auspices of the proposed Council of Elders.

3. Political leaders in Africa should recognize the inevitability of change in the context of the overall interest of a nation and people so that they can play a positive role in the management of the change and the sub-sequent process of economic and human development. This must be based on the acceptance of a redefinition of the concept of development providing for the full integration of the economic and human dimensions.

4. Likewise, opposition leaders and groups should work for the overall interest of their respective nations and encourage the development of democratic debate in nurturing and sustaining relevant transition process at the national level.

5.   The Africa Leadership Forum is called upon:

    a. to initiate a vigorous exchange of experience in Africa between countries and parties that have crossed the stage of democratic transition and those who are still in the process toward achieving a democratic system;

    b. to that end, to convene regularly a multi-partisan African Roundtable on Democratic Practise and Problems to which all democratic parties in Africa should be invited;

    c. to urge African Governments to take measures, on a priority basis, to facilitate the emergence, funding and effective functioning of political parties so as to allow a meaningful implementation of pluralist democracy and its proper functioning.

6.   The Conference urges African and non-African Governments, international and national organizations, foundations, political parties and their international umbrella organizations, the business community and concerned individuals to provide the necessary support and resources for an implementation of the activities recommended in paragraph 5 above.

7.   The Conference expresses its wish that such support be extended publicly and without curtailing the resources earmarked for the ever-increasing needs for development assistance. Intra-African and international support to the transition processes in Africa should be given not only before or at the point of transition, but more importantly during the post-transition era to ensure the emergence and functioning of all necessary institutions and mechanisms on a sustained basis.

Opening Remarks

By
Olusegun Obasanjo

It is always a matter of great joy for me to welcome old and new friends to this part of the world. But today, it is a lot more different; rather than just welcome you to Ota, I should more appropriately also welcome you to the fascinating epoch of Africa's re-discovery of itself. Some have chosen to call it Africa's democratic revolution. But whatever one may call it, one thing is clear, a rising tide to change in Africa is now irresistible.

As many of my African brothers and friends gather here today, in our attempt to interpret the past and debate and chart out the future of Africa, it is most fitting that we are able to welcome in our midst, our non-African friends in the leadership of the persons of H.E. Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo, a champion of democracy in her country, Portugal, and a distinguished and eminent friend of Africa and the Hon. Mervyn M. Dymally whose tireless dedication to the emancipation and the advancement of the African people has earned him our admiration and one may add, the respect of his foes. Let me specially welcome our friends from South Africa to Ota and to Nigeria. We welcome all our non-African friends to share with us, their view of our situation and the role the international community can play by way of lending us a hand in our effort to enhance and sustain democracy and good governance in Africa.

Today, the issue is no longer whether all African countries – and I mean the entire African continent, will achieve a democratic form of government within the next two years or so. The uncertainty is whether most African leaders will allow such changes to be achieved peacefully or rather democratically. Those sufficiently wise, to recognize the inevitable, may have a rare chance of managing the change. But those who, even at this eleventh hour, continue to believe that they can stop this tidal wave of Africa's historical movement, may be obliterated by this mighty force and end up in the dust-bin of history.

There is an obvious dramatic change in the African political terrain today. The undulating structure of the political landscape contains features of a strong move towards democracy. But then, it would be trite to state that Africa is at a historical watershed today. I say this because, the clamour that we are witnessing in contemporary Africa, while it is one for democracy, is only so in an unrestricted sense. There are two broad reasons why our people want democracy today.

Denial of fundamental human rights, arbitrariness, absence of the basic freedoms of and for the individual have, in the main, remained familiar traits of majority of the governments in Africa. The strain of these styles of governance has prompted a demand and a clamour for a new approach to the resolution of the various national questions. In consequence, Africans are now clamouring for greater responsiveness of their political leaderships, respect for human rights, accountability and a two-way channel of information between the people and their leadership.

These related issues of governance can only be guaranteed under a pluralistic political framework. The existence of choice in selecting those who will lead them, and the corollary existence of the chance to periodically review and renew or terminate the mandate given to the political leadership should provide the basis for good government.

The second, and perhaps more profound reason for the contemporary clamour for democracy in Africa has to do with the inability of most African governments to better the lot of the citizenry. Having arrived at political independence with the hope and promise of an increasingly better existence, our people are today disillusioned. While the fact of neo-colonialism, as represented by unequal exchange and exploitation of African economies by interests other than African explain, up to a point, the inadequate performance of African economies since independence, the major responsibility of our present impasse must be placed squarely on the shoulders of our leaders, who have in the main, been somewhat inadequate, unimaginative and in some cases, less than upright in their approach to the issue of governance in Africa. The present clamour for democracy, therefore, must also be seen in the context of perceived redemption. There is the general feeling that out previous frameworks having had the chance of performing and having failed to perform adequately, should give way to democracy, with the

people themselves, not just the elite, determining how they should be governed.

We must send a message from this place to those within and outside the continent who are still in doubt about Africa's capacity and determination of its people – as opposed to some of their governments, to regain our position and become full partners in global affairs and in our own development. Those who are making the error of writing off Africa have forgotten that there are no constant values in human existence. Emerging generations of Africans – like various generations in other societies, will gradually overcome the forces of oppression and dictatorship in Africa and construct the necessary democratic values based on an orderly form of governance of our societies to trigger a sustained process of socio – economic transformation in Africa.

True, every activity bearing upon the way many people live in other parts of the world, has undergone a change, some revolutionary, over the last few decades; and radical of all, especially, in recent years, has been the accelerating rate of change itself and the profound positive impact it has brought to many, except in Africa. But the agony over the slow pace of change in Africa must be viewed in the historical context of our continent.

For all the errors of the continent, past and present, Africans have struggled every minute of our lives and every little point of our movement against historically crushing or debilitating odds. We survived the anguish and brutalities of slavery and colonialism and the disruption of the Cold War. Most of these were calculated or systematically carried out to destroy our capacity for initiative and our rights for independent action. We, as victims, are now blamed for the failure which those impositions transmitted into the political, economic and social fabrics, of our society. So perversive has been this domination that those who marginalize Africans today are behaving as though, we as Africans, really deserve no privileges or opportunities in the global home we jointly inhabit. Some are even giving greater attention to the welfare of animals than they are ready to accord to Africans.

The devastating experiences of the past 0 notwithstanding, Africa cannot be pre-occupied with the question of apportioning blames to the actors who precipitated or participated and exacerbated the situation. Africans are now focusing into the future and with the benefit of hindsight, the continent is being turned around primarily by Africans themselves. The forces behind the movement and uncompromising demand for change in Africa, stem from a conviction that at the core of the problems in Africa is the lack of good governance in African countries which resulted form and/or facilitated the penetration into the continent of forces inimical to the genuine interest of the African people. Whatever common outcome of our dehumanizing poverty and gross violations of basic human rights in our countries.

It is this process that constitute and motivate the struggle for pluralism. However, democracy, for me, is not an end in itself, though as an end, it is alluring for its all-participatory element. However, democracy is also a means to an end. Political democratization as the quest for good and sustainable government is only one side of a good coin. To sustain, bolster and advance the democratization process in Africa, to put meat on the bone of political democracy, there also must be economic democratization process side by side the political one.

Africans have now determinedly resolved that heir societies must readapt to political pluralism based on democratic principles as the major vehicle for good governance and the socio-economic transformation of the continent. While the essentials of democracy like fundamental human rights, basic freedoms, responsiveness and accountability of government, pluralism and universal adult suffrage do not know any racial or cultural bounds, the practice do democracy, has to take cognizance of historical and cultural factors bearing in mind that culture Is not static.

In consequence, it is important to recognize the past democratic traditions of Africa societies. Africans are in the first place, the cradle of the human race; and the reality is, African societies were essentially democratic until they were disrupted by colonialism. It is also less often recognized or admitted that active and at times, violent opposition against dictatorship in Africa were on and off before the changes in Eastern Europe. More importantly, unlike Eastern Europe where democratic groupings were materially supported by Western nations in

the case of Africa, the forces of democracy were ruthlessly suppressed with the support of the nations in the Cold War divide. It is thus clear that the end of ideological confrontations with its global severe seismic movement and reforms, orphaned the Africa Cold War clients and lifted the lid for our democratic revolution. "The genie is now out of the bottle" and there is no way of putting it back.

This Fourth Annual Conference of the Africa Leadership Forum is being devoted to Democracy and Governance in Africa which phenomenon, undoubtedly, constitute one of the most important and fascinating task of our time. National Conferences; National Democractic Forums; Patriotic Fronts; and, loosely organized (armed and unarmed groups), some of which have already won free and fair elections, while others have violently overthrown dictatorships, represent the most glaring manifestation of the power of this continental movement.

The major challenge facing our conference is to examine the momentous pluralistic transformation which is rapidly gathering momentum in Africa and considers a strategy that would enhance and sustain a lasting democratic character in the present and future movements of change within the continent.

The overwhelming support the movements for change have gained in Africa is a demonstration of a phenomenon which, as one observer has stated in a different context, "has simply returned to rekindle the spirits of communities that were waiting for their turn to return to their fame". Political pluralism (under the democratic movements) has become a major part of the lexicon of the fundamental structures of society in Africa. Our conference should contribute towards the shaping, the direction and the future agenda for these pluralistic movements which are committed to the transformation of Africa's political landscape and consequently its socio-economic terrain.

As many of you may be aware, it is the consideration of Africa's direction under the extraordinary global dynamics that many eminent individuals in the Kampala Forum produced the Kampala Document on a Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation – CSSDCA which is truly a charter that represents a *Magna Carta* for Africa. Those who take it upon themselves, to try and define democracy

for Africa, on the grounds that Africans have not defined that process, should read the Kampala Document. It is a Document that sufficiently informs and instructs.

CSSDCA not only defines a democratic framework for Africa but also, provides an overarching structure that organically links the establishment of democratic institutions as a basis for national security and stability; and, economic development as a crucial ingredient for the sustainment of democracy. Accordingly, Africa Leadership Forum sees this conference as an important event in the gradual process of the realization of CSSDCA.

We all, no doubt, recognize that CSSDCA encapsulated the spirit of the current democratic movement in Africa and outlines a process based on Africa's experience in democracy and governance which is the first topic of our conference. At the same time, CSSDCA does define in outline form the nature and the kind of democracy and governance which we are also trying to address at this conference. With the benefit of various developments which have taken place since the Kampala Forum – including, abortive or deadlock in National Conferences, successful free and fair multiparty elections in other situations, refusal for holding National Conferences in yet others, our meeting should attempt to comprehend more clearly the emerging experiences of Africa's democratic revolution and the changes in governance and perhaps refine in more detail, the nature and requirements of the kind of democracy desirable for Africa which is also a topic we are dealing with. For example, CSSDCA is deliberately silent on the multiparty system as a necessary pre-requisite for political pluralism. Should democracy be equated with multi-partyism? If representative democracy goes by the wish and the rule of the majority rather than consensus, how will the interest and concerns of the minority be protected for the wholesomeness of the society? What institutions must we put in place to nurture and sustain democracy? Secondly, CSSDCA left out any specific outline of the role of the international community in the enhancement of democracy and governance in Africa other than a general call for involvement and participation of international community in its implementation. It is important that we should also be clear on this issue of international involvement.

The challenge of our Conference, however, is not just to consider how to bring about democracy and good governance in Africa but how to sustain that process. How to avoid a process where change into a democratic system has been hijacked by desperate despots who were acting out of greed rather than national interest. In other words, let it not be said of Africa again as was said of the Borbons who returned to rule France after the Napoleonic Wars that they forgot nothing and learned nothing.

To successfully sustain democracy, Africa must effectively treat the causes rather than the symptoms of past failures. We must recognize that as important as democracy is, however, defined, it can only deliver stability through social and economic justice. Both are necessary to guarantee that the dark forces of repression and greed shall never again rear their ugly heads in Africa and can be permanently replaced by an era of tolerance for dissent and equal opportunities for all. Economic democratization, in this context, means a process of qualitative and quantitative resource management within the framework of a mixed economy which possesses in-built and autonomous mechanism for equity, empowerment and capacity building, and in which access to the system is open, free and equal. This process, i.e. economic democratization encourages, moistures, nurtures and increases private initiative and participation by the citizens and non-citizens. Such participation is often generously rewarded, resulting in a maximum positive beneficial transformation of the lives of the people.

While negative cultural practices should be jettisoned, it would be unwise not to take due cognizance of our culture in our practice of democracy. We cannot import democracy. It must be home-grown, home-nurtured and home-sustained. While the basic structures of democracy all over world bear striking semblance, the essence of democracy in terms of what it does, entails and encompasses, very from place to place depending on individual cultural additions and subtractions and historical perspectives, resulting in net additions. As such, our practice of democracy in Africa should contain additions, that our cultures dictate. This can only serve to guarantee and boost democracy on the continent.

Democracy, as an end in itself, makes for sustainable good government. At least, it creates the atmosphere conducive to sustainable good government. The democratization process in Africa must go beyond setting up democratic structures. Good government, not just liberal government must be insisted upon. Good government must entail responsiveness, humaneness, fundamental human rights, pursuit of policies that address the concern and the interest of the majority without trampling on the minority. Particularly from the African point of view, it is hoped that democracy, while making for good government and freeing the bottled-up capacities and energies of the people for initiative and entrepreneurship, will end up in the beneficial transformation of the lives of Africans, most of whom live below the poverty line. Economic growth is a necessary, if not sufficient condition for improving the lot of the poor.

A word about the media. Democracy must be freshened and made wholesome by information and openness through freedom of expression within the limit of the law of libel and defamation. But with the government, the press and the governed, there is need for a new press and information attitude.

Let me say that there is more to governance than the political aspect. There is also the economic aspect, the social aspect and the institutional aspect of governance that must not be ignored.

In the final analysis, the sustainment of democracy, as indeed any form of good government, is bread and butter issue. The hope and promise that democracy holds out for our people today has to do with having their lives go forward. The complete disenchantment of our people with authoritarian regimes on the continent also has to do, to a considerable extent, with persistence of poverty and want. The call for democracy, therefore, is grounded in perceived redemption for which the short-term prospects must be viewed realistically. For example, the payment of a high percentage of hard currencies earned, for debt servicing, cannot make for meaningful development of infrastructure and other priority areas of our economies. If the emergent democracies in Africa are to survive, a lasting solution has to be found to the debt crisis.

It is true that Africa economies as suppliers of raw materials and buyers of finished goods, relate with the industrial economies on an unequal exchange basis. The initiative for change must come from within Africa. The outside environment and forces can only help and encourage our own initiatives. We will have to live with the fact of decreased assistance to Africa, both in terms of official development assistance and loans. We will have to rely more in mobilization of local resources for investment and on direct foreign investment. With this at the back of our minds, democratization, deregulation, and competitive market economy are some of the elements of a hospitable economic environment we have to provide. Others are prudent fiscal policies, elimination of corruption, encouragement of production, continuity of policies and political stability.

We are now at the threshold of learning from the experiences of those individual African countries who have crossed a critical transition to democracy through free and fair elections. Their dual challenge of sustaining democracy and bringing about growth and equitable economic conditions will provide valuable lessons for those countries in transition. We must however, avoid the temptation for quick results. This is a long and painful process for Africa and there are no quick fixes. It is these short-term expectations that would give ammunition to those still holding out.

Current economic prognosis suggests that we face a very grave situation. If we want to see a continent wholly in the main stream of the world economy we should pursue African regional economic integration as a matter of urgency.

In order for the process of integration to be relatively smooth and speedy, interaction and integration would have to be sourced and concentrated at the informal, business, and people to people level. This strategy will not only prove to be effective in providing regional integration a dynamic, or autonomous mechanism of its own, but it will also remove whatever bias and apprehensions that may exist amongst certain peoples as to the efficacy or even desirability of economic integration. Such endurable programme as regional integration are better guarded and advanced in the minds of the peoples, and once the people themselves are convinced of its desirability, the different government s will have their jobs cut out for them.

Much of what we can hope to achieve in the sphere of economic integration can be done better when left to private initiative; with the responsibility of government remaining largely that of guiding, encouraging and providing the needed climate and the required infrastructure for the concretization of economic integration as a prelude to future political integration. Enlargement of market with increased purchasing power has become the vogue and the reason for regional economic cooperation; Africa can only fail to join the bandwagon at its own disadvantage. If we do not band together for survival and prosperity, we will sink severally in poverty.

Our Conference will hear the experiences of Benin and Zambia which have already crossed a critical democratic transition. We should particularly look out at the measures these countries are introducing or contemplating in order to sustain democracy and improve their governance. Our meeting will also meaningfully examine the evolving democratic process in South Africa and implications to the rest of Africa. With the eradication of apartheid which will mark the apex of Africa's campaign against the system, the question we must ask is, what then must be the common standards of democracy that Africa should demand of South Africa and vice-versa.

As Africans fight for change, they are no longer prepared to engage in a sterile argument of whether there is a link between democracy and economic growth or a choice between peace and freedom that a new order may purportedly disturb. In the first place, many of the African leaders delivered neither.

In any case, all of these things are necessary and there is no room for compromise or mutual exclusivity. Africans everywhere are overwhelmingly rejecting the claim of those leaders trying to perpetuate their stay in power by equating national stability with their longevity or continuity in office. We have already seen cases where they left and the tremor they predicted never came to pass.

This Conference is taking place against the background of considerable loss of life and untold suffering of innocent people resulting from the destruction caused by civil disturbances and wars because of African leaders who tenuously held onto office. This lesson must be grasped by those where the protagonists are so tensely poised as to seriously

threaten a rapid and total breakdown of national security and decapitation of an already fragile social fabric.

The real question for many countries in the transition is the extent to which their leaders may truly be committed to democracy and good governance. A government spokesperson in one African as three-piece suit in the desert". If multiparty is alien, democracy is not. The actions of such governments as well as those who are playing dirty tricks against the opposition are only delaying the day of reckoning and the time needed for the necessary healing of tensions. On the other hand, the forces of opposition must consider what can be achieved through consensus and what must be achieved in total. But to all the African leaders, many of whom I have known and respected, the best way to face this inevitable change is to behave as if it were welcome, and then participate in the management of the change.

By the end of this Conference, let us reach a consensus on what should be the direction and the way forward for Africa on the democratic path. What should inform our mode or model of democracy? What role does legitimacy play in governance and how should it be ensured in the African democratic context? What are the factors for sustenance of democracy and how can we put them in place? Is it true that African culture and situation does not admit of democratic practice?

Let me conclude by noting that much of the strength of the pillar on which we might hope to build our democratic and governance structure would depend largely on the effectiveness of our NGO's and the entire civil society. But let me say here that the NGOs can only be relevant and perform this role when they conduct themselves as matured, dedicated, responsible and progressive groups.

I hope that we will all have an exciting time at Ota.

Thank you.

Keynote Address

By
H.E., Maria De Lourdes Pintasilgo

Part I

International Movement Towards Democracy

We are facing a total new political phenomenon, in all continents, there is movement towards democratization. This springs from the desire for freedom which galvanizes people. It is a time of euphoria and hope. People equate freedom with better life, new prospects for society and peace.

It is therefore, a movement from the bottom up. It has been understood by most political leaders, thus creating a wave without precedent of what can be seen as giving up power. At this stage, it does represent a unique chance for popular mobilization and for the creation of new forms of democracy. At the same time, all countries are subjected to a continuous pressure to introduce democratic regimes.

Such pressure is visible in the on-going process of political conditionality. It was established for the first time in November 1989 towards the countries of central and Eastern Europe, and included in the charter of the Bank for the reconstruction of Eastern Europe. Since the, it spread to many other countries, up to the clear conditions put recently by Baker to China. From this angles, it is a strong condition imposed by the world and its most powerful countries – it goes from the top down. These two trends do meet – fortunately – and create, for the first time in history, a dynamism that provides reason for great hopes for the future.

The unique feature of such dynamism resides in the fact that democracy is not to be taught to the countries who are entering that path. Because, at this stage in history, democracy is under strong scrutiny in the traditional democratic countries. New forms need to be invented.

I am convinced that the Northern hemisphere can learn a lot from the questions raised in the countries that are establishing democracy.

I am also convinced that the Southern hemisphere can makes a leap-frogging with regards to forms of democracy, by taking into account both the experience in the North and its own culture. Therefore, what I have chosen to say has this twofold movement and hope in the background.

At the outset, let me recall the basic ingredients of democracy as it appears in its best forms.

a. It is based on the principle of fundamental equality of all individuals before the law and the state. Therefore, it repels all forms of discrimination or exclusion. Either by legislative acts or by tradition. It embodies a set of norms and rules to be followed by all individuals and institutions, and establishes a clear distinction among the basic institutional political and judiciary powers. Therefore, it requires as a condition a state of law;

b. It is expected to express, throughout its structure, institutions and processes of decision – making, that sovereignty resides with the people. It thus creates an inseparable connection between sovereignty, citizenship and democracy. Therefore, importance of universal suffrage and free elections;

c. It accepts and encourages the status of freedom and dignity of the human person, doing away with all threats to basic human rights. Therefore, inviolability of human person, freedom of expression and freedom of association;

d. It comes into being through a constitution as fundamental law out of which electoral laws are drawn; electoral laws are changeable mechanism intended to provide the conditions for the expression of popular will in all its shades;

e. It implies a balance of institutions and centers of power in such a way as to provide democratic control of all institutions and the support for the exercise of the basic principle of accountability of those elected to their constituency or to the nation;

f. It welcomes and stimulates the dynamism of society in all its forms: press, organizations, popular mobilization;

g. It is rooted in the culture of the people. Therefore, it takes into account the way in which the fabrics of society constitutes itself and how the issue of power is perceived within such a culture. It is for me a fundamental question to try to see what in each of our own culture can be captured by the democratic movement and translated into new perspectives and new institutions.

Democracy at the national level is part and parcel of the broader question of world governance. Multilateral organizations have developed in the last decades, but they still represent a conventional way of dealing with *separateduers* of events and issues.

However, in the last years a new awareness has grown not only among scholars, but also among politicians and the people in general, concerning the interdependence of issues and countries. *Foreign Relations* were traditionally a field apart from internal policies. Today there are no public policies in any country that may be designed with accuracy outside the frame of international relations. The attempt to re-examine the functioning of the United Nations came form the acknowledgement that there could and should be new forms of real democratic decision-making.

However, we are now uncritical with the way the G7 has replaced all international bodies (rich and powerful)! Obviously, the G7 works now because Japan and Germany are not permanent members of the security council!

The search for a democratic and rational way of dealing with issues at world level can only take place if it is accepted that our time is a time of complexity and that forecasting is an almost impossible task.

The difficulty of dealing with interdependent is clear in the way our governments are structured and our ministries function, in isolation to each other.

People/politicians need to be able to deal with adaptation, unpredictability, complexity.

 Part II

In this vast area, I will tackle only three major issues, namely:

   a. The connection between democracy and development,

   b. The socio-cultural dimensions of plurality and the role played by elections,

   c. The conditions for building up consensus.

Democracy and Development:

It is my firm belief that democracy and development are two sides of the same coin. It has been difficult for Western countries to see this connection as their own experience of democracy took place alongside a continuous process of economic growth, prosperity, and gradual building-up of social security systems. However, since the 70's, in some way as a result of the oil shock, questions started being raised about democracy, its institutions and the political class which emerged through the Western type of democracy. The European institutions of the EC have also contributed, particularly the European Parliament (EP), to the awareness of important limitations in the present democratic system.

It is very clear, as it has been pointed out often in EP, that the Brussels Commission is not elected but chosen by the government who happen to be in power, the Council of Ministers is not elected. Only the EP is elected and yet the final political decision pertains to the Council. In the European jargon, this is the democratic deficit of the Eastern institutions. What is strange, however, is that by the end of 1992 more than 80% of the economic and financial decisions will be taken in

Brussels, thus taking away from national parliaments some of the flexibility in the budget and other decisions. However, the political class, including national parliaments, does not seem to notice that!

The steps taken a few years ago by twelve newly restructured democracies seem to point out to a more vocal expression of the link democracy/development. It was clear for Latin America, the Philippines, my own country (Portugal), when they met in Manila, that the burden of the foreign debt, preventing development to take place, was creating the fear of a setback in the democratic process.

We see it now very clearly in Central and Eastern Europe. There is no denial of the craving for freedom. But the freedom was the all-encompassing cry for a better life and more human conditions.

This does mean that there is a basic question about human rights. The civil and political human rights which express freedom and dignity, viz-a-viz the state, such as freedom of expression and of association go hand in hand with economic/social /cultural right which guarantee food/shelter/education/work/information/medical care. In other words, one cannot in our times, envisage a political democracy where there is no social, economic and cultural democracy. (I know that this correlation had been one of the cleavages in the East/West confrontation but the way we arrive at it today does not spring forth from an ideological assumption but from the assessment of facts in the last decades).

However, in an increasing interdependent world, none of these aspects can be seen in isolation or taken in a simple relation of cause/effect. All interfere with each other in ways that sociology and political sciences are continuously unfolding before our eyes.

It is the complexity of such interdependence and its continuous changing pattern, that prevents us from applying any coherent gestalt theory, which would give foreseeable configurations. Hence, some basic questions:

A.   The satisfaction of basic needs can only be met in a sustainable way in the context of the medium and long-term perspectives in the economic, social and cultural field. However, democracy as lived in the Northern Hemisphere, is sustained by short-term mandates.

There is a definite problem here concerning what I call the continuity of the governing acts, regardless of the persons who are at the helm.

A new ethics has to emerge by which any government has to avoid creating negative conditioning to future governments.

In the conduct of public affairs, *predecessors are neither enemies nor rivals but legitimate heirs of the same political responsibilities, as decided by the popular role.*

I know this is not the common attitude. But is the only one that can assure that the power to be exercised is not power for its own sake, power over people and above them, acting at its won discretion. It is rather power towards the accomplishment of the goals that can serve the people.

In my experience, if this attitude is not present, political democracy may be there with its elections and institutions but it will not eradicate misery and destitution. In the long-run, its very existence will be at stake.

B.   Another difficulty is to reconcile the work and time needed for the decisions which commit the long-term with the urgency the population feels (and rightly so!)

Because people get tired of problems – they do not elect people for the leaders to tell them how the problems are, they know them over too well; they expect the leaders to solve the problems!

How do you tell the Russians that the problem is not to some extent, that lack of food but the fact that they need more and better railways and roads for the distribution of the goods?

It is there that in transition periods, the use of task forces working in close collaboration with the personnel of administration may be of great help. Even in countries of a relatively recent independence, the weight of public administration is already there.

There are other ways and means:

a. a tremendous proximity to the people, to real life, to real issues; examples:

   i. Filipe Gonzalez, talking concrete consequences on TV.

   ii. Tina Auselmi, while Minister of Labour, keeping one day a week to hear people and visit them in their places of works.

   iii. My own attempt to take decisions on the spots where they mattered

A very clear mind for the spokes-man of the government, able to translate the arid decisions into understandable measures.

C. Still within this context one difficult problem, underlined by General Obasanjo is the way in which foreign investment is encouraged. I see it in three levels:

   1. the legal framework of the foreign investment which determines what kind of goods can be purchased, the percentage of capital sharing in a new enterprise, the obligations in relation to the national norms;

   2. the technological choices: the need for a very competent team, without financial; vested interests, to help the decision – making process. In order to avoid.

       i.   Obsolete material
       ii. outdated and polluting processes
       iii. satellysation in one specific field

3. the delocalization of enterprises, updated version of the international division of labour.

I am stressing this aspect because democracy ought to reinforce national sovereignty and in some cases these processes make some countries incredibly dependent on others.

Need to show that our own process, if carried on honestly, needs to be explained over and over again to ears and minds only attuned to their own institutions.

Pluralism and Elections:

Within the "Political conditionality", multi-partism gained such an importance that Poland, with all its passion, had 60 parties in the last elections!

Multi-partism is a way "to make" clear that the era of "one ruler' is over.
Two points of clarification are, however, important.

First, what is at stake is basically an appeal to tolerance, respect for the other's opinion and an acknowledgement that in a given society there may be divergent views about the solutions to be adopted.

Political parties are essentially the organized expression of such views. According to modern constitutions they should express what is alive among the people. In fact, the East/West polarization and its correlated propaganda has also led the political parties to establish themselves as structures who sell their ideologies and impose them on people. This is a fundamental perversion of democracy. We see in most European political parties their incapacity to absorb new ideas, to arise to new challenges and to widen their own horizon. Basically, this means that the State (which is the fortress to be conquered by political parties) is still dominating society.

For the parties to come back to express what is alive in society they need to change radically from that they are today.

To become what?

This question leads me to the second point of clarification. Even pluralism is not the most adequate expression for democracy as power of all.

Wouldn't plurality of forms of association and organization define better what is at stake?

If the civil society precedes the state in the sense that the ideas that will guide the state will emerge, then it is the encouragement of an alive plurality that constitutes the best guarantee of a democracy.

The political parties would take a less dominant role if they would be part of a larger plurality of forces.

I consider extremely dangerous, paralyzing and, in the long run, destructive of democracy, the tendency displayed in new democracies, like in my own country, to try to express the plurality of views in a society through the lines of cleavage of the political parties.
Plurality has to find its way between the tendency to fall back into a homogenized, simpler culture and the extreme fragmentation that may characterize the transition period. The fragmentation may be caused by differences in the set of ideas. But is may also be caused by the mere adherence to different leaders, because of their personal appeal or because of their ethnic belonging. Hence, the importance of an on-going process of deepening democracy.

Elections are the moments when the plurality of opinions is universally expressed and the strength of each opinion is weighed.

a. This is why the freedom of elections, the absence of fraud or coercion, even a certain solemnity at the moment of the individual vote, are so important. It is the moment for unequivocal affirmation of citizenship and of its key-role in the direction a country is going to take.

The practice of international observers at national elections has increased. For some politicians it remains disputable. In my own understanding such practice must be looked at against the background of several events:

i. In any case, at decisive elections, the foreign press is in the country and covers whatever it decides

ii. I doubt that ad hoc groups, in a kind of self-appointed righteousness, will be helpful. They hurt the dignity of the host country.

iii. On the contrary, a group of eminent personalities, without any vested interests in the country concerned and who are not members of the international associations of political parties, could be chosen by a democratic international institution, either regional or world-wide or invited by the current government.

iv. Their task would be deeper than the vigilance or the uncovery of any trouble. It would be seen mostly as a sign of support and solidarity from the international community.

b. In the Northern hemisphere, there is, however, a type of coercion which is exercised through the media.

The media, under the alibi of "freedom of expression", is very often taking sides:

i. through the way news is given and pressures undergone;
ii. through the attitudes of journalists present in debates among candidates;
iii. through the sub-liminal messages it conveys during the period of the campaign.

We are still in the beginning of dealing with the media in a true democratic society: how to avoid the promiscuity between the media and the political class? How to make the media what they should really be: a mediation in communication among the masses?

c. Another – more sophisticated – interference are the opinion polls. They help to weigh chances, to give an idea of the forces present in society. But the way in which they are regularly published creates for democracy in general and particularly fro elections, some serious dangers:

    i. polls often emit the wrong signals and, yet, they determine what the candidates are going to say next, twisting often their own starting-point and programmes;

    ii. polls function as mirrors where naively individuals see themselves, and, if their intention of vote is not very strong, they internalize what they see or hear. They identify themselves with figures;

    iii. this is possible because the analysis of polls by any media is based on the simple question: Who is going to win? And in our societies people still want to be with the obvious winner.

It is my conviction that opinion polls need also a legal framework so as to create a space where no signals are emitted and where people can, in good conscience, come to a decision about their vote.

Consensus-Building:

One of the main tasks in democracy is the creation of a communal will, or, as some people say, the process of consensus-building. It is a key-question in a time when there are no clear indicators for the future ahead. It is decisive for the undertaking of major endeavours in a country. In the Western democracy, we are in a deadlock in what concerns the communal will. The existing mechanisms are not enough for people to express themselves in due time and around the important issues. So the gap between the political class and the citizens is growing everyday. The people don't believe anymore in the competence and capacity of achievement of their leaders.

The Reagan years have certainly contributed everywhere to transform the political debate into yet another spectacle or a theatrical show.

The reaction of the people is rejection, and a total disbelief in the political class.

It is, in my view, at the level of consensus building that any democracy can express in an efficient way the status of freedom of individuals opinions as well as its connection with the trends alive in the fabrics of society.

The difficulties of consensus-building cannot constitute, however, a pretext for falling back in any form of one-man or one-party rule.

There are some difficulties which should not be omitted. But it is clear that there is among the citizens of the Northern Hemisphere a growing uneasiness concerning the current practice of democracy.

The persons elected are less and less connected with their constituencies during the exercise of their term of office. The electors felt that they are marginalized, not taken into account, as decisions are made without taking into account their thinking. One vote every 4 or 5 years becomes irrelevant.

The representative democracy has been devoid of its very essence – representation – and tends to become a mere formal democracy.
Several elements are at play in this dislocation of meaning. One of them is the role played by political parties.

In most countries, political parties have such a strict discipline of vote that the elected MP's instead of representing the views of their electors, are, in fact, representing the views of the political committee of their party.

In the context of party-led decision in a national parliament, we enter another contradictory process.

It is true that a government that has won an absolute majority has better conditions to implement its decisions. But, with party politics at play, it can easily block the parliament, making of it a government sounding

board. We encounter here another perversion of democracy. How do we then counter such dysfunctional element? The obvious answer is to strengthen representation through a pact between the elected and his or her electors.

More over, in respect of fundamental human rights of the elected, no one should be asked to act, speak or vote against his conscience. It is an issue pertaining to basic ethics in political life and yet very much absent from its concrete practice.

What would be the consequences? There would be a more difficult but also more realistic formation of decision in parliament. It would correspond to majorities of ideas", constituted by MP's with the same view on issues regardless of their party-line. Such a practice would introduce in political life the concrete proof that politicians are listening to opinions and needs of the people and that the danger of behind-the-curtain arrangements would be avoided.

Though a criticism may be made based on the unpredictability coming out of the majority of ideas, the gains would be such that they appear to me as worth trying.

Another way of countering the way in which political parties occupy, with their own logic, all the political space, is the recourse to a more participatory democracy.

I am thinking of several elements – first, the introduction of forms of direct democracy. It can very well be built around the local space and local power. Decisions concerning directly the lives of people in their settlements can be better answered and taken by the people themselves.

Example, to cope with forest fires, to weigh pros and cons of a polluting industry, to establish centers of primary health – care, to use the school as a multi-purpose cultural center, moreover, the local power is the one that can contribute more decisively for connections across national boundaries.

One important element to draw in more participation is the referendum both at the local and at the national level. They are not only a guarantee of involvement of the citizens (if they so wish); they are also an opportunity for locally or nationally binding processes of political awareness and civic consciousness-raising.

Participation is, however, strongly jeopardized, by discrediting especially because of corruption and by the way in which the political class covers it up.

An instrument used today in some Western countries seems to me one of the best: to ask of all politicians a formal declaration of what they possess before and after holding office otherwise political discussion are reduced to mutual attacks of dishonesty.

Another important institution is the ombudsman to whom everyone is entitled to appeal. A third element is the recognition of social actors who have something to say to the political life.

All forms of associations and organizations, however small and however marginal, should be drawn into the process of decision – making.

The Northern hemisphere has used the concept of social partners in every issue concerning conflicts in the labour field. This concept should be enlarged. It is necessary to define fundamental issues and to discover the actors whose interest is vital in each issue. They should be also social partners.

A whole new path is at stake here. I think that wherever democracy is new, there are possibilities for such dialogue to take place and for new institutions to emerge. In the beginning of a democracy and in the heat of political struggle, a country needs sometimes reference points of ethical values and peaceful negotiation.

I think that an appeal should be made to all the religious forces, to all religions to play a role in this regard. Of course, I am not thinking of a theocratic society, but of need for the different religious to speak in the name of the transcendent values present in each human person.

Conclusion:

What is at stake in everything I have said is the need for a radical change in the concept and practice of democracy. At this stage of history there are no models.

The vitality of every society provides the dynamism and the concrete ideas necessary to establish new democratic institutions and new channels for decision making. Africa can make a decisive contribution to the shaping of a wider and deeper democracy. Times for growth and imagination, times for doing what is just needed.

Democracy and Governance In Africa: A Preliminary Statement
By
Prof. Eme Awa

Introduction:

In popular discourse the Americans define democracy as the government of the people by the people for the people. No serious attempt is made to state this definition in operational terms and so we do not require anybody to explain the component elements of this definition: What is meant by government of the people? When can we say that a government is by the people? What conditions must operate in order to enable us to confirm that a government is for the people? The definition is seldom treated analytically anywhere and remains nebulous, being a manifestation of populism which is designed to create the impression that trappings of political power has been extended to the masses. But in the analysis of the distribution and exercise of political power, no serious write ever devotes much attention to the definition or tries to indicate how the elements of it can be made operational.

There are many more sophisticated types of definitions of democracy and we need only examine a few of these since in serious America political thought the concept is basically treated in the same ways except writings. For instance, Adrian and Press define democracy in the following manner:

> Democracy in a complex society is a political system that affords
> frequent opportunities for changing the governing officials and a social
> mechanism that permits nearly all of the adult population to influence
> major policy decisions from among genuine competitors for public
> office and through other procedures viewed by most citizens legitimate".

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1   Adrian, Charles and Charles Press, <u>The American Political Process</u>, McGraw-Hill, New
     York, pp. 84-85

The essential elements to the concept are summarized to include the principles of representative government, competitive elements, fundamental freedoms of speech, association, religion, thought, choice and equality of all adults to vote to choose those that will rule the nation. The definition cited by Joseph Schumpeter has had a pervasive influence on the mind of the West. According to him, democracy is a political method, i.e., a certain type of institutional arrangement for arriving at political – legislative and administrative-decisions. Later, he modified his view slightly and then stated the democracy is the institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the peoples' vote. So, competition for leadership is the distinctive feature of democracy and the main basis for distinguishing it from other political methods.[2]

The philosophical and practical issues which flow from this definition of democracy are many and we can only write for now in the most general terms. The issues include representative government; number and structure of political parties; electoral systems and elections; the major philosophical questions; democracy as a way of life; the problem of economic justice in a democratic society, etc. Since we are writing in brief general terms, we had better brought in the concept of the state and develop the other issues around it. The modern state in advanced nations consists of the following elements: the executive; the legislature; the judiciary; the administration (and this embraces the civil services, parastatals, regulatory agencies, special administrative agencies such as police councils, university councils, public enterprises, etc; the military, police and state security agencies; regional/state and local governments.

The advanced capitalist states have regimes which an economically dominant class rules through the use of democratic institutions characterized by the use of representative assemblies and regular elections, political competition, the right to opposition and seeming guarantee of individual rights which are supposed to serve as restrictions on the application of state power. We must note that the various elements of the state system are dominated or controlled

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[2]   Pateman, Carol, Participation and Democratic Theory, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1970, pp 3-5.

indirectly by members of the upper classes in society, to the virtual exclusion of members of the working class, farmers, small business men and women and most intelligentsia. In the U.S. for instance, business men constituted the largest occupational group in the executive branch of government from 1898 to 1949; over 60 per cent of the cabinet office holders were business men. A high percentage of business men was also found in the Eisenhower cabinet and conservatives of various description were in the Regan administration.

Power in the UK appears to be solidly in the hands of the conservative elites trained in the public schools and in Oxbridge. There is in UK, as Philip Stren- worth and Anthony Giddens have pointed out, a complex system of interlocking directorates which enables these people to determine the fate of the country and of the masses.[3] To buttress this position, Geoffrey Alderman has asserted firmly that in Britain, power lies with the big economic battalions, namely, the TUC, the Confederation of British Industry and the Whitehall economists. He argues that elections are no longer about who governs – for it is the three battalions who govern – but about who chairs the meeting at which those with power and authority try to reach agreement. Elections and representation in his view have mainly ritualistic function. [4]

A close study of the US and UK would show that although the franchise has now grudgingly been given to most adults, the actual exercise of the right to vote is hedged about by many practical difficulties of a sociological or other nature: the coloured people, the poor, the ignorant, women, etc are in effect deprived of these right in many ways. Thus, the outstanding merit and virtue of Western democracy – the right of the people to choose their rulers in a two-party contest is flowed to a considerable extent in practice. What is more fundamental than this is the following: Whether people vote in large or small numbers, they choose as rulers the people who are presented to them by the political class (the upper class). Choosing of rulers in this way is no longer considered an instrumental. That is, democratic government on this showing is not obliged to achieve any particular ethical purposes for the nation. Thirdly, democracy understood in this way, confines

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[3] See Philip Standworth and A. Giddens (eds), Elites and Power in British Society, O.U.P., 1974, passim.

[4] Geoffrey Alderman, British Elections: Myth and Reality, B.T. Batsford, London, 1978, p.207.

participation of the people for whatever it is worth to voting for the rulers. It does not deal with the basic issue of participatory democracy (democracy which determines the governance of their political lives) and the question of economic justice (participation in economic organizations which determine whether they can meet their basic needs for food, clothing and shelter).

The Major ideals in Democratic Thinking:

The fundamental ideals in Western democracy are freedom, equality and fraternity. Surprisingly they leave our justice which is fundamental to an African. The discussion of these concepts need not detain, us much for there is constant reference to and explication of them in the literature of political science, history, law, economics and philosophy. Our approach here is merely to define each concept in a meaningful way and assess its significance in the political system of the Western world.

Freedom and Equality:

Freedom has both negative and positive connotations. When writers define freedom as the absence of restraint or coercion, they emphasize its negative character. When a person is forced to do an act or to refrain from doing something, we say that he has no freedom to act or that his freedom is limited to the extent of the restraint. In this sense, we find that rules, regulations, laws, and even conventions do interfere and set limits to the freedom we can enjoy in a society.

We know also that people's behaviour and thinking may be constrained by other types of social forces. Poverty, ignorance, disease and squalor can impose restraint on the behaviour of the individual. If we remove these socially imposed disabilities, then we give freedom to the individual. We may refer to this as negative freedom for in each case, we enlarge the area in which the individual can act without the restraint complained of. Negative freedom implies the existence in our society of an area in which we cannot be pushed around and we have reasonable liberty of action. It also implies being freed from the constraints of ignorance, disease, etc, and we now have knowledge of social reality and can participate meaningfully in the discussion of socio-political

affairs and cast our votes with reasonable assurance of personal autonomy. In the discussion of freedom in the earlier pages of this chapter, we had reached the conclusion that it is mandatory for the state to provide this type of freedom for all its citizens. Once a person has achieved negative freedom, he is free then to be the best he is capable of being.

As Leslie Lipson has noted, a person is also free to act in any way which does not result in injury to others or in any way which is consistent with the like opportunity for others to do the same. Let us consider the second part of this statement. Suppose we are dealing with two citizens, A and B. A supports the establishment of a two-party system in his country. A's view does not foreclose the opportunity of B to express a negative opinion on the same question. A and B are therefore equal in the sense of having the right to express their opinions, unhampered, on the subject or other subjects. Both A and B are equal in the eyes of the law which gives the citizens the right to express opinions on various issues. Each can claim, as many people do in democratic societies, that theirs is a democratic society and they have a right to hold and express their own opinions on the party system. Both then are equal to each other in the matter of expressing opinions or exercising choices about the party system. Equality here refers to uniformity in the treatment of people. In the expression of opinions on various public issues, all people should be equal.

But the opinion expressed may carry different weights. These weights will be determined by the intrinsic value of each, the criteria available for evaluating such matters and the value position of the assessors, especially the policy makers. A's position may be hailed and used by rulers to help organize the political system and B's position may be ignored. Thus, we would find that both A and B start off on an equal footing with freedom of action but in the end they in effect become unequal because the freedom leads to other conditions which equality does not determine. Let us consider cases:

    a. Take equality of opportunity. We regard education as the open-sesame to success in life and we therefore demand that in a just society all citizens must be given equal opportunity to acquire education. We are equal when we are given equal opportunity for education but in the end find that a few people have turned out to

be geniuses; some people who have high abilities may become university teachers; some others are great professionals; become technicians and others may occupy lowly position in society.

b. Several people may seek election to high public offices such as membership of the legislature. All the people will set out as equal claimant to the vacancy in a constituency. In the end of them wins the election and by acquiring legitimate authority, becomes unequal to the contestants who lost.

c. In a situation of perfect economic competition, several people have set out on an equal resources footing. In the end, some become quite wealthy because they posses superior skill, luck, energy and cleverness. Some may not do so well and others may remain rather poor, the rich will use their wealth to wield considerable political power and enhance their status in society. They may not want this position to be tampered with and they will remain on a higher level in society than other people.

In all these cases, we will note that as a result of the democratic feeling, we give equality to all to pursue certain courses of action. Each is free to use certain resources in the pursuit of each type of objective and a certain amount of inequality characterizes the end result and some people may become entrenched as masters of society. Should society intervene after the first leg of the relay race to set the contestants up again on an equal footing, i.e., should it be part of public policy to ensure that nobody is allowed to unduly exploit the advantages gained and thus assume a dominant position in society? Is it not fair and reasonable that society which, because of the demands of democracy, provided the setting for the variable successes of citizens, should intervene continually to make sure that the governmental system should not be monopolized by any group of people but should remain the government of the people by the people for the people?

The general attitude seems to favour such intervention and the practical measures applied to achieve the objective include:

a. Statutory rights of employees to organize trade which can bargain collectively with the employers and thereby set wage levels and determine conditions for hiring and firing the workers;

b. Use of a graduated income and inheritance tax systems for redistributing wealth;

c. Policies designed to erode the power of monopolies, oligopolies, etc.;

d. Nationalization of enterprises which are deemed, especially in new nations, to be intimately connected with the idea of sovereignty of the nation such as the running of oil refineries, iron and steel industries, etc.,

The experiences of the West shows that these and other measures which have been adopted to secure fairness are not adequate. Only the grosser inequalities are modified and the freedoms of the lower classes are not considerably enlarged. In the capitalist societies of the developing nations, very little has been done to secure negative freedom for the individual and wealth plus a consequent political power is vested heavily in the hands of the elites. It should be pointed out that part of the problem we face with the general provision of welfare and redistributive measures is that these measures are in effect in injection of equity into the social situation from outside the system of production and distribution. These measures do not flow from the system as an integral part of it and therefore depend on the particular positions to remain entrenched.

Democracy As A Way of Life:

There remains the ideal of fraternity. This is a matter which straddles both philosophy and democracy as a way of life in capitalistic society and it is better to discuss it along with the other questions which characterize the democratic way of life is such societies. Equality, of course, is inextricably mixed up with freedom and it was therefore better to discus it under the heading of ideals than under the democratic way of life. The main issues in the democratic way are therefore fraternity, emphasis on the individual in contrast to group, what is referred to as rational empiricism and the observance of high morals or reason in legislation of policy – making.

The world fraternity refers to a group of formal association of people with common purposes and interests. In the context of democracy, it implies the idea of the brotherhood of mankind with particular reference to the member of one national community. Many things are involved in the idea of fraternity and these include the idea of responsibility for or a consideration of other people's welfare, equality of all the people in the community in the sense of equality of liberty. The questions already raised above apply with equal force in the discussion of fraternity. We accord equally to all to enable them to engage in various pursuits and because of the freedom that each person has, we find problems of inequality starting at us in the face although we feel that all, being members of the same community, should be treated with fairness and equity. We live with this contradiction because of the reasons already given above, namely, that equitable measures are decided by people who are inclined to take measures to erode the autonomy of the individual in making political and economic choices and the latter cannot therefore use their individual initiative meaningfully. The elites do not want significant equitable measure to be provided for most people in society.

When we turn to the questions of rational empiricism, we are dealing with the assumption that Western believers in democracy are not dogmatic by nature. The democrat keeps an open mind on various socio-political questions in contrast to Marxists (who are assumed to be rather dogmatic) and can adjust his attitude as issues develop in the political system. What specifically distinguishes a democratic from an authoritarian legislature, for instance, is not the final product – what laws or polices are made – but what procedure is adopted. We must discus and hear all sides to a debate before making a decision. Hence, the need for free speech, association or assembly and publication. This position cannot really endear the underprivileged groups to democracy because the laws or policies often serve unwittingly to deny freedoms to such people.

Finally, it is assumed that a large and effective middle class is needed for democracy to be viable and to survive in the long run. This statement openly begs the question and there is little need to discuss it at length. We should note, however, that it contradicts the ideals of fraternity and equality and seems to uphold the idea of freedom without any reservations. Moreover, we must note that the idea has done a lot of

havoc to the fledgling economies of many new nations. In Nigeria, for instance, the leaders who obtained political independence for the country believed quite strongly in this doctrine of existence of a large and effective middle class as the pivot of democracy. Many of them immorally, if not also illegally, used public funds to build up such a middle class at the expense of the masses, giving themselves almost absolute economic and political powers.

The foregoing constitutes the core of the heritage that the West wants to leave with Africa. Apparently, they believe that what is good for them is good also for Africa and attempts are made to push the ideas and practices through three main avenues, namely:

1. The general cultural penetration of Africa through communications processes;

2. the formulation of theories by the social sciences and their recommendation for application in Africa; and

3. the tying of the US aid to the adoption of Western practices in politics, especially party competition, to target nations, irrespective of considerations party of social justice and participatory democracy which are of high value to Africa. We will now analyze the indigenous African political system, show its strengths, thereby indicating the conflict which the imposition of ideas and practices may conceivably generate.

Philosophy of Government and Nature of the State In Africa:

Our ancestors did very little articulation (found in folk tales mainly) of the ideas and practices of their governmental systems. But their elaborate plans of governance contain evidence of a people with an ordered mind and a high ethical purpose of the state from which we can infer some plausible theory of the state. We will state the bare outline as follows:

a. The Governmental System:

There would be a principal ruler at the center of affairs, a council of elders, then a lineage group made up of representatives of the various lineage, age grades, priestly groups and an assortment of special formations, with all adult males meeting occasionally at a market square or other designated place to deliberate on public issues and take decisions on how the community would solve its problems. The ruler and the council of elders hold the reins of power in the interstices of time while the other groups would meet occasionally. All these people had a right to be present in the meetings of the entire adult males. Decisions were taken by consensus on all levels of the system. Although, women were not part of this system of direct democracy, they were nevertheless powerful in their own right for there were special structures through which they could exert influence on the governmental system.

Elaborate arrangements were made for the security of people and property, to protect them from perceived enemies, wild beasts and natural disasters. Honesty, bravery and patriotism were considered of very high value and through the instrumentality of the political culture, these values were passed from one generation to another. There was a lot of concern for justice but quite often some communities sought to achieve this by referring disputes to the gods, and people might be subjected to oath-taking which could be injurious to all irrespective of guilt. Communal projects designed to improve the conditions of the people were organized by various agencies of the community.

b. Socio-economic Issues:

A considerable amount of attention was given to the question of how the community could feed itself, maintaining everybody under conditions of reasonable comfort. The socio-economic organizations could be a mixture of individualism, collectivism and cooperate social system. For instance, people could do their farm work or engage in trading on an individual basis; the organization of carvers, metalsmiths, etc., could be collectivist or cooperative in nature and such structures were designed partly to render assistance to the members on procuring raw materials, the transmission of technical knowledge from one

generation to another and to facilitate the sale of products and the sharing incomes.

Land and farming occupied a focal position in the social system. They were means of ensuring social control of the community, regulation of the behaviour of the members and the assurance of welfare to all. Land was owned by extended families and larger communities. All members who needed some for farming were allocated portions roughly on the basis of rank within the family or other group. When land was allowed to lie fallow, nobody however important he might be, would be allowed to cultivate it for any agricultural purpose. The resumption of farming no any land was usually preceded by prayers said by the chief priest to propitiate the gods and thereby ensure that the harvest would be bountiful for everybody. If harvests failed or if epidemics visited the communities continuously, the rulers would be suspected of wrong doing and they could lose the rulership position.

Apart from the function of providing land to all its members, the extended family also served as a social security devise as well as the modern Keynesian device of pump-primping the economic system. The more affluent members, for instance, could render assistance to those who needed it badly. The benefactor would work harder (not steal or cheat) to replenish his stock and give more if need be while the beneficiary would work just as hard in order to get away from the receiving and also be able to assist others in due course. The initial giving of aid could be said to amount to an injection of new blood into the system and thus stimulate increased economic activity. The old, the sick, disabled, etc. were taken care of by the extended family.

From all these, we can see that the political system operated with a basic minimum sense of fairness and justice in respect of each member of the community. There was a moral order that governed the handling of public affairs. This was predicated on the understanding and assumption that everybody 's welfare must be catered for. I believe that the basic assumption was that there is a spark of divinity in every human being and nobody ought to be obliged to live under conditions of poverty and squalor. For poverty was recognized as a condition that involves a deprivation of those concerned of economic resources that could enable them to meet the basic needs for food, shelter and clothing. It was understood that those who were poor and therefore

morally deprived, could not participate meaningfully in the decision processes of their community. Our system was thus characterized by social cooperation in politics, economy and society generally.

The highlights of the theory of the state are:

a. There was direct democracy and a consensual political system. Rulers were expected to perform their functions with high credibility or they would be compelled to lose the mandate to rule;

b. The public interest was defined through discussions on the various levels of the political structure and arrangements were made to promote it:

c. There was room for individual initiative in the pursuit of economic enterprises and along with this there were opportunities for collective and cooperative activities. No undue or immoral exploitation of the people was allowed. Indeed, moral restraint was imposed on the successful to force them to aid those who needed such stimulants in order to increase their productive capacity. Equality of opportunity was assured through the educational system and through the physical and spiritual processes of procuring the fertility of farm land for all farmers.

What we inherited from Britain was essentially laissez-faire in nature. The state was set up to perform the minimal house-keeping functions for the society while the major economic activities were left in the hands of the organized private enterprises which initially were absolutely dominated by foreign enterprises. The major infrastructure, built and kept under maintenance by the state, were designed to facilitate the operations of the organized private businesses: the railways, waterways, post office and telecommunications, electricity and water supply, etc. were designed essentially to service the private sector. It would be true to state that the Nigerian state at this point in time consisted not merely of foreigners in the main (the three branches of government, the police and other security forces) but also that it defined the public interest in terms which gave only peripheral considerations to Nigerian people themselves.

In due course, Nigeria elites entered the political scene and pursued policies which at best seemed ambivalent in some important respects. With varying degrees of attention some effort was made by the leaders to rescue the common people from the strangle-hold of ignorance and poverty through special educational policies. But all leaders adopted the same policies in using public funds (which originally were derived from farmers) to create or reinforce a middle class which, according to them, was indispensable to the emergence of a truly vibrant capitalist society. Professor Sayre Schatz has discussed this development in terms of pupil capitalism and private capitalism, with the wealth of the nation being concentrated in the hands of a few Nigerians while the rest of the people lived under conditions of poverty, ignorance and disease. By now the state has gone through some severe metamorphosis, being tightly structured and streamlined. We must briefly note the major elements of the state:

a. the chief executive are drawn from the ranks of elites, many of whom were created at the expense of the people;

b. the legislators are drawn from the same base as the chief executives, the legislative chambers are virtually monopolized by adult males, for not only are women not really involved but also we find that the masses of the people (peasants and workers) are not represented in them;

c. the executive and legislators have very strong ties with the elites in the private sector as partners or investors in many private companies;

d. the administration comprises civil servants; public servants in parastals and public enterprises; regulatory agencies such as the stock exchange, electoral commission, the public complaints bureau, etc.; special administrative agencies such as the police council, civil service commission; special development agencies such as the river basin commission; ad hoc panels, committees or commissions of inquiry, etc. Members of these administrative groups also have strong ties with the private sector and some of their retired members are involved in inter-locking directorates of the boards which run the organized private enterprises and therefore can exert a tremendous influence on public policy

formulation which more often than not, favours the private sectors on crucial issues;

e. the judiciary, as in many nations, is elitist and conservative in temperament; the law which it administers is not equitable and this body has only a precarious claim as the sanctuary of justice;

f. the state and local governments which symbolize the federal character of the nation and are designed to assure fairness to all, have been bogged down in the travails found on the federal level.

An essential part of the outcome of the activities of the state system is serious stratification of the society, resulting in the poverty of the masses, a de factor denial to the masses of the right to decide who should rule the country (since elections are often rigged and resort to violence is common), bitter ethnic rivalry, under-utilization of human and material resources, the misdirection of development effort and low productivity.

Democracy and Governance In Africa: A Trade Union Perspective

By
Chakufwa Chilhana, Secretary General

First Wind of Change:

Just over three decades ago, the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillian declared, "the wind of change is blowing through this continent, and whether we like it or not … we must accept it". [5] He was referring to the decolonization process of the African continent that had started and which had spanned 33 years from Ghana in 1957 to Namibia in 1990. A sigh of relief and sense of jubilation were felt by Africans as decolonization process swept one country after another.

Africans entered independence with high expectations. Most people believed that rapid progress would be made in raising incomes and improving welfare following the dismantling of the colonial bondage. This expectation existed notwithstanding of racial segregation in South Africa on a scale not seen since the abolition of slavery.

After an initial growth, however, most African economies faltered, then went into decline. There are some exceptions, but generally Africa as a whole has witnessed almost a decade of falling per capita incomes, increasing hunger, famine, provision of poor social services and overall, economic mismanagement has made African economic growth hit rock the bottom. In addition, many countries face problems of excessive population growth, crushing mass poverty, debt burden and varying degrees of environmental degradation.

The overall scenario has been unwelcome to the electorate whose high aspirations at independence have been reduced to mere wishful thinking. It is less surprising to note that some peasants have been heard to proclaim…"we would feel much better if we were told when this independence would come to an end. [6] This is a clear manifestation of how governments are out of tune with the people they are designed to

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[5] Quotation from Time, October 14, 1991, p. 29.
[6] Political and Economic Monthly, Vo. 4, No. 7, p. 44.

govern, and indeed, spells doom for the ruling government and leadership.

One Party, One Man, One Vote:

What went wrong? Scarcely had the echoes of Macmillan's speech faded when newly independent African states began sliding towards a lamentable model of – one party, one main, one vote. Reflections of shaky regimes were followed by military coups. Autocrats installed socialists or Marxist economies and frequently looted already bare treasuries. The cold war turned Africa into a battleground of ideologies, and surrogates, defining the continents politics and stunting its development. Certainly, as it turned out, there were ample reasons not to like the wind of change, albeit Macmillans' proclamation, but for reasons far more complex than the reluctance of colonial powers to relinquish their lush prizes.

The one nation, one leader slogans have often created a disgruntled and oppressed community who can be manipulated for personal gains and power. This has led to blatant failures in nation-building. If we consider the model of decolonization of British colonies, the Lancaster House Constitution can be viewed as a strategy geared to retain the remnants of colonialism as can be evidenced by the fact that the socio-economic structures, the Bill of Rights and the Land question all remain intact.

Democracy of Dictatorship:

The one party states which took over after independence ran the risk of concentrating power in the hands of one man – the President. In most cases, the assimilation of the party and state affairs amounted to dictatorship. In such a set-up, power was centralized at the expense of democracy, leaving the problem of the limitation and separation of the powers concentrated in the hands of the executive.

Often time, such governments have conducted themselves without due respect of the feelings of the populace which initially gave them the mandate to govern. They do not even care to renew the mandate by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote. It must be noted that it is competition for leadership that is the distinctive feature of

democracy since the electorate do not normally control their leaders except by replacing them at elections with alternative leaders – and the fact that the individual can switch his support from one set of leaders to another ensures that leaders are relatively responsive to non-leaders.

It is competition that is the specifically democratic element in the method, and the value of a democratic system over the political methods lies in the fact that it makes possible, an extension of the number, size and diversity of the minorities that can bring their influence to bear on policy decision, and on the whole political ethos of the society.

The democratic system also ensures the existence of universal suffrage (one man, one vote) with its sanction through the electoral competition for votes, and more importantly, to the fact that equality of opportunity of access to influence decision makers through inter-electoral processes by which different groups in the electorate make their demands heard. Officials not only listen to the various groups but expect to suffer in some significant way if they do not placate the group, its leaders or its most vociferous members.

The electorate has been denied this, in most cases since independence, largely because of the monolithic system of governance. The debate has not been recast to question whether the one party system truly provide for popular participation by the electorate in the government affairs.

Multi-Part: Devil of Incense?

Proponents of one party states see its validity as a sure way of guaranteeing continued stay in power by those in authority even when the government has lost public confidence. Otherwise, how does the electorate choose where there is no given alternative? To quote President Gorbachev, "We should not be afraid of multi-party system the way the devil fears incense. Developing the independent activities of the masses and promoting democratization of all spheres of life under a one-party system is a very difficult mission for the party".[7] But Joe Slovo puts in clearer relief when he wrote, "the mission to promote real democracy under a one-party system is not just difficult but in the

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[7] President Gorbachev said in Lithuania in January 1990.

long run impossible".[8] And we have sufficient experience of how one-party rule in various parts of the world has stifled development and provided a recipe for gale-strength demands for political reforms.

"There is no country on the face of the earth whose citizens do not desire a government that respects the basic principles of democracy… freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom from arbitrary intimidation and arrest and the rule of law which is the life-blood of democracy", Dan Quayle declared.[9] New democracies are blossoming through out the world. And Africa is part of the world. We are all living witnesses to the recent events in the world which bear eloquent testimony to the fact that the forces of democracy cannot be chained for too long and certainly not forever. Even where communist doctrines are deeply rooted for those who dare suppress democratic reform only services a time bomb that will violently blow wide open in to their faces. People want to be empowered,… want respect,… want good life,… want hope and an opportunity to live their dreams. [10] To borrow Macmillans phrase, "the wind of change is once more blowing through this continent, and whether we like it or not… we must all accept it".

We must, however, be cautious in the way the diverse African countries adopt and practice pluralistic politics that is claimed to augur well with popular participation and free market economic systems. Participation backed by intimidation and coercion, underlay the tendency for participation to become linked to the concept of totalitarianism rather than that of democracy. People's capacity for adjustment to change, realization of political aspirations and the keeping of allegiances; and it also implies that political decision making is effective in the basic sense of action itself, and any sort of action, in pursuit of shared goals or in adjustment of changing conditions.[11]

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[8] Joe Slovo in his pamphlet, "Has Socialism Failed"?
[9] U.S. Vice President, Dan Quayle, Africa file for Wednesday, September 11, 1991, p. 15-16.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Carrole Fateman, "Participation and Democratic Theory", 1977 Cambridge University
   Press, London 1977, p. 1-13

Static Politics, Static Economies:

If we do not voluntarily accept it, then outside forces will impose the changes on us by means which we are less willing to accept. Already, democratization of societies, accountable government, respect for human rights and rule of law have become aid conditionalities portraying the image that we, Africans, are incapable of identifying politics. Africans are aware that good governance is an indispensable framework for development. Times have changed and politicians too must have the ability to change to suite dynamic situations. In a world no longer polarized on East – west terms, demands for democratization have become more urgent than ever. African countries under uncompromising one-party rule have to adjust to the new political order in which openness in dealing with national issues through a free press, is a virtue. Only then can the press, as a national asset, remain a permanent feature of our new democratic practice. On the other hand, lip-service to multi-party constitutional changes must be avoided.

Two-Way Process of Accountability:

Good governance through accountability and full utilization of resources are major concerns as we usher into the 21st century. And is has always been: the harder the fight, the sweeter the victory. But accountability should be a two-way traffic. Both the electorate and those seeking election to public office must be accountable for whatever comes out.

For those aspiring to public office at any level, individual or personal accountability is crucial because the office belongs to the people and the person holding that office is a mere trustee of the people's civic power. The first qualification to public office should therefore be public credibility. This should imply that any leader at any level ahs to be screened in terms of moral integrity. Without accountability, the execution of national tasks can easily be impaired even with all the goodwill on earth.

Above all, once public confidence and credibility ceases to exist in those holding public office, the people's positive participation in the management of the affairs of state breaks down because a crisis of

confidence has occurred in the minds of people vis-à-vis the leadership. Institutions should therefore be established and the existing ones strengthened to promote accountability. These could take the form of Ombudsman or Code of Conduct Bureau or Audit Boards.

Democracy and human Rights:

Democracy cannot, however, be discussed without reference to human rights not can we meaningfully talk of human rights today without addressing ourselves to issues of democracy – the two are interrelated. After getting the Africa continent off the colonial chains,[12] the next liberation struggle that confronted citizens of independent states was to be free from modes of political domination and economic exploitation imposed on them by non-democratic systems of government.

The turning of human beings into mere speaking instruments is not only denial of their humanity, but a reduction of society into camps of the oppressors and the oppressed, and the exploiters and the exploited – none of whom can claim full humanity until society is liberated from all such human divisions. To be independent means "to stand up as a human being among other human beings: equal, proud, dignified intellectually alert, aware of your environment and in control of your future.[13]

Africans have not been able to do this because they are not only denied a say in how they are governed, but they are also burdened by poverty, ignorance and disease which dehumanize them. As such, repressive governments have faced people's resistance to misrules, corruption and lack of accountability.

We, therefore, should turn our struggle into struggle for personal freedom, justice, democracy, human rights and dignity of African people. Promotion and protection of human rights and basic freedoms are essential to fostering genuine popular participation and these should be built into national institutions or comparable legal codes.

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[12] The current dismantling apartheid in South African provide hope for a country where people of all races are equal.

[13] Finance, 16-31 August 1991. "Human Rights in Kenya: Political Leadership and Democracy in Africa". Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, p. 28-31.

Democratic Reform: Framework of Economic Reform:

While Africa is dismantling the undemocratic one party system, it is advisable and desirable to discuss the new form of democracy which would provide social order and create favourable conditions for economic reform and growth. The debt overhand like an albatross around the necks of many African countries makes it eminent that a mechanism should be devised soon to ensure that democratic transformation is not associated with disorder, crime, general sense of despair, economic collapse and deprivation.

Unless the whole exercise takes serious account of our own level of development and not based on conditions obtaining elsewhere, it could very well turn out to be ammunition for political, social and economic instability with minimal benefits, if at all, accruing to the very people whose cause we are trying to champion. Already orthodox structural adjustment programmes prescribed on derailed African economies have been associated, inter alia, with currency devaluation which makes it impossible for people to survive on their legitimate earnings and indeed, make importation of manufacturing equipment very expensive.

It is therefore not surprising that most African countries presently import more than then they manufacture, a trend which could stigmatize Africans as perpetual providers of raw materials condemned to occupy the lowest position in the new global economic configuration. This has certainly given impetus to the increasing move toward integration on the continent symbolized by the signing of the treaty establishing the African Economic Community (AEC).

But it must also be borne in mind that African economies have always had porous borders. The many economic dislocations, the prevalence of high interest rates, and the predatory nature of marketing boards have led to increased smuggling of goods. There is need to bring discipline in these areas. And whatever financial discipline that may be adopted must first of all include devising an appropriate institution framework for the effective control and efficient management of public funds, and expenditure priority areas should not include the military which has in the past enjoyed precedence over other sectors. Education, health and housing are some of the critical sectors that demand more resources.

Is Security Equal to Number of Bombs?

The recent events in the world demonstrates how impossible people's power cannot be put to stay even under the barrel of a gun. We no longer can talk of the security of the state by counting tanks, guns, missiles, bombs, troops and fighter planes because even those countries with superior numbers of these hardware have seen popular revolt occur at the very gun point. The question has been raised as to whether the military or police is for the people or the ruling class. The subjection of the people to extreme hardships of all forms resulting from poor governance and lack of accountability, compounded by the involvement of the security organs in politics have disillusioned many people and are primarily responsible for instigating people to call for pluralistic societies.

The security of the state lies and foremost in a stable and progressive society and the army and police provides protection from outside aggression and maintenance of law and order. The absurd comes in when these organs are turned against the very people they were instituted for. Of course, all individuals as citizens of any country have the right to choose their political inclination, but security organs as state institutions, should be kept out of politics and politics out of them. This should be a matter of democratic principle.

The Montesquieu Discipline:

The other challenge confronting African societies is about the Montesquieu doctrine of the separation of powers; the three arms of government – the executive, the legislature and judiciary – are expected to act as checks and balances resulting in limited government which cannot threaten liberty, as being one of the most important of the basic human rights. The Constitutional provisions made to secure a dispersion of government power will however reflect the system of government practices. For instance, the federal republics' provision will be at variant to other governments, as indeed, there are variations within the European countries, let alone contrasted with those of the United States. No one should therefore come up with a universal prescription as to how to go about with these constitutional provisions for respective societies are well placed to do so.

What is undeniable is that the montesquieu doctrine is universally acceptable, never mind the variations in degrees to which it is practiced. Failure to implement this is a precursor to constitutional abrogation or coup d'etat by those in authority whose power, can, for example be …shown by Salazar's continuous rule until his incapacity in 1968. [14]

During Salazar's Portugal, parties were illegal in opposition, but permitted to function for the immediate election period and in spite of the opposition having been granted unprecedented rights', the elections were not free. Obviously, this is undesirable as it makes the democratic debate irrelevant. In fact, constitutional provisions must also include clear stipulation of maximum allowable period for any one Head of State which should certainly not exceed two presidential elections.

The avowed aim of those who frame the constitutions in Africa should be to achieve a genuine and responsible parliamentary system whilst taking into account the special problems of their specific countries. The proliferation of political parties, to the point their numbers ridicule the very democratic principles, endangers the entire democratic revolution – more especially if these parties cut across ethnic or racial groups. This is another political minefield and should be carefully monitored and avoided.

The Second Wind of Change:

The second wind of change blowing across Africa provides the only hope of redemption from political, social and economic domination of one African by another. The democratization of all social institutions will usher Africa into an era where people are empowered to determine their own future through democratic election of transparent and accountable government and the respect for human rights will be a norm. The meeting of the Heads of Commonwealth Governments in Harare came at an opportuned time when multi-party democratic changes had already engulfed the continent.

Amongst their declarations, the Heads of Commonwealth Governments expressed their belief in … democracy and democratic processes and

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[14] Gordon Smith, Politics Western Europe, Third Edition, 1980, Heinenmann, p.105.

institutions which reflect national circumstances, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, just and honest government … and also … in liberty of the individual under the law, equal rights for all citizens regardless of gender, race, colour, creed or political belief, and in the individual's inalienable right to participate by means of free and democratic political process in framing the society in which he or she lives. [15]

If these declarations are anything to go by, then we are in for a smooth political transformation as governments become more responsive to popular demands setting the example for the rest of Africa. However, if what one believes in is not necessarily what he does largely because of adopting an opportunistic attitude, then this wind of change will define another phase of bloodshed and shock.

How to Avert Repeat of Past Experiences:

There is understandably a great temptation to look back, remember and reflect on the events which have brought about the current wave of change. We end up taking stock of bitter and painful past experiences which for once, encourage nobody to leave anything to change. Past records of many African countries show non-respect of the majority of human rights declarations which lie buried in the dust of history – unused and unread. As the Maxim goes, experience is the best teacher – we therefore must now use an acid test to see the credibility of our governments.

There is need however, to first of all ensure that the hallmark of a Constitution lies in the specific provisions made to secure a dispersion of government power – the executive, legislature and judiciary. One device that can be used to insulate the judiciary from political pressure is to have an independent Judicial Council[16] with complete supervisory and appointive powers.
The Governments must also legislate on human rights and that it is a proper thing for a constitution to embody a declaration of human rights and freedoms. One form this could take is inclusion of an extensive Bill

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[15] Financial Times, Monday, 21 October 1991, p. 3.
[16] For instance, the High Commissioner of the Judiciary could be set up consisting of Professional Judges and of Juries selected by the National Assembly.

of rights in the Constitution designed to protect individual liberties and act as Constitutional safeguard – providing protection against an over-zealous servant of state, if not against rulers themselves like the West Germany used to do.[17] And each country should establish a Code of Conduct Bureau as a supervisory body of the Government's conduct and the results of its findings should be submitted to the OAU and made public.

The Government rating should then be scored using the following indicators to evaluate its transparency, accountability and humane governance:

a. Period of tenure of office of the incumbent Head of State.
b. Estimated wealth of Head of State.
c. Number of competitive democratic presidential and parliamentary elections since independence.
d. Number of political detainees the country has.
e. Number of politically inspired murders of the present government
f. Extent of academic freedom as measured by closures of academic institutions.
g. Existence of freedom of Press and Speech.
h. Total expenditure on Security Organs as compared to Health and Education
i. Number of security personnel appointed to political position in the present government.
j. Number of peaceful demonstrators killed by the Police in the past five years and whether concerned police were brought before the Court of Justice.

This list is not exhaustive, but if indeed any one country is screened using it and has unfavourable responses on any two or three items, that is enough evidence to the contrary.

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[17] The West Germany Basic Law in Articles 1 to 9 provides for the basic freedom: of speech, assembly, association, religion, faith, choice of trade to profession, petition, movement and of asylum. It also gives security to the home, family and persona s well as granting equality before the law, secrecy of the mail, protection of property (or just compensation) – protection of inheritance rights, security of citizenship. In Article 21, the free formation of political parties is guaranteed – as long as they respect the democratic order. The Constitutional Court has a final jurisdiction in all these matters. See Gordon Smith, Political in Western Europe, Third Edition, Heinemann, p. 123.

Presentation

By
Daniel Muchiwa Lisulo S. C.

Introduction:

Many people do not appreciate always that the study of government is one of the most difficult fields of scientific study. The subject matter is vast both in space and time. The phenomena are more intricate than those in natural sciences for the simple reason that they are influenced by a far greater number of variables. Problems arise from the impossibility of maintaining intellectual neutrality in the analysis of political problems. There is, for example, the emotional bias from which human intellect is not free and cannot be eradicated. Political prejudice can impair the judgement of an individual (whether he realize it or not) and invariably affects both his line of thought and his conclusions. As an English philosopher once remarked, the reasons that students of government do not more frequently arrive at the truth is that they do not wish to. "All to often they are more zealous in fitting the facts to their own mental stereo- types than in rigidly following the path that leads to an impartial judgement".

The handicap that makes it difficult to study politics and government is the impossibility of measuring with reasonable accuracy the strength or otherwise of the facts and forces which one has to deal with. At least the astronomer and the chemist have mechanical aids which a student of politics and government does not have.

Having no such technical aids, one is forced to substitute his own appraisal of facts and forces *and one which carries his methodology back to where that of the natural scientist was in the time of Copernicus.*

Sometime in the past it was customary for writers of books on Political Science to begin with Aristotelian classification of governments into three types: monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. This classification was quantitative in that it was based on the number of persons who did

the governing. An Aristotle of today would find the ancient classification not only inadequate but also baffling.

I will not therefore attempt to define democracy. This is so because there are all sorts of "democracies" in endless differentiations, federal and unitary, presidential and parliamentary, autocratic and popular.

Suffice to say that a democratic state should, inter alia, tolerate the free interplay of political parties and free press and observe the rule of law and fundamental human rights.

Historical Background:

Zambia, which is a former British Protectorate is a land locked country in the heart of Southern/Central Africa. Its geographical local lies in South of the Equator between latitudes 8^0 and 18^0 and longitudes 22^0E and 33^0E. It is surrounded by Malawi, Tanzania and Zaire. It has a population of 8 million people and its capital Lusaka has a population of over 1 million people.

Before Europeans came to colonize Zambia, there were a number of kingdoms such as the Kingdom of Kazambe, the Bemba Kingdom and the Lozi kingdom. Each king had a capital of his own and a court (Kuta) from which he ruled through specially appointed chiefs. All these kingdoms were feudal.

The European penetration began at the end of the 18th Century when a Portuguese governor from Mozambique, Dr. Lacerda led an expedition to the Northern part of the country. Dr. David Livingstone, a Scottish missionary and explorer traveled sometime in 1851 to the Upper Zambezi through the western province of Zambia and on his second mission in 1855 "discovered" the Victoria Falls (known locally as Musi-O-Tunya (the smoke that thunders). During the same period, Arab slave traders from East Africa were active in the country. Cecil John Rhodes, after whom the country was named as Northern Rhodesia, formed the British South Africa Company which was granted a Royal Charter in 1889 to promote trade, commerce and administration in the region, under the supervision of the British High Commissioner for South Africa.

This Company was by the said charter allowed to administer Northern Rhodesia for a Period of 25 years. The charter was extended for another 10 years. In 1891, British control was extended to "Bartoseland" now Western Province of Zambia. By the Bartose Concession of 1900 entered into between the Paramount Chief of the Lozi and the British South Africa Chartered Company, the company acquired trading and mineral rights in return for an annual subsidy and a guarantee for the Lozi Paramount Chief's constitutional powers. The Orders in Council of 1899 and 1900 provided a firm basis for the administration of the country by the British South African Company, while the 1911 Order in Council promulgated the Protectorate of Northern Rhodesia. The British Government assumed responsibility of administering the country in April 1924 after consultation with the Directors of British South Africa Company. In exchange for surrendering to the British Government, the administration of both Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and the title to the land, the British South Africa Company received a compensation of £3,750,000 from, the British Government.

African nationalism began about 1930 through welfare societies or associations. These welfare societies which sprung up in many urban towns of the country handled matters or issues that pertained the welfare of their members. The societies conveyed recommendations to the colonial authorizes through their representatives who sat on consultative municipal committees. These societies played important roles in uniting Africans in the towns.

Then came the Second World War. Africans from Northern Rhodesia like in other African colonies fought on the side of British. Resistance to colonialism on the part of the Africans increased in the war years because of the exposure to international politics. It assumed various forms. There were movements by the workers and peasants. The African Trade Union Congress of Northern Rhodesia which united the major workers' union was established in 1952. A Federation of Africa Welfare Societies was established in 1946, and in 1948, it was reorganized into a Congress of Northern Rhodesia, renamed African National Congress of Northern Rhodesia in 1951.

There were initial attempts before the Second World War by white settlers to form the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. These

attempts were abandoned by the British Government firstly due to opposition by Africans and secondly due to a British Government Commission headed by Lord Bledislore, who concluded that such a merger was undesirable. After the Second World War, the white settlers raised the merger issue again and this time very vigorously.

This time, the British Government ignored the wish of the Africans and the Constitution of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland came into force on 3 September 1953.

The dissolution of the Federation became the principal demand of the Africans and political struggle was intensified. The British Government sent a special commission to the Federation to study the people's attitude to the merger of the three countries. After three months of hard work, the commission presented a report which admitted that in both Nyasaland and the two Rhodesias, the Africans were against the Federation.

The British Government conduced talks on constitutional changes throughout 1961-62. The pressure of public opinion, the insurrection in the country, the changes in Africa and in the international situation in general forced the British Government to make concessions to the Africans.

Finally, a conference of representatives from Britain, the Federation and both Northern and Southern Rhodesia, was held in Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe) from June 29 – July 3, 1963.

 It was agreed to dissolve the Federation as of 31 December 1963. "Thus, the history of the Federation ended in the same place where it was established 15 years earlier. The British Parliament's decision confirming the resolution was made on 17 December 1963, a week after the dissolution of the Federal Parliament and two weeks before the official demise of the Federation".

During all the decades of the British South African Company occupation and the colonial rule, the Africans were never given a chance to participate in the running of affairs of their own country. Very little was done in the form of education. All that the colonial

authorities were interested in, was to educate the limited manpower to a level they required in their day to day administration and exploitation of the country.

They needed clerks, messengers, interpreters and teachers just to meet the requirements of colonial administration. All those who were in school were carefully scrutinized and those who appeared to be non-conformist were never given chances to join the civil service. Further, the colonial authorities enforced a mild form of apartheid in all walks of life. White supremacy was applied in a subtle manner and Africans were made to believe that democracy, the rule of and human rights were the prerogatives of the white men and the role an African could play was to work for his white master. His movements were restricted within the reserved rural areas and he could not participate in commerce, in towns because he needed permission to leave the reserves to come into the town and the form of that authority was that he had to show that he had been offered employment in town.

Before independence, there was a religious sect called Lumpa Church, which was founded by a self-styled Prophetess, Alice Lenshina Mulenga. This sect created problems in the Northern Province of the country which made the colonial Governor declare a state of emergency to contend the disturbance, so that when independence was proclaimed, the state of emergency was already in force, and this state of emergency continued to be in force until 9 November this year.

On 20 and 21 January 1964, Northern Rhodesia held her first general election in her history. The United National Independence party (UNIP) won 55 seats out of 75 seats in the Legislative Assembly. And on 24 October 1964, the country was proclaimed an independent Republic within the Commonwealth of Nations. This was the first time the Africans were exposed to democratic rule, the rule of law and human rights.

First Republic – 24 October 1964 – 13 December 1972:

The Independence Constitution of Zambia contained provisions tha secured the protection of fundamental human rights. The rights were elaborate and impressive. Powers and functions of the Executive and Legislative were provided for in clear terms while the independence of the judiciary was guaranteed.

In addition to the ruling Party, UNIP, there were other political parties, such as the African National Congress (ANC), which by law and the constitution were allowed to operate.

During the first few years of the First Republic, democracy seemed to be on the right course, though on limited scale because of continued existence of the state of emergence and lack of democratic experience and practice by those in corridors of power.

Differences in matters relating to the national policies and the speed of implementation of such policies began to surface within UNIP. These differences led to the late Mr. Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe breaking away from the ruling party (UNIP), and forming a new party called United Progressive Party (UPP)> The new party which had strong base in Copperbelt, Luapula and Northern Provinces went all out to organize and recruit membership. The popularity and the challenge UPP gave to the ruling party raised eye brows within government circles. And under cover of the state of emergency, UPP was proscribed and declared an illegal organization and most of its leaders were detained without trial. During the course of their detention, some of them were subjected to various forms of torture and degrading treatment.

Another party was formed called United Party (UP) by the late Mr. Nalumion Mundia after he broke away from UNIP. This party had its base in Western, North – Western and Copperbelt Provinces. Like UPP, it was domed to failure. The government, using its powers under the state of emergency, banned UP and arrested some of its leaders and had them detained without trial. The leaders of UP were again subjected, like most detainees, to all forms of torture while in detention.

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The banning of these political parties showed that UNIP as a ruling party under Dr. Kenneth David Kaunda, was not prepared to co-exist with other political parties which had different approach to national and international issues. This intolerance, high handedness and lack of accommodation laid basis for the destruction of democratic principles and process.

Frightened by opposition which was beginning to surface in the open in a formidable way, UNIP leadership began to entertain ideas of introducing one party system in order to remain in power. Instead of holding a referendum to determine whether or not Zambians wanted to change from plural politics to single party system, UNIP cabinet decided, out of desperation and without mandate from the people, to declare that Zambia was going to be a one party state. Accordingly, on 25 February 1972, President Kaunda announced at the press conference that "the Government had decided that Zambia shall become a one party participatory democracy and that practical steps should be taken to implement the decision". At the said press conference, the President announced the appointment of a 20 member national commission to "consider changes in the Constitution of the Republic, the practices and procedures of the Government and the Constitution of the United National Independence Party (UNIP) necessary to bring about the establishment of a one-party participatory democracy in Zambia." This decision dealt a death knell to democracy.

The Commission whose chairman was Mr. M. Mainza Chona and I was a member, agreed unanimously that as it was dealing with such a crucial national issue, it was imperative that supreme power of decision making should be vested in the Zambian people and therefore it was desirable to give ample opportunity to as many Zambian citizens as possible to enable them to express their views on this matter either orally or in writing.

It was obvious from the oral and written submissions given by members of the public that they did not favour a single party system. There were some commissioners who were apprehensive of the introduction of one-party system without the mandate of the people and these commissioners felt that a very comprehensive system of checks should be introduced and entrenched in the Second Republic to forestall autocratic and undemocratic tendencies.

The Commission toured the entire country from 14 March to 16 June 1972, and submitted its report to the President on 15 October 1972.

The Commission made certain recommendations, which if they were accepted, possibly or probably, democracy could have survived in the Second Republic. For instance, the commission recommended that the President should have specified executive powers and that his term of office be five years and that he be eligible to stand for a second term of five years only.

The effect of the recommendations of the Commission would have been that some executive powers would be exercised by the Prime Minister and all presidential appointments would be subject to approval by either Parliament or some other organs of the party. This was meant to ensure against nepotism, favouritism and abuse of office and that only the best men and women would hold public office.

The best recommendations of the Commission were rejected by the Government. The net result was that the President was given all the executive powers and was eligible to stand as a president as many times as he wished. He was given the powers not only to create public offices in the Republic and the Party, but also to appoint literally everyone from the Secretary General of the Party (Vice President) through to the Prime Minister and down to the humble civil servant and other officers in the public service.

One man dictatorship and cult of personality was thereby introduced in the body politic and developed to such a degree that very few people and for that matter very courageous ones indeed, were able to question government actions. Everyone, especially those in the corridors of power had either to sing and join the chorus of endless praise or find themselves in the gutter.

Second Republic: 13 Dece3mber 1972 – 17 December 1990:

The form which the one-party state was to take in Zambia reflected itself well in advance by the method adopted to bring it about. Contrary to pronouncements made by its champions and defenders that the coming of Zambia's one-party state was necessitated by pressure from the people, there is need to stress that from the very beginning that the idea was mooted at a meeting of the cabinet of the Republic chaired by its President, real involvement of the people in the decision-making process to determine the course of the nation has always been conveniently avoided. It is probably only in Zambia where the monopoly rule of one party came about as a result of a cabinet meeting deciding that for purposes of legitimacy, a commission of inquiry should gather evidence from all corners of the country regarding the type of one party rule desired by the people. No referendum, as I have already indicated above, was conducted and all in all, the people were not at all consulted and this was in apprehension of things to come when the system was in place. For the entire life of the Second Republic which lasted for eighteen years and four days, it was not always that government decisions reflected public opinion, desire and interests of Zambians as well as national honour.

Officially, the system was designated one party participatory democracy, but in essence and practice, it was neither participatory nor democratic. By late seventies, one party participatory democracy had degenerated into one man participatory democracy with President Kaunda as the central domino. In any case, history has now indisputably proved that a one party state is inherently dictatorial and it would therefore be a blatant contradiction in terms to refer to any one party monopoly rule as democratic. Further, any genuine democracy by its very nature, presupposes free participation of the people, including participation of the weakest in the society.

As the Second Republic became more entrenched, the absence of democracy became monstrously pronounced. Article 4 of the 1973 Constitution of Zambia pronounced the demise of all other organizations with different political views and the only political party

allowed to operate was the ruling United National Independence Party (UNIP). UNIP was supreme in all spheres of operations in public affairs in the land and its supremacy was recognized and legitimized in the conduct of state affairs in Zambia. The UNIP's central executive called the central committee was made the policy making body of the country while cabinet comprising of ministers was there to oversee the implementation of central committee decisions.

In other words, the thinking was that the central committee members were the brains whereas the cabinet members were the tools of the central committee. The sad side of this arrangements is that while the majority of cabinet ministers could legitimately and genuinely lay claim to have been popularly elected by their constituents, the same could not be said of the members of the central committee though, in theory, there were elections to be conducted periodically leading to membership of the central committee, in reality no such elections were ever allowed to take place but instead the President of the Party and at the same of the Republic always presented a list containing names of those persons he proposed should be central committee members at a particular time and not even for once was any person on the official list turned down, the list presented by the party and the Republican President, by putting himself forward as a candidate acting on the strength of the UNIP constitution, which provided room for such a move, was ostracized and treated as "anti-party" and "dissent" or even a "subversive element". It is noteworthy that no single person succeeded during the whole life of the Second Republic in becoming a member of the central committee who was originally not on the President's official list. It was a taboo to challenge the incumbent President for the Presidency of the Party and of the Republic. Constitutionally and theoretically, there was provision for that type of contest. The only time citizens tried to put into effect what was in the constitution by declaring their candidacy for the Presidency was in 1978 when a Lusaka businessman, Robert Chiluwe, and two former leaders of defunct opposition parties, Messrs. Henry Nwaanga Nkumbula and Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe picked up the necessary courage for the onerous task. The UNIP constitution was thereafter changed and manipulated in such a way that it became virtually impossible for anyone to contest for the number one position in the end.

As if change of the UNIP constitution was not enough, all organs of the party were mobilized to demand for the adoption of one person as the party's sole candidate. In all the political saga, the people were not consulted but reduced merely to the role of spectators. The three candidates were greatly humiliated. From that time, no one ever attempted to stand for Presidency because it was not only a folly, but also an exercise in futility.

Parliament comprised only members of UNIP toeing the ruling party's line. Any aspirant to Parliament, who was in the slightest, not in tune with party policies or appeared not to be loyal to the leadership was vetted by the party's Central Committee and was therefore rendered ineligible to stand for election, however popular he may have been among his constituents.

The vetting system brought about a lot of despondency, frustration and discontent because of the arbitrary manner in which it was used. Originally, the system of vetting was intended to help the party weed out would-be candidates with past criminal records and others with records of a criminal nature who would doubtlessly tarnish the image of Zambia's Parliament and hence that of the Republic. As time passed, however, vetting was turned into a vicious and malicious weapon by those in power and in some cases by individual members of the central committee to settle old scores and to punish individuals on matters purely personal and in most case petty and frivolous.

According to the ruling party's constitution, the ultimate objective was in the realization of "Humanism through Socialism". To hold public office, one had to express loyalty to the leadership and adherence to humanism. What this meant was that anti-humanists and anti-socialists including those whose socialism was more to the left than that preached by the powers that be, could not exercise their political rights in their country. This obviously was a negation of elementary principles of democracy.

Third Republic:

The people of Zambia put up determined resistance to one party rule from its inception to its demise; in other words, the basis for change had always been there. There was no time when there were no voices of

dissent being raised both within the corridors of power and outside them. What was missing were conditions for change because even if the basis for change is there, it cannot mature if the conditions are absent. With the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, which was sacrosanct and the source of inspiration for most one party regimes in Africa, the inevitable was due to follow. In Zambia, where the seeds for democracy were planted and were only waiting for the right time to sprout, once the movement for change was set in motion, it became irreversible.

Serious demands for a new constitution to usher in the Third Republic where political pluralism would be the order of the day started being made in late 1989. A lot of work was done among the people for pluralist ideas to take root. The consequence of the food riots of 25-30 June 1990, which were followed by the attempted coup of 30 June 1990, was that the UNIP government "lost the mandate from heaven" as the Chinese would put it and it was just a matter of time before meaningful change would come. All these events provided solid ground fro the birth on July 20 –21 1990 of a pressure group, the Movement for Multi Party Democracy (MMD) with a permanent secretariat and office-bearers to spearhead the change. On 17th December, 1990 the notorious Article 4 of the Constitution of Zambia was repealed and new political parties were by law allowed to operate. As at 31st October, 1991 when the first multi-party elections were held for over twenty years, there were fifteen political parties in the country with varying degrees of seriousness. A new face is at government house and it remains to be seen if that face will uphold democratic principles, the rule of law and fundamental human rights during its tenure of office. However, the middle class and the masses who were the principal actors in the process of bringing about change will not allow to be taken for granted again.

Conclusion:

One major obstacle to democracy, I believe, may arise from economic problems. Voters can easily change their minds if democracy brings only tougher times. The majority of the people clamour for political change not because of ideological niceties, but because they expect that the assumed change would bring about some economic benefits. An

ordinary man in the street will go along with any political system that helps to improve his quality of life.

In Zambia, the majority of the people have great expectations and they honestly believe that the change for the better, in economic terms, will be realized, sooner than later. They voted for a change hoping that all their economic problems will be a thing of the past. If there is no change for the better, they will begin agitating for that change and they will adopt the same tactics they used to change the previous government.

There is yet another obstacle to democracy. This is the absence of an independent, enlightened and prosperous middle class.

Since people in any given society have different views and conflicting interests, democracy, in my humble opinion, needs a wide spectrum of independent institutions which can represent such views and interests. In this regard, I have in mind political parties, trade unions professional organizations and various pressure groups. It is this array of voluntary associations or groups which constitute the middle class. If a strong and prosperous middle class does not exist or is weak, the people will not be strong enough to use the system to their advantage or for that matter, call politicians to account for their acts of commission or omission. This is why one party states, more often than not, take over interest associations and use them to enforce the will of the ruling clique. In some undemocratic societies, the middle class survive and in others it is crushed.

And, where democracy begins without the involvement and participation of these various interest groups, it may not survive. In Zambia, the middle class was weak at the time of independence and that is the reason why one party rule was not politically challenged. If the middle class was powerful and vigilant, it should have challenged the introduction of one party system even in the Courts of Law. I had discussed with the opposition the unconstitutionality of the introduction of one party system. The opposition agreed that it would challenge the decision of the ruling party in the High Court, and I prepared draft documents to this effect. The opposition, for some reasons unknown to me chickened off at the last minute.

It will be noted that in Zambia the middle class was not crushed during the Second Republic. Instead, it grew to a formidable force that was able to challenge the one man dictatorship, the existence of the State of emergency not withstanding.

Democracy usually survives not because politicians mean well but because people are strong and vigilant enough to protect their rights. They can only do so if they are well organized and led by a fearless and enlightened middle class. There is not revolution or meaningful change in the body politic that can be brought about by all the people acting together in unison without capable leadership. If the people do it on their own it will invariably end up in a riot. The changes are normally conceived by one person or a group of persons and ideas for such a change are sold to the majority of the people. The people on the other hand may not embrace such ideas unless they are mentally and physically ready to take up the challenge. Leadership therefore is key to the success of democracy. Even in the animal Kingdom, in order to maintain social order, leadership is required. The leadership I am thinking about is that type of leadership which is intellectually and professionally competent. Africa has suffered fro years and will continue to suffer unless it rids itself of mediocre leadership. Most of the Leadership Africa has produced in the past four decades leaves much to be desired. Modern governments are complex human organizations and therefore require men and women capable not only of intellectual penetration but also capable of knowing what ought to be done when it ought to be done.

Political parties are a necessity in a democratic society. They are conduits through which people channel their wishes and demands. It is not possible in modern times to have a democratic society without political parties. Even in the Athenian (direct) democracy, there were group interests (parties). There were those who came from the valley and those who came form the hills and at times their interest were at variance. There is need therefore for more political parties in a democratic society to cater for different view points and conflicting interests. One party system cannot adequately look after conflict of interests more so when such interests are of a fundamental nature. This is the Zambia experience.

The issue as to whether there should be a limit to the number of political parties that should be allowed to operate is debatable. Limiting the number of parties by statue or decree, in my opinion, is undemocratic. I believe that people should be allowed do form as any political parties party is an expensive exercise by any standard and those parties which will not appeal to the masses will naturally disappear from the political scene and political equilibrium will thereby the maintained.

I pointed our about that in Zambia as at 31st October 1991 when the elections took place there were 15 registered political parties. Out of these parties only two, namely, Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) and United National Independence Party (UNIP) were able to put up Presidential candidates. All these parties were even unable to put forward candidates for Parliament. There is now utter confusion in their ranks and I believe that most of them will die a natural death. There is a possibility that these parties will band together and constitute themselves into a third force.

Zambia is now a multi-party society. There are some questions that are still to be considered. One such question is whether or not the associations which already exist such as trade unions, professional and business groups and so on will insist on their rights to pursue their interests independently even if most of their members continue to support the majority party.

Another question is whether or not those whose interests are not represented at all will begin organizing and ensure that their voice is heard.

Annexure I

Terms of Reference
Study Of The Processes of Transition To Democracy in Africa

Objective:

The objective of the study is to undertake an analytical assessment of various approaches to the process of transition to democracy in Africa, including national conferences, with a view to identifying the critical requirements for negotiating, managing and monitoring the successful completion of such processes.

The recommendations of the study shall be considered at an International Conference to be organized in Benin by the Africa Leadership Forum (ALF) and co-sponsored by the Global Coalition for Africa (GCA). This Conference shall be attended by African leaders and individuals with experience in transition process, experts, and representatives of donor countries and institutions. This conference will aim at developing an international consensus on measures to be taken in Africa and by the international community to ensure effective and sustainable democracy in Africa.

Specific Tasks To Be Carried Out By The
Consultants:

1. The consultants shall undertake a comprehensive analysis, including:

    a. a concise study of the origins, processes, characteristics and parameters of National Conferences held since 1990 or currently under preparation in several African countries as well as other transition mechanisms to democracy in relevant African countries. The salient features could usefully be presented in tabular form focusing on issues of sovereignty; constitutions; economic issues; question of national reconciliation and cohesion; possibility for politicians and members of past governments to hold future public office;

time frame of preparations for national conference; selection of participants and chairman of national conference; designation of an interim government; organization of elections; the role of external bodies, if any, etc.

b. The consultants shall also present an assessment of the experience gained and identify whether there may be elements of common concern and applicability that may serve as lessons for other countries about to embark on similar undertakings.

c. The consultants should broadly consider the factors which have differentiated the various transitional approaches pursued by African countries.

d. The consultants shall further undertake an ex-post assessment and evaluation of the transition processes through interviews with individuals in countries where the process has been completed or reached an advanced stage.

e. The consultants shall suggest guiding principles by which the process and the end product of a transition could be gauged.

f. The study shall also dwell on the role and importance of organized structures of counter power as a means of ensuring the durability of emerging democratic governments.

2. Geographical Scope of the Study:

Countries to be included in the study may comprise the following: Algeria, Benin, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, South Africa, Togo, Uganda, Zaire, Zambia.

Manpower and Qualification Requirements:

It is envisaged that the study will be carried out by four African experts, two Francophones and two Anglophones for a total of 12 m/m.

a. Two political scientists – (one to serve as team leader);
b. Two political economists.

Organizing The Study and Time Table:

The consultants should commence the study not later than January 2, 1992 for a period of 3 months. The consultants' report should be submitted in final version by March 31, 1992. The reports shall then be translated into either French and English depending on the language of submission.

ALF and GCA will provide overall supervision of the study and guidance as appropriate.

It will therefore be desirable that a preliminary draft of the report be made available to ALF and GCA for comments by March 15, 1992. The preliminary draft can be submitted in any of the two required languages. ALF and GCA should discuss their comments and suggestions with the consultants within 7 days. The date and venue of the meetings with the consultants for both briefing and discussing the preliminary report will be mutually agreed.

The consultants will be requested to present their report at the Conference referred to in section I above.

Budget and Conditions of Service:

The total cost of the study and the follow-up conference is estimated at US$ 150,000.

Annexure II

List of Participants

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Annexure III

Background Note on the Africa Leadership Forum

Despite over a quarter of a century of political independence, Africa's aspirations and hopes remain today largely unfulfilled. This has not been, however, a period of unmitigated failure in the history of the continent. There have been successes in education, public health, import substitution industries, and in the continuing process of de-colonization. The problems of development, peace and security, the health of the world economy, and improving the environment are interrelated global issues, as they do not admit of piecemeal solutions.

And yet all countries find that in the absence of true global cooperation, they have to tackle particular aspects of them. At the national as well as the regional level in Africa today, the inadequacy of information, data, and resources further complicates an already daunting problematic state of affairs.

African leaders have frequently come to leadership positions with limited experience. Though most of them have often battled on, confronting their awesome problems of development and nation-building essentially not only unprepared but unaided, their efforts have been, at best, only a qualified success.

It is quite clear therefore that Africa cannot afford to continue its journey with ill-prepared and unassisted leaders. Those on whom the burden of leadership will fall in future must fully comprehend the nature of their responsibilities, duties, and obligations. In other words, they must be given all the necessary exposure and carefully planned preparation to be able to meet the challenges that they will inevitably face.

This new task is all the more apparent when one considers the level of preparedness of our leaders of tomorrow who are clearly not bothered by anything other than the pursuit of their professional careers. They have little time to devote neither to acquiring a comprehensive knowledge of their own countries and their region nor of the cultures of their diverse peoples. They neither have the time to learn about and

understand the actions taken by their present leaders where they do not impinge on their own areas of expertise.

Most young potential leaders have focused primarily on single issues, lacking time to look at wider, critical regional and world challenges. The time for comprehensive study and reflection, for sharing experiences with persons inside, let alone outside their countries, region, and field of concentration is very limited. Opportunities for such detached discussions and contemplation are even rarer.

This problem is however not helped by the dearth of private institutions in Africa that are devoted to preparing potential leaders with that essential global outlook, which will enable them to cooperate within and across national, regional, and institutional boundaries. Furthermore, it has become increasingly difficult, if not impossible, in many African countries to gain access to relevant and timely information on most national, regional, and global issues.

Experience in and out of Government and in international forum bears out this situation, one that must definitely be addressed and remedied. One solution in this regard is to launch the "Africa Leadership Forum", and to charge it with the task of conducting a series of meetings which may be national, sub-regional, regional and international in dimension and may vary in duration. The purpose will be to enhance the knowledge and awareness of current and young, potential African leaders, placing special emphasis on diagnosing apparent failures of the past; on understanding multiple dimensions and complex interrelations of local, national, regional, and global problems; and on seeking out appropriate solutions.

Objectives

The purpose of the forum is to encourage a thorough diagnosis, broad understanding, and an informed search for solutions to local, regional and global problems, taking full account of their interrelationships and mutual consequences.

To that end, the Forum will develop, organize and support programmes for the training of young and promising Africans with leadership potential so as to expose them to the demands, duties and obligations of leadership positions and to prepare them systematically for assuming higher responsibilities and meeting the challenges of an interdependent world.

The Forum will also endeavour to generate greater understanding and enhance the knowledge and awareness of development and social problems, within a global context, among young, potential leaders from all sectors of society, cutting across national, regional, continental, professional and institutional borders. This may foster close and enduring relationship among participants, relationships promoting life-long association and cooperation.

Furthermore, the Forum will support and encourage the informed search for appropriate and effective solutions to local and regional African problems and to global problems from an African perspective – within the framework of global interdependence. This will nevertheless include the consideration of phased action programmes, which can be initiated by various countries, sub-regions and institutions in the continent.

In addition, there will be specific weekend seminars organized as Farm-House Dialogues to be held quarterly.