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Regional Overview of the Impact of Failures of Accountability on Poor People

Ahmed Mohiddin

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AHMED MOHIDDIN

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PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

Failures of accountability have been a major factor in the occurrences of violent conflicts, persistent insecurity and instability, and thus a deterrence to sustainable human development and the eradication of poverty in Africa. Eradication of poverty depends on economic growth with equity--- human development. And this in turn depends on the appropriate policy options. Human development and the supportive policy options can typically take place in an environment of peace, security and stability

Sustainable peace is unlikely to be achieved in a situation of persistent pervasive poverty or gross social and economic inequalities. Peace is likely to prevail in a situation where people enjoy a reasonable social and economic well being. And only within the context of sustainable human development –enhancement of freedom of choice -- can sustainable peace prevail. Peace and development are intiricately related and mutually supportive issues. One cannot be achieved in the absence of the other.

The poor and disadvantaged groups are the hardest hit victims of accountability failures. Included in the disadvantaged groups are: the disabled people; those afflicted with HIV/AIDS; women and children; asylum seekers, refugees and internally displaced people; ethnic and religious minorities. These people depend almost entirely on the decisions of government for protection and basic social services; and for some the possibilities of employment. Ironically, it is due to the behaviour --- accountability failures---of those in charge of governance that these people find themselves in the situation they are

Articulation of the interests of the poor people and disadvantaged groups, the eradication of poverty and the promotion of human development are more likely to take place in an environment of good governance. There are several components of good governance. They consist of institutions, principles and mechanisms supportive of governance. Good governance is the consequence of deliberate policy options. It is the manner in which the institutions, principles and mechanisms of governance are utilized by those in charge of the governance processes that may constitute good or bad governance. Accountability is a major component of good governance. The components of good governance are inter-dependent and mutually supportive. Weakness or dysfunctionality in one component is likely to affect the operation of the other components. Thus, the efficacy of accountability of one component is bound to be affected by the workings of the other components.

As an empowering process good governance enhances the capabilities ---and the opportunities-- of the poor people and disadvantaged groups to improve their socio-economic conditions, welfare and well-being in general. When empowered to make decisions affecting their lives and livelihood they will moreover gain the self-confidence and self-esteem to engage themselves in various creative and productive activities in pursuit of their interests and profits, supporting their famuilies thus contributing to the creation of wealth and employment and the promotion of human development. As human development becomes more sustainable with the support of good governance, incrementally more poor people and disadvantaged groups would participate in the development and democratic

processes, making them confident stakeholders in the governance system. And as beneficiaries of the system they are more likley to be its ardent supporters.

Good governance and sustainable development are indivisible.

That is the lesson of all our effort and experiences, from Africa to Asia to Latin America. Without good governance –without the rule of law, predictable administration, legitimate power, and responsive regulation—not amount of funding, no amount of charity will set us on the patch to prosperity...

...Good governance will give every citizen, young or old, man or woman, a real and lasting stake in the future of his or her societies –politically, economically and socially. With that stake in their minds and hearts, there are no limits to what the peoples of your countries can achieve.

Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, *Inaugural Address*, Report of International Conference on **Governance for Sustainable Growth and Equity**, UN, New York, 28-30 July 1997, pp.124-5

Failures in accountability are in effect a breakdown of the institutions of governance---consequences of bad governance. Hence any attempts to strengthen the institutions of governance and ensuring the observance of accountability must take into account the workings of the other components of good governance. For the purposes of this paper it would therefore be helpful to have a sound conceptual grasp of the major components of good governance. This would enhance our understanding of the causes of accountability falilures and their impact on the poor, as well as providing us with knowledge and insights into the best and most effective ways of strengthening the instutions of governance and ensuring the observance of accountability.

This paper provides a regional overview of the impact on the poor people and disadvantaged groups of the failures of accountability of institutions of governance, and the different kinds of actions taken and policy options discussed in order to improve accountability. Part Two of the paper presents a theoretical framework within which interests of the poor and disadvantaged people could be reflected in the decision-making processes, ensure accountability of the institutions of governance, the promotion of sustainable human development and the eradication of poverty. Good governance is a key factor in the creation of the enabling environment of peace, security, the rule of law, legitimacy and stability in which the creation of wealth, promotion of sustainable human development and eradication of poverty can take place. Accountability is an integral component of good governance.

Part Three of the paper focuses on the impacts of accountability failures on poor and disadvantaged peoples in Africa. It identifies the types of accountability failures and the most common accountability failures, analysis of their major underlying reasons and their consequences on societies and economies in African countries. Part Four reviews the various measures taken to enhance accountability of the institutions and mechanisms of governance. The evolution of a global and African consensus on the importance of peace, security and good governance as precondition for human development and the eradication of poverty is discussed in Part Five. The paper concludes with a brief discussion on the 'virtuous circle' of good governance creating the enabling environment for the promotion of human development and the eradication of poverty, which in turn reinforces the importance of good governance.

PART TWO

3

GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Governance is the art and skill of utilizing political or collective power for the management of public affairs. Art and skills are the products of knowledge, information, education, culture, experience, motivations, comopetence and commitment to goals. Acquisition of collective or political power could be by force or violence, as in a military coup, or through constitutional and peaceful means, such as democratic elections. Governance is conducted by a people within institutions and may be guided by legal and ethical principles, cultural and traditional values, and inspired by political, religious and ideological considerations.

The Major Components of Governance
For our purposes it would be useful to categorise these principles and institutions and group them in meaningful clusters in terms of their inter-related functions. Each one of them plays an important role in sustaining the governance process, but not necessarily in ensuring good governance. Working together and in deference to the ethical, cultural and traditional values of the people, and in support of the general welfare of the people they are conducive to good governance. This typically happens when these principles are respected and the institutions belong to the people, are run and managed by the people and for benefit of the people. Accountability is a pervasive theme that permeates all the institutions of governance.

Constitutional
These components provide the legal and political framework for the empowerment of the people to demand and expect accountability in the performance of duties and the delivery of services of those entrusted with such tasks. The constitution is the source of authority and legitimacy for all major governance actors. It inserts the principles of the rule of law, due process of law, the separation of powers, and provides for the independence of the judiciary. It defines the process by which people seeking power or leadership could be elected, and creates the institutional mechanisms (electoral commissions) responsible for ensuring the free and fair conduct of elections. Some African countries have constitutions that empower the electorate to recall a member of Parliament who has reneged on his/her promises, or not performed as expected.

The Constitution provides the checks and balances within the entire range of the governance processes, embracing the political, administrative, economic and civic structures of governance. It facilitates and regulates relationships in society, providing a consistent, accountable and transparent framework for the conduct of economic, social and political activities. As it assures the protection of fundamental freedoms and human rights, and empowers citizens----all citizens, the very rich and the very poor--- to challenge and call to account the actions of governments and their agents, the constitution is the basic foundation for good governance.

Democracy
Democracy is a system of governance in which people effectively participate in the decision-making processes that affect their lives and livelihood. Democracy ensures equality and inclusiveness for all the people ---the very rich and the very poor---to participate in public affairs irrespective of race, colour, ethnicity, economic status, region or religion. It enables people to make **"their choice"** of **"their rulers"** and, if need be, change or remove them. One of the greatest values of democracy is that it facilitates and encourages the expression of different points of views, ideas, opinions, principles, and alternative ways of doing things. In this way errors or inadequacies in policies can be identified and exposed before it is too late. Because it empowers the individual whose vote is critical

in determining the fate of governments and politicians during periodic elections, democracy prevents extreme poverty, famine and other human-created social and economic disasters. Democracy ensures accountability in the exercise of power and authority.

Indeed, the working of democracy and of political rights can even help to prevent famines and other economic disasters. Authoritarian rulers, who are themselves rarely affected by famine (or other such calamities), tend to lack the incentives to take timely preventive measures to avert famines and other such catastrophes. It is not surprising that no famines has ever taken place in the history of the world in a functioning democracy---be it economically rich (as in contemporary Western Europe or North America) or relatively poor (as in postindependence India, or Botswana...Famines have tended to occur in colonial territories governed by rulers from elsewhere (as in British India or in an Ireland administered by alienated English rulers), or Chine during 1958-1961, or Cambodia in the 1970s), or in military dictatorships (as in Ethiopia, or Somali, or some of the Sahel countries in the near past.

Amartyan Sen, **Development As Freedom**, Anchor Books, New York, 1999, p.16

Civil Society
Civil society plays a very important role in the governance processes. As an arena that consists of people and organizations that in a democracy government usually appeals for votes, civil society can influence the composition of government and the character of its policies. Elections are periodic events, while democracy is a perennial process that requires continuous adaptation and adjustments to perpetual change. In between elections civil society organizations---including various professional pressure groups--- keep the government on its toes, reminding the ministers of their promises, insisting on accountability and transparency of the public servants, and generally keeping alive the democratic process, and thus promoting good governance.

Private Sector
As the major engine of economic growth, and hence the creation of wealth and employment, the private sector creates the necessary conditions for human development. As the major source of government revenue, the private sector plays a very critical role in enabling the government to provide peace and security, and to deliver and maintain the essential social services. The availability of social services is in turn a major contributing factor to the alleviation of poverty.

Competence
Competence entails the capacity to make timely and strategic decisions with regard to the immediate issues and the long-term policy options that are likely to emerge. It entails the overall analytical capability to identify the salient issues, design strategies and formulate the appropriate policies, and to manage the governance processes in response to the needs, wishes and aspirations of the people in a world that is rapidly changing. As a major institution in the governance processes, it is important that government is efficient and effective.

The effectiveness of the political leaders will depend partly on their own individual capabilities, primarily an issue of education, training, skills and experience; and partly on their legitimacy, primarily an issue of how they obtained the power and the manner in which they utilized it. In other words, are the political leaders reasonably educated and sufficiently experienced? Did they acquire power via free and fair elections or by other means? Are they accountable to the Constitution and tho those who elected them?

Leadership and Political Will

Governance entails complex actions and interactions between individuals, groups and institution . diverse and dynamic ways, involving different structures and levels of governance from the village council, the district, town, to the city and the nation at large; and beyond, to the global environment. Clearly the exercise of the governance processes requires leaders who are conversant with the needs and aspirations of the people, competent, with integrity, vision and the will to bring about the needed social and economic transformations.

Accountability

Accountability is the obligation to render an account for a conferred responsibility. The linkage betw assigned tasks and the actual performance makes a reality of one's responsibilities or obligations to th who have entrusted them with those responsibilities. It is in a sense a reciprocal relationship between th who have been entrusted with certain responsibilities and those who expect those responsibilities tc fulfilled. Accountability requires that public officials respond to the requests and demands of the citiz without any discrimination or favours.

Financial accountability is an indispensable management device providing essential information for effective monitoring and controlling of resources. One important function of accountability in the priv sector is the provision of sufficient and necessary information on the performance of the enterprises so investors may make or adjust their decisions. Or those who are concerned with the economy and promo of human development--- the government--- may put in place the appropriate poverty eradication policic

Society is an intricate network of reciprocal and accountable relationships between peoples at vari levels and for different purposes. It is the cluster of these reciprocal and accountable relation s v acknowledged codes of conduct that creates the trust, compassion and social capital---the conduc environment--- for the promotion of human development and the alleviation of poverty. Accountab promotes peoples' trust and confidence in government; and, in turn, reinforces legitimacy and integrity, enhances dedication and commitment in those responsible in running and managing government.

Transparency

It is impossible to ensure accountability, detect weaknesses and evaluate their impacts on people. design the strategies to enhance efficacy of the institutions and mechanisms of accountability if there v no popular awareness of such deficiencies. Transparence facilitates such an awareness. Transpare entails availability of information on all matters related to the governance process. It means in partic that the conduct of public servants and the manner in which they perform their duties are know knowable to those interested, and that the public servants themselves are aware of the rules and convent that describe their duties and prescribe their performance. The bottom line of transparency is opennes the conduct of all types and levels of governance, public as well as private. It is this openness and expo that stunts the temptations to corruption and circumscribes its growth.

...Transparency is a key aspect in sound public administration as governments have a moral and l responsibility to report periodically on their performance. The essential prnciple that must be maintaine that the business of government must be transparent. Transparency focusses on public reporting with objective of making apparent that what governments do is more visible, which hold them accountable the way they exercise authority granted to them. The cost of failing to be transparent and undersestima the power of governing bodies can be high. A lack of tranparency leads to mistrust and election lo s.

Transparency feeds on itself. The more transparency there is in society the more it is demanded. People appreciate the value of transparency because it enables them to obtain the necessary information on the governance of their country, about their citizenship obligations and entitlements and other productive, creative and social activities. As more people appreciate the value of transparency the greater is the demand for more information about governance, and the government is obliged to respond to such demands. The less transparency there is the little the people are likely to know about the governance of their country, and incrementally a culture of ignorance and fear of the government is likely to be created. Political leaders would distance themselves from the people, visible only during elections times, and the bureaucrats would build walls around themselves with only a few openings for the favoured ones. Vital information about citizenship entitlements, about job and other opportunities, and rules and regulations would be known only to the chosen few. It is in these circumstances that corruption thrives.

Ultimately government would become a mysterious collection of institutions and the peoples who manage them would be known only to the chosen few or those who dare approach them. It is in such circumstances that those in governments find it in their interests to keep the rest of the people in ignorance and fear. And those who are governed develop distrust, suspicions, cynicism and hatred of those who govern them. Each one fears and distrusts the other. Those in government are afraid that if the people know more about what the government does, or does not do, are likely to revolt; and hence the best thing is keep them in contrived perpetual ignorance, manipulation, fear and ocassional brutalities—police or military.

Transparency thus implies a more open governance process. There is a very close linkage between accountability and transparency. It is not possible to have accountability without transparency. Without the availability and accessibility of the relevant information--- transparency---it would be difficult to call to account any political leader or public official. And yet without accountability the rationale for transparency would be diminished. Accountability justifies and reinforces the need for transparency. Transparency facilitates the rendering of accountability.

Financial accountability and transparency in public affairs in Africa are areas that need to be strengthened. Where political accountability and financial transparency are inter-linked political leaders and senior public servants are likely to be more responsible, efficient and effective. Aware of the professional and career importance of being transparent and accountable public servants are likely to be efficient, polite ----and "people-friendly"---- when they inter-face with the public. Aware of the promises they made to the people during the previous elections, keen to be re-elected in the next elections and suspicious that the people are bound to raise the issues of accountability and transparency, political leaders are likely to promote and protect peoples' interests, needs and aspirations. And as the poor people constitute a large proportion of the population of African countries, political leaders are likely to be responsible, responsive and proactive—caring for the people and anticipating their needs and problems. And as they are keen to be re-elected they are also likely to be concerned with their track record, and will thus be obliged to be accountable and transparent in all their actions and behaviour.

II
Institutions and Mechanisms of Accountability

Parliament
In a democracy Parliament is the supreme legislative body. It enacts laws, appropriates, allocates and oversees public expenditure. It checks the activities of the government and on occasions censures individual members of government or senior public servants. It acts as a forum in which people air their grievances, express their anxieties, demand wrongs to be righted and generally through their elected representatives compel the government to conform to the provisions of the Consitution, to acknowledge and honour its political mandate to the people. By compelling the government to account for its activities and the behaviour of the civil servants, the representatives of the people act as watch dog on the accountabilty and transparency of the entire governance system.

The Question Time is a key institution in the Westminster model of parliamentary government, which has been adopted by many African countries. This is where Members of Parliament can pose direct question to government ministers and expect to get answers from them. On special days the Prime Minster appears in Parliament, and he/she has to listen and answer the questions put to him/her. In Madagascar the entire cabinet---including the Prime Minister---appears before the National Assembly on live radio and television to report on their annual activities, their performance and results. This is followed by tough questions-and-answers session on the individual presentations. This makes a reality of the governments accountability and transparency to Parliament and through it to the people. Some African countries have constitutional provisions that empower members of Parliament to impeach an incumbent President or Prime Minister if they determine that he/she has violated the Constitution

There are additionally numerous Parliamentary standing and select committees that deal with variuus subjects that need the approval of Parliament.. It is in these committees that the details of new legislations are explained, defended, critiqued and often modified. These committees hold special sessions to which people with special interests are invited, or demand the right to be invited, and its is here ---particularly in the 'working democracies'--- that civil society organizations and those in the private sector play very effective roles. They articulate their interests, defend their rights and calls to question governments accountability and transparency. Quite often these committees are held in public with the media and press present.

Parliament has overall control of the budgetary appropriation and expenditure of the government. The annual budget debates and motions of confidence on specific government activities, policies or its general performance and record are critical moments of accountability and transparency. At these occasions the government is taken to task and is obliged to account for its behaviour in manners satisfactory to Parliament. It is on these occasions that Parliament asserts its role as the representative of the people and forces the government to be accountable.

There are also in all African countries supportive regulatory institutions and mechanisms such as the Auditor General, Comptroller-General or General Inspectorate of Finance that play the important role of ensuring that there is honesty and efficiency in government finances, that every appropriation and expenditure has been made according the law and for the intended purposes. A vigilant Auditor General can contribute immensely to the transparency of a government. Presented in an understandable language, Audit reports can empower the citizens to participate more effectively in public debates, making elected and appointed public officials more accountable for their actions and performance.

Elections

When appropriately conducted---free and fair for all contestants---elections provide opportunities for the people to call to account the record of the government and review the behaviour of its members. This is a very important period in the life of a government. It brings into focus for public review the two factors critical to democracy and the legitimacy of a government: accountability and transparency. The government is afforded the opportunity to have a direct contact with the people and various civil society groups, defend its record, and plead for re-election. For the ordinary citizens and the various organizations in the civil society and the private sector this is the momentous occasion when they have the power to influence the shape of government's policies, change its composition or deny the right to exist.

The government's accountability to the Constitutional obligations, such as ensuring the rule of law and the promotion of an enabling environment of security, peace and stabilty, and the manner in which it has fulfilled its political mandate---promises made to the people during the previous elections---are reviewed, evaluated and assessed. The manner in which the government has exercised its powers, the policies formulated, decisions made and implemented by the elected leaders and the appointed officials--- an issue of transparency----are similarly reviewed and assessed.

The Press

The observance of accountability depends on the circulation of information, ideas, opinions, experiences and views by the press. Only when one experiences or is aware of the deficiencies in public accountability or transparency is one able to complain or commend. By circulating and broadcasting information on the governance processes, reportage on local and world events, and by facilitating debate and exchange of views and opinions on public issues, the press empowers citizens to make intelligent decisions on policy options, and judgment on accountablity and trans parency of the government.

With the advent of multi-party politics and liberalisation in general, privately owned radio and television stations have played very important role as watchdog on government. They have created alternative sources of information on government itself. More importantly, through investigative journalism the press has been able to uncover and highlight accountability failures and their consequences on the economies and societies of African countries. In those African countries with independent and vibrant press and mass media, public opinion is increasigly becoming a major political force insisting on accountabilty and transparency that governments can no longer ignore.

Administrative/Bureaucratic

A political system provides the framework within which conflicts are resolved and decisions on pol options made and subsequently implemented. The implementation of policies and the administration of country are the responsibility of the civil servants. Politicians come and go, depending on the politi winds; but civil servants by and large remain even when the military takes over. A distinction theref needs to be made between government as a political institution consisting of a group of people who may may not be elected to manage the affairs of the state, and government as an administration/bureaucr consisting of appointed civil servants.

Civil servants manage the institutions of governance, they provide public services, draft rules ; regulations, advise ministers and assist in the formulation and implementation of public policies. In Western Parliamentary traditions, and with some modifications these these have been adopted by Afri countries, the civil servant is subordinate to the Minister who is an elected politician. While the Ministe

accountable to the people via the parliamentary process, the civil servant is accountable to the Minister via the administrative/bureaucratic hierarchy.

As suppliers of the basic security for the community [law and order, police and the military] ,and that of social services---health, education, housing, and welfare in general---the civil servants have daily and continuous contacts with the poor people. And as voters in a democracy the poor people are an important factor in the electoral processes. Politicians need their votes to be elected. Thus in their own separate spheres both politicians---political leaders---and the civil servants are accountable to the poor people. But because the poor are by definition powerless, illiterate and ignorant, and in most cases are not organized, they are unable to insist on the accountability of the politician or the bureaucrat.

Judiciary
Independent Judiciary is the cornerstone of the rule of law and due process of law. It is moreover designed to ensure that all public officials stand trials if their actions contravene the law. In some African countries special constitutional courts have been created with the objectives of ascertaining that bills submitted to the legislature and passed as laws fully conform to the provisions of the constitution. In general, supreme courts are established to ensure that government decrees, rules and regulations do not violate the law, and that justice is done and seen to be done.

An independent judiciary is an important institution of accountability. On it depends the security of life and property, the legitimacy of government and the enabling environment of peace and stability in which people feel free and confident to engage themselves in various productive and creative activities of their choosing. If appropriately constituted and enabled to perform its constitutionally mandated functions, the judiciary is the only independent institution in the entire governance system that can ensure justice to the poor.

As an impartial arbitrator between government and the citizens, the judiciary plays the most critical role in a democracy of ensuring government's accountability to the provisions of the Constitution---- constitutionalism---and its political legitimacy in case of disputed elections results. Special Constitutional courts exist in many African countries with a variety of purposes, but all intended ultimately to ensure the constitutionally mandated accountability of the government in the various areas of the system of governance. There are thus administrative tribunals, permanent commissions of inquiry, inpectorate of governance and ombudsman to which the ordinary citizen can appeal---and expect impartial results---for grievances against the government or damages inflicted by the decisions and actions of its agencies.

Political Parties
Political parties play a very important role in the promotion of accountability and transparency in a democracy. Diversity of public opinions, policy options and leadership are vital to democracy. Unorganized these views, opinions and ideas are ineffective in bringing about the desired social or economic transformations. They have to be aggregated in an orderly manner for them to be meaningful and operational for the people. It is virtually impossible to imagine a working democracy without political parties.

Political parties mobilise and aggregate public opinion, package them with their own particular political or ideological flavour and present them to the public as their "party manifestos". In the process political parties make numerous promises to the public that once elected into power they would implement the manifesto. In adopting the manifesto a political party thus creates the basic foundations for political accountability and transparency. Henceforth its performance---as well as the

beaviour of its leaders---will be held accountable to the members of the party or those who voted for it.

Good governance takes place when the processes of governance are conducted within the framework of a constitution and constitutionalism, the separation of powers, the rule of law and due process of law, and ethical codes of conduct and traditions of the people; when it responds to the basic needs, livelihood, wishes and aspirations of the people; when it is based on sound, efficient organizational and operational principles; when it is conducted within institutions that *are* of the people, operated *by* the people and *for* the benefit of the people; when the entire process is transparent and accountable, whose consequences are understood and predictable.

Good governance creates the enabling environment for the elimination of poverty and promotion of human development. Accountability of the elected leaders, the appointed bureaucrats, the activists in the civil society and those in the private sector is one of the major factors supportive of good governance. It is primarily due to the lack or neglect of accountability on the part of those in responsible governance positions that many African countries have experienced bad governance, which in turn have been largely responsible for the persistent poverty and a major obstacle to the promotion of human development.The impact of the lack of accountability on the poor has been, and continues to be, disastrous to the lives and livelihood of the poor and disadvantaged people.

Causes of Failures

Constitutional

Lack of constitutionalism has been one of the major causes of failures of accountability in Africa. While a constitution defines powers and authority and the manner in which they should be used, constitutionalism refers to the practical habit of conforming to the constitutional provisions, and in particular to the principles of the rule of law and the due process of law, and the separation of powers. The principles of the rule of law stipulate that law is specific, impartial and non-discretionary; that is they are universal and applied equally to all citizens---the rich and the poor. No one is above the law

Most of the constitutions in Africa have been modeled on those of advanced Western democracies. They promote human rights, enshrine the principles of the rule of law, separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary; and they provide for the protection of human rights, independent tribunals, commissions and inspectorates. It is, however, the manner in which these systems have performed that has been problematic. The Constitutional provisions are rarely observed or respected by those in power. African governments have often used selective provisions of the Constitution against their perceived enemies, often benign and well-meaning critics or legitimate political opponents. This has to do with the absence of supportive conventions, weak civil societies and the lack of political will, the tenacity of the one-party state culture, the inertia of the exigencies of   e building and the consolidation of political leadership. Constitutionalism has not yet taken roots in many African countries.

The majority of citizens in Africa, particularly those in slums and rural areas, tend to perceive the constitution as an esoteric document whose contents and purpose are understood only by the rich, powerful and literate elite. It tends to be pro-property, favourable to the interests of the rich and protective of their status. The poor can be hanged for the theft of a chicken if some violence was involved, while the rich can get away with millions embezzled from the state if some colleagues were associated. The Constituion has no relevance to the basic needs, self-esteem, respect, dignity, survival and aspirations of the poor people. In Africa it is very difficult for one to invoke his/her constitutional rights. It takes money, sound understanding of ones constitutional rights and citizenship entitlements. as well as a determined and courageous lawyer.

...In all our countries, we have wonderful constitutions. These constitutions provide for the equality of the citizens before the law, but yet, this is not always the case. They provide for equal opportunity for employment regardless of the ethnic, religious or political ground of an individual. But, the reality is often different. The constitutions do not allow for domination by any group on national institutions, but the reality on the ground might be different and we have a lot of examples on our continent.

Our constitutions are as good as any other constitutions in the world. Our laws are equally so'
The judiciary is supposed to be independent and the Police fair and accountable. In most of our

countries the laws and the regulations provide for equal access to land and resources. Yet, we know in some cases, groups and individuals prevail over the general interest. We do have institutions for control such as constitutional courts, Ombudsman and other appeal courts and commissions. But yet, the situation in the field is quite disturbing as the rights of the citizens are often violated and undermined.

Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim , Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity,

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1998

There are other factors in addition to the reluctance/refusal of the African political leadership to conform to their constitutional obligations: poverty, illitetaracy and ignorance. Levels of literacy are very low in many African countries, and virtually all the constitutions of African countries are written in foreign languages and in manners not easily understood by the people. These constitutions are incomprehensible to many citizens. The absence of civic education is also a major contributing factor to the lack of respect for constitutional obligations and non-compliance with the basic principles of the rule of law. Illiterate and un-informed ---or mis-informed---about the basic principles of their systems of governance, their constitutional rights and citizenship entitlements, the poor can neither challenge the government nor demand accountability from the civil servants, be they bureaucrats or police officers. To many people in Africa the Constitution is still a very difficult-to-understand document. To be operational and meaningful as foundations for accountability and good governance the constitutions in Africa have to be indiginized, simplified and owned by Africans. This process has already begun in several African countries.

Lack of conventions is another contributory factor to weak constituionalism in Africa. There has not been sufficient time for constitutional and political conventions to evolve in Africa. Conventions are products of long historical process, of people working together in partnership sharing experiences, intellectual and philosophical traditions, building respect, trust and social capital. It is peoples conventional wisdoms that define their notions of personal responsibilities; what is wrong and right; and distinguishes theft from possession. In some African countries a leader can be convicted a grand thief in the capital city for the misappropriation of public funds and proclaimed a hero and a generous benefactor in his/her village for the hospital, school or road built from those funds.

Parliament
Politics is the process by which resources are competed for and authoritatively allocated in society. Public policy options—health, education, transport, housing, poverty eradication, and other alternative development project proposals —are the products of the political process. The delivery of public services and development projects entail the allocation and organization of material and human resources. These resources are limited in supply and have to be competed for. Those with greater political power or influence---the rich and influential--- get the greatest share of the allocation of resources---the things they need or want. Those with little or no political power---like the poor and disadvantaged groups---get less or nothing of the resources or values. The poor are not represented in Parliament.

In the mature democracies Parliaments play very active role in ensuring that governments are accountable to the people. Accountability and transparency in financial matters are some of the gravest concerns of Parliaments. These concerns are exercised through a variety of Parliamentary standing and select committees. Athough Parliaments in Africa have the same formal procedures and the committee systems they are not however functional and as effective. Financial accountability and

transparency constitute the weakest link in the governance of many African countries. Neither Parliament nor the media has been able to make any significant impact on government's lack, and in some cases disrespect, of accountability and transparency in its financial dealings within its own institutions or with the externalities.

In many African countries Parliament continues to be the weakest link in the governance structure. It has neither the legislative independence nor the respect of the people. In some countries ethnic politics have undermined the national character of Parliament. In other countries fractious opposition parties have weakened the effectiveness of Parliament as a forum to debate national issues. In most countries it is controlled by the executive, and indirectly influenced by powerful economic interests. Parliamentarians are unable---unwilling or fearful---to check and balance the activities of the governnment. And in virtually all countries Parliamentarians lack the necessary institutional, academic, intellectual and material support by which they could perform their duties with efficiency, respect and dignity. Unless African Parliaments are strengthened and enabled to perform their constitutionally mandated duties with respect and dignity, they would not be able to attract young Africans with the appropriate expertise, visions and commitment.

Political Parties
Political parties in Africa have tended to be the means of acquiring and concentrating political power and not as institutions that articulated and promoted particular political mandates, or a watchdog on accountability and transparency of the incumbent government. The culture of the one-party state is still very strong in many African countries. Intra-party democracy is rarely practiced. Policies are promulgated by the leaders and not based on research or grounded on debates by the members. Often political leaders regard the party as a personal instrument used to punish political enemies and reward friends. African leaders are able to do this because of the weaknesses of the civil societies, ethnicity, poverty, ignora and disorganized and ineffectual opposition.

In Africa elections are rarely the occasions at which the accountabilty of governments [contesting political parties] are critical factors in the overall electoral processes. It is possible to have a ruling political party, reads government, elected and re-elected regardless of its track record of accountability or transparency. Elections are won without governments having to pay too much attention to what their citizens think of them. The priority is on getting the majority of counted votes and not in persuading or convincing the majority to vote. The majority of the people are poor, illiterate, ignorant of their basic constitutional rights and citizenship entitlements, are fearful of the authorities and are easily intimidated by them. Because of their poverty and the need to care for their families, the poor are compelled to choose between survival and civic responsibilities. They are easily bought, and corrupted. With their numbers they have the potential power of the majority but because of their poverty and ignorance they lack the real power of the organized vote.

Internal party democracy will enhance transparency and strengthen accountability, creating sense of ownership among the party members. It will enable the poor to play an effective role in the party policy-making processes. It will also strengthen the legitimacy of the party in the public arena, as it is perceived to represent a particular body of ideas, views and policies for which they could be held accountable. Genuine open competition for leadership within the party would expand the source of potential leaders.. To ensure that party policies are based on knowledge and information –and not just personal inspirations or whims-leaders must be adequately educated and with experience in the management of a modern nation-state.

Politicised Ethnicity
Ethnicity is still a very important factor in many African countries. The tendency to vote according to

ones ethnic preference rather than policy options is still strong. And so is the allocation of economic and other social resources. Public images of leaders are closely associated with their ethnic background rather than the soundness of their policies. Thus public perception of leaders' accountability is compromised with ethnicity. They are popularly perceived to be accountable to their respective ethnic constituencies and not to the all-inclusive national constituency This rather complicates the issue of poverty reduction and the promotion of the interests of the poor as leaders are perceived to be concerned solely with the welfare of their own ethnic groups, and not that of the people as a whole.

However, given its multiplicity and deep historical and social foundations, it is both impossible and indeed undesirable to suppress the ethnic factor in public policy issues in Africa. Ethnicity should be understood as the struggle to preserve and protect a collective identity and survival in a multi-ethnic state. The struggle for ethnicity is basically a part of the struggle for democracy, human and people's rights, and for the alleviation of extreme poverty. In some African countries the deepest pockets of poverty are to be found among certain ethnic groups who do not appear to have any political leverage. In principle there is nothing inherently good or bad in people asserting their rights/freedoms to be different, or struggle for survival. The problem arises, however, when ethnicity is politicized and manipulated by unscrupulous, corrupt and greedy leaders for other objectionable purposes.

The crucial issue is: in a region that is very poor and undergoing multiple transitions what role can ethnicity play in the strengthening or weakening of democracy ---and thus the accountability and transparency of the leaders. The quality of leadership and political will, competency and integrity, are very critical in resolving this issue. One of the challenges facing the new generation of young leaders in the 21st Century is the creation of innovative ways that will acknowledge ethnicity and the need for communities to preserve and promote their communal identities, and at the same time for the individual members of the communities to participate in the development and democratization processes as a citizen or leader, and not as a representative of his/her community.

> Ethnicity, good old tribalism, has been another impediment to the viability of democracy in many an African country. Tribalism is probably more insidious threat to democracy than military rule. No one now fights shy of the existence of tribalism in Africa and different countries have devised different constitutional mechanisms to cope with the strains and stresses arising from pluralism. But the challenge remains. As I see it, the advocates of genuine democracy, which makes for fair play must also find a lasting solution to the divisiveness of unappeased tribalism.
>
> Chief Emeka Anyaoku, Commonwealth Secretary-General,
> **In the Cause of Democracy in Africa,** Gaborone, Botswana, 24 Feb.1997
> p..9

Judiciary
The independence of the judiciary is very fundamental in ensuring accountability and transparency, and in promoting good governance. However, despite the insertion of the principles of the rule of law, due process of law and the separation of powers in virtually all the constitutions in Africa, the judiciaries in Africa continue to be weak. This is due to several factors: interference by the executive; low salaries, poor working conditions, and inadequate supportive staff; over-centralization of the

judiciary, resulting in congestion and inefficiencies; corruption and politicization of judges and the entire system.

Moreover, as in Africa the judges are appointed and promoted by the Government, judges feel indebted to the Government and tend to be accountable to those close to the Government and not justice for the citizens as demanded by the Constitution. The poor suffer as they cannot compete with the rich and politically powerful who can afford to bribe the judges whenever there is a clash of interests between them.

The independence of the judiciary in many African countries is constitutionally guaranteed under the principle of the separation of powers. Nonetheless, magistrates in nearly all-African countries are civil servants whose appointments and other career prospects depend on the executive. Moreover, few magistrates have been trained in financial management. Other factors also contribute to loss of confidence in the judicial system, among them: lack of predictability, physical distance between tribunals and the vast majority of citizens, and the huge financial costs for litigation.

Second Africa Governance Forum (AGF11), "Accountability and Transparency in Africa: A Concept Paper.", UNDP, New York 1998, p.10

Administration

In Africa civil servants are very powerful agents of governance, suppliers of the essential services, like law and order, health and education. They are in daily contact with the people whom they are supposed to serve diligently, efficiently, impartially and fairly. In theory they ought and must be accountable to the people --- and "people-friendly"--- in the performance of their duties. In practice they are not. This is due partly ₁ ₁e break down in the chain of accountability from the Parliament through the Minister to the district level; inadequate remuneration, poor working conditions and career prospects; and partly to their politicization and government interference at all levels of administrations. Consequently they have tended to be corrupt, discourteous, inefficient and generally unconcerned with their accountability to the people, let alone the Constitutional requirements.

Accountability deficiencies in other components of governance---democracy, competence, constitutionalism, civil society, and leadership---have also contributed immensely to the breakdown of accountability across the administrative hierarchies. Lack of democratic governance, corrupt political leadership, ethnically fractured civil society and politicized ethnicity have aggravated the culture of bureaucratic 'untouchability' and impunity. Most people---particularly the poor---approach Government buildings with apprehensions, fearful of the bureaucrats not knowing what they will demand or threaten---- harrassment or exaction of bribery. Rapacity of the leaders [political and bureaucratic] in their strivings to accumulate, their disregard of the legal provisions and appropriate administrative procedures, their cynical attitudes to the welfare of the people, and in particular the plight of the poor----promises made with no intention to deliver---have created attractive role models for the poorly paid civil servant and the greedy ones.

The situation is however changing. A number of African countries have instituted major radical administrative reforms. And many have established disciplinary councils and procedures, codes of eethical conduct within the civil service to ensure discipline, integrity, accountability and transparency.

Impact of Failures of Accountability
Systemic
At the general systemic governance level, the impact of accountability failures have been catastrophic, creating violent conflicts and civil wars. These conflicts have caused considerable destruction to life and property, creating fear, insecurity and instability. They have undermined domestic entrepreneurship, and drastically reduced the prospects for foreign development assistance. Violent conflicts have been a major obstacle to economic growth, socio-economic transformation and the reduction of poverty pervasive throughout the continent. Africa is the only continent where the number of poor people is likely to increase in the 2ist Century.

Africa starts the new century facing enormous challenges, with close to 350 million people living on $1 a day or less, and up to 150 million children below poverty line. Africa is the only continent where the number of the poor is increasing, creating the perception that poverty is increasingly becoming an African problem rather than a global one. Although Africa's economic performance over the last five years represents an encouraging improvement on that of the first half of the decade, deep concern remains that current growth rates are inadequate for effective poverty reduction.

African Development Bank, Report 2000, p.38

With the notable exceptions of the few countries that respected their Constitutions, and practiced a modicum of good democracy, responsive and responsible leadership, such as Botswana, Mauritius, South Africa and Senegal, most of African countries are characterized with weak, inefficient and corrupt systems of governance, unable to respond to the needs of the people. The following is the summary of the impact of systemic lack of accountability on the African systems of governance.:

- The governance systems are ineffective in both directions: providing overall sound governance for the people, and in facilitating the people to effectively participate in the decisions that affect their lives and livelihood.
- Due to the lack of 'working democracy', accountability and transparency the people are unable to articulate their interests and air their grievances.
- In most African countries Parliaments have become arenas where the political parties in power exchange threats with those in the opposition parties. National interests or the concerns of the people may be noted and on occasions debated, but in reality rarely acted upon.
- National budgets are skewed in favour of the needs and interests of the elites at the expense of the poor and disadvantaged groups. Construction of huge referal hospitals, airports, military hardware and barracks, conference halls and high-ways, instead of effective public health programmes and appropriate preventive facilities, the supply of medicine for the poor, and feeder roads for the villagers.
- Elections have rarely brought changes in political leadership, or real policy options. Political parties neither represent peoples interests nor are they peoples' watchdogs for government accountability and transparency. For most people elections have ceased to have any meaning.
- Inability---or reluctance--- of the elected governments to provide the essential public services, reneging on their electoral promises; thus undermining the value of democracy and effectiveness of electoral politics
- Unable to promote social capital that is conducive to national unity, a sense of solidarity, common well-being, mutual trust and a sense of belonging to a nation and common governance system, that are very essential to multi-ethnic African countries undergoing multiple transitions.

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- Lack of social capital has accelerated ethnic marginalization, oppression and repression, resulting in very serious societal fractures and governance problems, creating major obstacles in poverty reduction
  - various ethnic groups vie for political power in order to advance their own interests at the expense or exclusion of the others;
  - people are identified in terms of their ethnicity or habitation and not their citizenship; and most African countries are increasingly becoming a cluster of diverse ethnic groups rather than cohesive nations consisting of diverse individual citizens;
  - citizenship entitlements are provided according to the ethnicity of the provider or the recipient, and not primarily on citizenship itself [passports, social services, etc];
  - the entire governance system—the various structures and processes—is embraced with ethnic politics, and politics assumes the dimensions of struggles for ethnic hegemony rather than a competitive---and ultimately accountable--- struggle for the advancement of the common interests.
- Due to systemic lack of accountabilty the people---particularly the poor and the disadvantaged groups---have been denied the essential social services:
  - In many African countries the people are denied adequate education and health facilities and services for their children, and for themselves as well;
  - housing is very poor and in most cases virtually non-existent, creating very serious problems of homelessness and threat to security of person and property; very bad roads and poor transportation systems making mobility of resources and persons very difficult, thus adversely affecting the performance of the economies, and the prospects for poverty reduction.
- Due to rampant corruption the eonomy is distorted as scarce resources are diverted from essential social services to debt repayments accumulated by corrupt politicians and bureaucrats. The national revenue dwindles due to losses in tax and customs levies. Domestic and foreign investors are deterred because of uncertainties in the 'playing field' and the high costs of business. The prospects for development are thus severely retarded. It is however the poor who suffers the most. In addition to higher prices and unemployment, they must daily bribe the corrupt officials to obtain essential social services or the protection of the police, that are their basic citizenship entitlements. Corruption denies the poor of their share of the national product, small as it is. Endemic corruption is very brutal to the very poor, who is denied the basic social serives and have no resources to compete with those willing to pay the bribes.

The Poor--Rich Divide

Poor economic management and bad governance have created un-precedent levels of unemployment and poverty in many African countries. They have created internal displaced people, economic migrants, refugees, rapid and unwieldy urbanization, anxieties, fears and a sense of insecurity amongst those who are rich; and hardship, anger, frustration and hostility amongst the poor and unemployed. Both categories of people are uncertain of the future. They harbour mutual suspicion, fear and hostility towards each other. The rich living in their privately guarded secured residencies fear the poor and the un-employed, worrying all the time that given the opportunity they will burgle their homes, robe them on the streets, rape their wives or daughters, maim or kill them whenever and wherever they can. The poor regard the rich—including some politicians and bueaucrats-- as the root-causes of their poverty and unemployment, and hence the enemy. The attitude of the rich towards the poor is virtually 'racist' and overwhelmingly xenophobic. The poor are defined/identified by appearance and handled accordingly. They are subjected to police brutality. Their human rights are abused with impunity.

The poor are the most vulnerable group in society, almost entirely dependent on the state for security livelihood, and basic social services. The poor are inescapably the victims of bad governance. When violent conflicts take place due to bad governance they are the ones forced to flee in numbers avoiding killing and maiming by the soldiers or rebels. When there are severe economic conditions due to mismanagement, it is the poor who bear the burden of unemployment and lack of the basic social services; and when they peacefully protest the conditions in which they find themselves the police harasses them. When their interests conflict with those of the rich and powerful who can bribe the corrupt judges, the poor lose their lands, a kiosk or even their lives. Wherever they find themselves, in their own countries but far from their homes or in foreign lands, either as refugees, asylum seekers, or simply as poor and unemployed, but able-bodied and willing to work, the poor are distrusted, held with suspicions by the rich neighbours and subject to police surveillance. If they are left un-attended or unwatched they are expected to do something untoward----stealing, causing damage to property or harassing people by their begging and beggarliness.

Impact of Bad Governance On Children
The major victims of violent conflicts due to bad governance in Africa are children. They are unable to look after themselves. They are the most vulnerable segment of the population. Every school destroyed is one education institution eliminated from the few that exists. Every hospital looted or its staff killed means the lives and health of hundreds of children are at risk; and so are the pregnant mothers who might replenish the dwindling population due to wanton death and destruction. And when mobility is restricted either because people are afraid to travel, inavailability of serviceable vehicles or because of bad roads –all due to the prevalence of violent conflicts—the children will not be able to go to school or visit the hospital.

Children in war-torn countries or post-conflict situations in Africa are the saddest and most tragic victims of bad governance. Their status in society is undetermined or undeterminable, having lost their parents or relatives. Their well-being is precarious, as there is no one to care for them affectionately and responsibly. They are traumatized and disoriented, because of the impact of the war and their personal experiences. And their future is uncertain, virtually bleak, as no education or training may be available to them. The children of Liberia are a case in point.

Historiccal bad governance is acknowledged as the major cause of the civil war in Liberia. Many children were killed. Almost all the remaining had their natural school cycle disrupted for ever, prematurely converting them into earners of livelihood and heads of families; thus denying them the nurturing warmth of the family and graduated maturity. A large number of them were separated from their families for long periods of time, thus exposing them to the insecurity of loneliness and disorientation, missing their mothers at the moments when they most needed them. Many children were conscripted as child soldiers, drugged and drilled to maim and kill. Some of these were sexually abused; and others became sexually active-- and mothers prematurely. Most of them were traumatized. All of them were forced to pay with their limbs and lives for a future they neither understood nor participated in the decision-making processes. They mortgaged their lives and limbs for a future whose foundations were violently contested. In various manners the children of Liberia were the major casualties of the civil war---an extreme consequence of historical systemic lack of accountability of the leaders across the society.

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Who are war affected children? How do they differ from other children? I have tried to provide empirical answers to these questions using the views of Liberian children who are undoubtedly war-affected and data from the UN system, particularly from UNICEF. Early this month, we of the Ce __r for Democratic Empowerment (CEDE) with the support of UNICEF, Liberia organized a National Youth Workshop on War-Affected Children. At the workshop, children were asked the question, "who are war-affected children"? Here are some of their responses:

"war-affected children are:

children who go without food because of war;
children whose parents have been killed;
children whose properties have been looted;
children who witnessed horrible killing;
children who disrespect older people;
children whose minds are disturbed and cannot do their school work well;
children who are too old for their grades;
children who became parents before their time;
children who took part in war as fighters;
children who engage in prostitution;
children who do not receive proper education;
girls who have been raped.

Amos Sawyer, "Children, Governance and Development: Towards a Framework for Protecting the Rights of West Africa's Children", Monrovia, Liberia, 2000.

What happened in Liberia has occurred and keeps on occurring in many other African countrie. _t have experienced bad governance and violent conflicts. [Burundi, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Chad, Somali, Sudan, Mozambique, Angola, etc] Despite their attributed importance as the valuable citizens of the future societies of Renascent Africa of the 21^{sst} Century, the plight of children either as victims of violent conflicts or poverty---or both---due to bad governance continues to be neglected due to yet more failures of accountability. In Africa the children continue to bear the greatest burden of the consequences of bad governance, irresponsible, insensitive and cynical leadership and the dehumanizing poverty.

Yaquine Koita and Forde Tourkana– the two young Guineans in their mid-teens who in August 2, 1999, died frozen in the landing gear bay of a Sabena jet flying from Conakry to Brussels is a telling and tragic event. They risked their lives in order to escape the turmoil, violence, uncertainty and hope-less-ness ---consequences of bad governance---that is now pervasive in many African countries.

A letter carried by them and addressed to European officials, reads, in part:
"...We appeal to your kindness and solidarity to come to the rescue of Africa. We suffer enormously in Africa...We have problems in Africa. We lack rights as children. Help us, we are suffering enormously...help us...we have war, disease, not enough to eat...There are schools but a great lack of education, teaching...We want to study, and we ask you to help us to study so we can be like you, in Africa. We young Africans are asking you for a large and effective organisation to bring about real progress in Africa....
...We are appealing to you for the love of your beautiful continent, for the feelings you have for your own people, your family and especially the affinity and love of your children..."

Undoubtedly todays children are the building blocks of the future societies. If today they receive the proper education and development, protection and identity, health and survival, and have an effective say in matters affecting their lives and the prospects for future livelihood--- the basic provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on November 20, 1998---the children will indeed be important assets for a Renascent Africa. They will be peace loving and law abiding citizens, with strong work ethics, compassionate, responsible, responsive and accountable in their actions. They will be potential contributors to economic growth, development and the reduction of poverty.

The patterns of poverty that are passed from one generation to the next can and will be broken when the poor have the means and opportunity to be healthy and well-nourished enough, and educated and skilled enough, to fully participate in the decisions that affect their lives. Because such needs are most efficiently met through public services, universal access to an integrated set of basic social services is one of the most effective ways of reducing poverty in any society. Access to basic health, education, family planning and water and sanitation services is what makes sustained and stable economic progress possible, helps people achieve greater productivity and forms an especially crucial buffer for children and women in difficult times.

UNICEF: State of the World's Children, 2000, p.37

If uncared, uneducated, unprotected, unloved, undeveloped and are not given the opportunity to participate in matters affecting their lives and prospects for future livelihood, today's children are likely to be the uncaring, antisocial, insensitive, selfish and prone-to-conflicts citizens of tomorrow. They are likely to promote the 'vicious circle' of lack of accountability and bad governance, swelling the ranks of street children, the unemployed and deepening the pockets of poverty. The prospects for a future of peace and prosperity [good governance], or that of violent conflicts and poverty [bad governance] will to a large extent depend on how todays children are treated.

PART FOUR

MEASURES TAKEN TO ENHANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is a reciprocal relationship between on the one hand those who are entrusted with responsibilities and authorities [politicians and bureaucrats] to perform certain duties or deliver public services; and on the other those [people, either through the Constitution or the electoral mandate] who have conferred such authorities and responsibilities and are expecting the due performance of duties and the delivery of services. Accountability is thus the linkage between power and authority conferred to perform certain duties and deliver certain services, and the actual performance of those duties and delivery of those services. It is based on the mutual acknowledgment of duties and responsibilities, rights and obligations between the citizens and the state, between those in charge of the institutions of governance and the beneficiaries of the services delivered by those institutions.

The effectiveness of the institutions---their capabilities to perform and deliver--- will depend on the competence, legitimacy, integrity and commitment of those in charge of the governance institutions, on the one hand; and on the capability and competence of those---the people---who demand accountability on the other hand. In other words, strict observance of accountability depends not only on the strength of the institutions and those managing them, but also on the ability of the people/citizens to ensure that accountability is in fact being observed. The latter is an issue of people/citizens empowerment. And the former is that of institutional reforms.

A missing link between anti-poverty efforts and poverty reduction: governance. Even when a country tries to implement economic policies to foster pro-poor growth and mount targeted poverty programes, inept or unresponsive governance institutions ccan nulify the impact.

When governments are unaccountable or corrupt, poverty reduction programmes have little success in targeting benefits. The poor cannot gain hearing for their views from undemocratic and authoritarian political regimes. They cannot gain access to public services from an unresponsive central bureaucracy--

Several measures have been taken to enhance capabilities ranging from constituitonal and institutional reforms, decentralisation, strengthening the instititions of civil society to the empowerment of the people. What follows are a few illustrative examples of such measures.

Following the movements for constitutional reforms initiated by Francophone African countries in the late 1980s many African countries undertook major reforms of their constitutions purportedly to strengthen accountability of their institutions of governance. In 1991 Benin adopted a new Constitution which ensured the independence of the Judiciary, created a Constitutional Court, reorganized the court system, making it meaningful and available to the citizens, and put in place several inspectorates to ensure ministerial accountability and transparency. Any citizen can challenge Government's decision by appealing to the Contitutional Court. The Constitution liberilised the economy and the political system, and the creation of the Supreme Media and Communictions Authority ensured freedom of the press and equitable access of all political parties to the media. All the members of the Cabinet, including the President, are required to declare their assets before and after assuming office.
In the same year Mali adopted a new Constitution similar to that of Benin, and so did Ghana in 1992, Uganda in 1995 and South Africa in 1996.

Entrenched in the Ghana Constitution is the unique "Directive Principles of State Policy", stipulating the fundamental social, economic, political, educational and cultural objectives, and the rights of the Ghanaians. Thus in addition to the usual constitutional concerns for the basic human freedoms and rights, the 1992 Ghana Constitution includes: Economic Rights; Educational Rights; Women Rights; Children Rights; Rights of the Sick, and Rights of the Disabled. These rights constitute obligations on the part of those in authority and are thus accountable to the people for their actions.

Moreover, as the Chief Executive the President is constitutionally obliged to issue at least once a year a report indicating action taken by the Government in pursuit of the policy objectives, particulalrly those related to basic human rights, the health of the economy, the right to work, to health care and to education. It is also incumbent upon the President to ensure that the national economy was managed in such a manner as to maximize the rate of growtrh and development, thus securing the welfare and happiness of the citizens.

Mali's Constitution contains similar features supportive of accountability and transparency as those in Ghana. The Constitution provides for the separation of powers between the legslature, the executive and the judiciary, involving a system of mutual and reciprocal monitoring that further enhances the checks and balances, thus ensuring accountability and transparency in the govenance processes. For example:

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- The Government is responsible/accountable to the National Assembly; hence by invoking the specter of censure the National Assembly can remove the Government
- With the consultation of the Prime Minister and the President of the National Assembly, the President of Mali can dissolve the Assembly , thereby checking the powers of the Assembly and the behaviours of the legislatures
- The Ptresident appoints the Prime Minisster but cannot dismiss him/her except when the latter submits resignation. Nor does the President have the powers to appoint and dismiss other members of the Government withjout recommendations of the Prime Minister, thus cheking the abuse of power by the President.
- The president and the Prime Minister may be impeached by the National Assembly for high treason, criminal or deliquent behaviour before the High Court, thus ensuring accountbility and trasnsparency at the highest levels of governance.
- The Constitutional Court judges the constitutional validity of all legislation, it regulates the operation of the other insgtitutions of governance, thus ensuring intitutional accountability and transparency
- The President chairs the Council of Ministers, which discusses Government policies and their implementation as one unit. Thus cooperation---and if need be, co-habitation in this era of multi-party politics---are promoted. In the Malian context it is possible for one political party to be in control of the Presidency, while another---or others---in conrol of the Parliament.

When submitting their proposals to the Council of Ministers for deliberations each Minister is expected to include a list of civil society organizations consulted or who participated in the policy-formulation processes. Multiparty politics, active civil society organization, the freedom of the press, coupled with the other fundamental Constitutional freedoms enable the citizens to participate effectively and meaningfully in decisions that affect their lives and livelihood.

By law a Malian citizen has the freedom of access for information relevant to his/her needs or requests. The citizen has the right of access to the relevant files and documents of the Public Services. When an official rejects a citizen's application or request, the answers and the reasons must be given in writing and within a specified deadline.

Given its background of three centuries of racist and bad governance, the 1996 Constitution of South Africa symbolized a new and bold phase in the history of the country. It promised a future: "founded on the recognition of human rights, democracy and peaceful coexistence and development opportunities for all South Africans, irrespective of colour, race, class, belief or sex". Major measures taken to enhance accountability and transparency include:
- The courts have ceased to be subserviant to Parliament. Transparency in the judiciary and political accountability in the governance institutions are assured. The rule of law applies to all citizens, irrespective of race, colour, religion or economic status. The appointment of judges and magistrates must now reflect the racial, cultural and gender realities of the society, thus ensuring a more equitable and transparent judicial recruitment.This is supported by an independent Judicial Service Commission. The National Director of Public Prosecutors is empowered to prosecute without fears or favours, a very powerful mechanism for promoting accountabnility and transparency in an erswhile racist society.
- The Bill of Rights in addition to providing all the traditional rights, include the following: easier access to the courts; the right to appeal; access to information, and civil servants are obliged to provide reasons for decisions in response to requests or applictions made by the citizens.

- The Public Protector is the South African ombudsman with powers to investigate maladminstration in all spheres of governance except those involving Court decsions. By law the Public Prsecutor is accessible to all citizens
- The Human Rights Commission has the powers of investigations and reportage on the observance of human rights; redress the violation of human rights; conduct research and public education. The Commission is legally required to specifically: promote respect for human rights and a culture of human rights; promote the protection, development and attainment of human rights; monitor and assess the observance of human rights in the country.

The 1995 Constitution of Uganda affirmed the sovereignty of the people, guaranteeing them the power to determine the systems and structures of governance suitable to them, and the active participation of all the citizens in public affairs. The following measures, mechanisms and processes have been put in place:
- The Electoral Commission, an independent body with powers to conduct and supervise national and local elections, to ensure a regular free, fair and transparent electoral process
- The leadership Code of Conduct legally obliging all political leaders and bureaucrats to declare their assets and sources of income and indebtedness
- The Inspector-General of Government [ombudsman] an independent institution enshrined in the Constitution charged with the responsibilities to: promote good governance; enforce the leadership code of conduct; investigate the actions, decisions or behaviour of civil servants and eliminate corruption; promote public awareness of the values of constitutionalism.
- The Auditor-General is Constitutionally empowered to ensure financial accountability and transparency in all public accounts. He/she has the unique powers to inquire into and audit the accounts of all accounting officers and receivers of public moneys, ranging from the sale of stamps to the negotiations of major projects with private entrpreneurs or donor agents.

Uganda is one of the few African countries that have taken substantial measures to enhance accountability and transparency in the systems of governance. With the help of the World Bank and Transparency International in 1994 Uganda inaugurated the National Integration Programme. A number of governance institutions ---including Parliament, Judiciary, Police, Auditor-General, Deaprtment of Public Prosecution, and the Ministries of Public Service and Local Government---were brought together to combat corruption in a concerted manner. The following year the Inpectorate of Government conducted an intensive public awareness and civic education on corruption at all levels of governance. In 1998, with the help of the World Bank Uganda launched a National Integrity Survey to determine the extent of corruption in the delivery of public services, and the best means by which it could be combated.

Uganda also embarked on an extensive civil service reforms to both strengthen the capabilities of governance institutions and improve the efficiency of the civil servants. The civil service was drastically reduced through retrenchment and the elimination of 'ghost' workers. Salaries were raised and working conditions immensely improved to boost the morale of the retained or newly-appointed civil servants. The Government strengthened the civil society by encouraging the formation of NGOs and CBOs, so that they could supplement the provision of social services, as well as act as watchdogs on Government activities. With the encouragement of the Press and Information Act, the press engaged the Government in constructive criticism on a wide range of its accountability and transparency. And the decentralisation measures gave local authorities the powers and authority they needed to promote development, combat corruption and alleviate poverty at the lowest levels of governance.

Decentralization 'rationalizes' governance so as to make it relevant, effective and meaningful to different parts of the country. It reinvigorates and democratizes traditional local governance institutions, thus promoting greater popular participation at the grass roots levels. Creatively managed decentralization may provide opportunities for relevant modernization of traditional institutions and leadership. Appropriately modernized traditional institutions may retain local talents and expertise and attract others from the urban areas. Rural areas could thus be new centres of creative and productive economic activities, alleviating poverty, frustrations and alienation, offering alternative attractive civic life, and in the process promote human deverlopment. As well, because it disperses powers to the levels where people can use it to manage their own affairs effectively and meaningfully, decentralization instils a sense of local ownership and pride, thus enhancing the habits of accountability and transparency. Many African countries have adopted decentralization.

Decentralizing governance---from capial cities to regions, towns and villages---can be one of the best means of promoting participation and efficiency. Local officials and politicians can be much more open to public scrutiny than national governments---and more accountable to the communities and indviduals they are supposed to serve. And public projects---be they dams, roads, schools or health programmes---all become much more relevant and effective if the communities concerned have a reall say in their planning and implementation.

UNDP Human Development Report, 1993, p.66

There are however serious potential problems with decentralization. If not appropriately structured or systematically monitored, decentralization could complcate rather than facilitate promotion of accountability and transparency. As decentralization entails privatization or the involvement of local communities in service deliveries, it creates business for local communities as well as opportunities for local corruption. There is thus the need for systematic Parliamentary control and empowerment of the local people so that they can prevent corruption or combat it at its roots. There is as well the issue of capacity and sustainability. Decentalization draws heavily on local institutional capacity and human resources which may or may not be available.

Benefits Gained, Problems and Obstacles Encountered
In general enhancement of accountability and subsequent improvements of the governance systems have been very beneficial for the ordinary people. Partly because of these reforms, and partly due to the changing global realities following the end of the Cold War and the discrediting of communism as an alternative development model for Africa, many Africans have become very assertive of their rights and are demanding accountability and transparency from their governments. Preventive detentions or arrests on political grounds are not totally uncommon, but exceedingly rare. Uganda and South Africa are good examples. There is a world of difference in the governance of Uganda during the military dictatorship of Idi Amin and after the adoption of 1995 Constitution. The same applies to South Africa: Apartheid era is a different world from that inaugurated by the 1996 Constituional and political reforms.

Ugandans have governance institutions of their choice, and they are sufficiently empowered---constitutionally and politically---to hold to account their political leaders and bureaucrats. Similarly with South Africans irrespective of their race, colour or religion. More importantly, the black South African ---erstwhile dehumanized by political oppression and depressed by poverty---can now expect amelioration of his/her poverty either by his/her own efforts or, as a citizen, with the help of the Government. And should that help be not forthcoming---for both Ugandans and South Africans---

because the political leaders are not delivering on their promises or the bureaucrats are not delivering the services, he/she can call them to account. The political leaders and the bureraucrats are all accountable in their actions and are required to be transparent in the manner in which they exercise their powers and in delivering the services. Ugandans and Soth Africans have at their disposal an array of institutions of governance and mechanisms they could utilize to ensure the accountability of their politicians and civil servants.

With regard to specific benefits to the poor these have to be determined by empirical investigations of specific countries. However, to the extent that these reforms have introduced major systemic empowerment for the ordinary people, in that their access to justice, social services and the opportunities to participate in decisions affecting their lives and livelihood have now significantly improved, those of the poor, too, are likely to have improved. Virtually all African leaders are proclaiming commitment to good governance and the elimination of poverty. Most of them have been compelled by the pressures of their own citizens---facilitated by the reforms--- and 'nudged' by donors---impact of the changing globall environment. A few the product of independent initiatives based on convictions.

Problems encountered in the enhancement of accountability are obviously specific to countries, depending on the history and the manners in which the reforms were conducted. Problems encountered by South African Government are likely to be different from those in Uganda, Mali, Tanzania, Benin or Senegal. Voodoo is a problem specific to Benin. Ethnicity is obvious in Rwanda and Burundi. However, generic to all is the inertia of bad governance and the residual culture of one-party politics, politicised ethnicity and racism. The bureaucracy remains powerful and its influence pervasive. De-politicisation of the Judiciary is still an entrenched stiff fight in many African countries. Illiteracy and, clearly, poverty itself are the greatest obstacles. Illiteracy is conducive to ignorance, fear of those in power, apprehensive of officialdom, and vulnerability to bribery and extortion by those in authority.

The Information Technology Factor

Sustainable human development, poverty reduction and ensuring the observance of accountability by politicians and bureaucrats require knowledge and information. Promotion of sustainable human development will require the mobilization of human and material resources, and the establishment of various partnerships between government, the civil society and the private sector; between NGOs and CBOs and the government, between the people and the government and various other organizations.

The notion of sustainable human development propounded by UNDP consists of three key elements: development *of* the people, meaning the enhancement of human capabilities and health so that people can participate fully in life; development *for* the people, meaning that all people should have the opportunity to receive or acquire a fair share of the benefits that flow from economic growth; and development *by* the people, meaning that all members of society should have the opportunity to participate in development...

Development by the people, through increased participation, is not possible unless political, economic, and social *power* is widely dispersed throughout the community. This dispersal enables people to influence the social, economic, and political functioning of society, a cornerstone of human development. This view of development implies that people, by right, should have access to a variety of avenues for exercising power...

Sustainable human development is human centred development. People –all the people –must be involved in the development process. They must participate at all levels of the decision-making processes, the implementation and the monitoring of the development projects. Only when the people are involved in the development process can development truly be of their choice, and not that of other people be they from the government or the donors. But for people to be actively involved in the development process they need to be empowered. They need knowledge and information.

Similarly, anti-poverty programmes require knowledge and information for those participating in promoting it---government agencies and NGOs---and for the poor themselves. To effectively participate in the programme the poor need to be informed and educated on its strategies and objectives; and those promoting the programmes need to learn from the poor so that the strategies and programmes are based on the information and objectives emanating from the poor---the ultimate beneficiaries of the programmes. Knowledge and information are similarly important in ascertaining and ensuring the accountability of the elected politicians and appointed civil servants. They empower the citizen to pose the appropriate questions and adopt the appropriate legal and political procedure to demand accountability.

Modern technology---especially the Internet---can facilitate the flow of knowledge and information. This has proved very useful in the medical field and intelligence work. It has also been effectively utilized by NGOs within and between countries transmitting very useful and important information on various development problematics and issues. Critics of intolerant or authoritarian governments have resorted to it when it was no longer possible to use the traditional means of communication within or between countries. The critics of the Royal House of the Saudis [Government of Saudi Arabia] effectively used the internet and fax to communicate amongst themselves between Europe and Saudia, exposing the mismanagement of their country and accountability failures of the rulers. President Moi of Kenya once threatened to ban the importation of the fax machine because he was convinced that his own civil servants were transmiting vital state secrets to the donors community. And a Senegalese immigrant can send an urgently needed financial support to a family in Dakar using the Internet or fax facilities of a compatriot with a mobile office in down town New York.

The Internet, the wireless telephone and other information and communications technology enable people to communicate and obtain information in ways never before possible, dramatically opening up possibilities to participate in decisions that affect their lives. From the fax machine's role in the revolutions of 1989 to the email campaigns that heled topple Philippine President Joseph Estrada in January 2001, information and communications technology provide powerful new ways for citizens to demand accountability from their governments and in the use of public resources.

UNDP Human Development Report, 2001, p.2

Understandably, the Internet has great potentials for facilitating informationa and knowledge in the promotion of human development, poverty reduction and the citizens' demands for accountability in Africa. With a laptop at his/her side receiving an instant flow of data from the World Bank or a relevant credible source, a determined crtic can expose the depth and extent of corruption of Minister or Government to devastaing effects. There are however major obstacles: high costs of hard ware, software and connection fees; very high levels of illiteracy; and poverty. The computer is still a toy to

an infinitely small proportion of even the literate Africans. But the most serious obstacle is the lack of appropriate public policies. The costs of the computers and associated software are falling, incrementally coming within the affordability range of many Africans keen to have them. However, in many African countries the appropriate supportive public policies are missing. Inefficient telephone monoplies still exist, and telephone services are invariably unreliable and costly at that.

Information and knowledge are sources of empowerment for the citizens, enabling them to effectively participate in decisions affecting their lives and livelihood. For the government information and knowledge are vital to the promotion of human development and poverty reduction. To the poor it is critical to his/her survival. Knowledge and information thus constitute power; and those who have it---individuals or governments---are able to do what they want, desire or aspire. The new emerging technologies are accessible and affordable. What are needed are appropriate public policies to exploit the opportunities for empowerment offered by the revolutions in information technology. But such empowerment is a double-edged instrumentality: empowers the government as well as the citizens. Many African governments are uncomfortable as IT renders them vulnerable to citizens' inquisitiveness. A few recognize the importance of IT as a means of both enhancing their capabilities to serve the people and for bringing the people closer to their governments.

It is not however clear, but worrying, whether information and communication technology constitute a fleeting window of opportunity for those countries who were not part of the first industrial societies, or it will be yet another great leap-frogging by the West and those with the capabilities to utilize its science and technology, thus leaving Africa and totally marginalizing its peoples from effective participation in the global economy and politics.

Poor countries—and poor people—differ from rich ones not only because they have less capital but because they have less knowledge. Knowledge is often costly to create, and that is why much of it is created in industrial countries. But developing countries can acquire knowledge overseas as well as create their own at home. Forty years ago, Ghana and the Republic of Korea had virtually the same income per capita. By the early 1990s Korea's income per capita was six times higher than Ghana's. Some reckon that half of the difference is due to Korea's greater success in acquiring and using knowledge.

The World Development Report; Knowledge for Development, World Bank, Washington, D.C. 1998/99, p.1

PART FIVE

EVOLUTION OF CONSENSUS ON GOOD GOVERNANCE, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION

The Emerging African Consensus

It is now universally acknowledged that people are at the centre of all human endeavour. There is a global consensus on the imperatives of peace, security, democracy and good governance as the pre-conditions for the eradication of poverty and the promotion of human development. In reference to Africa the September 2000 United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000 affirmed its support for the consolidation of democracy, and to assisting Africans in their struggles for lasting peace, eradication of poverty, sustainable development and integration in the global economy. The Millennium Declaration pledged support to the emerging political and institutional structures supportive of democracy and good governance in Africa.

A general consensus has also emerged among African leaders on the major challenges facing the continent in the 21st Century and the strategies necessary to overcome them. Throughout Africa people are increasingly aware of their rights and citizenship entitlements. There is now a new generation of young Africans, the majority of whom were born after Independence. They are better educated, more knowledgeable about the world around them, very much concerned with their individual freedoms, human rights and democracy. They are aware of the threats of Africa's marginalization from the world economy and politics. Of the incremental pauperisation of Africa due largely to mismanagement and gross failures of accountability. They are aware of the challenges and opportunities in the rapidly globalizing world of the 21st Century, of the possibilities for new relationships and partnerships at the national and international levels. But they are constrained by the existing structures of governance..

People's attitude towards the government have changed. African governments are now no longer viewed with awe, fear and apprehension. There is less respect for governments, the political leaders and the bureaucrats. In some places where rampant corruption thrives in the midst of gross inequalities and deep pockets of poverty, politicians and ranking bureaucrats are held in contempt. In other places the incumbent leaders are no longer regarded as relevant: they neither have the requisite capabilities, the political will nor the honesty and integrity to solve people's problems. Civil society organizations are active and their leaders are becoming influential all over Africa. People are demanding Governments of their choice that are technically capable of solving problems efficiently and effectively. In effect, people are yearning for new 'social contracts' with their governments.

African Union [AU] and New African Initiative [NAI

The transformation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union (AU) --- a move from a political forum to a more cohesive continental organization with defined governance structures--- and the enunciation of A New African Initiative (NAI) are the products of the emerging consensus among African leaders. The Constitutive Act of the AU stipulates the major goals as promotion of democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance, the protection and advancement of human and peoples' rights, peaceful resolution of conflict among the members of the Union, enhancement of social justice and poverty eradication. Along with the AU, the declaration of the New African Initiative, validates the emerging consensus among Africa's leaders. The AU represents the political aspirations of leaders and their peoples and the NAI is a combination of vision and plan of action, designed both to eradicate poverty and combat marginalization in a globalized world.

> This new African initiative is a pledge by African leaders, based on a common vision and a firm and shared conviction, that they have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and to place their countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development, and at the same time to participate effectively in the world economy and body politic. The Programme is anchored on the determination of Africans to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion ina globalising world.
>
> **New African Initiative, 2001**

NAI is led by respected African leaders and is accepted by Africa's development partners as a sound framework for co-operation. In adopting the NAI, African leaders are asserting ownership and reaffirming their commitment to managing the direction and development of the continent. They seek to build on past achievements, convinced that human and material resources for the eradication of poverty and the promotion of development are within the grasp of Africans. Stressing ownership and management the NAI crafts a democracy and governance framework that encompasses principles of transparency, accountability, integrity, respect for human rights and promotion of the rule of law. In order to reinforce capacity to meet those commitments the NAI endorses institutional and civil service reforms that contain administrative measures, parliamentary oversight, participatory decision-making, combating corruption and judicial reform. It is fully recognized that resources have to be mobilized and effectively harvested to expand the enabling environment of peace and stability, democratization and good governance as preconditions for development and the eradication of poverty.

PART SIX

TOWARDS THE VIRTUOUS CIRCLE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE-- POVERTY REDUCTION--HUMAN DEVELOPMENT—GOOD GOVERNANCE

Lacking in the capabilities and opportunities to articulate and promote their own interests, the poor and disadvataged people are unable to demand the accountability of those in charge of the decisions and actions that affect their lives and livelihood. The institutions governance are 'people-unfriendly', remote and inaccessible. The political leaders are powerful, pompous and remote, accessible only during elections times. The bureaucrats are unapproachable, demanding and corrupt. The constitutions are in foreign esoteric languages, understood by only those thoroughly versed in those languages, or are sufficiently interested and wealthy enough to enlist the services of lawyers. The poor and disadvantaged groups are thus perpetually marginalized from the governance processes, and incrementally pauperised. They are habitually suspected, watched by the police, questioned, warned, threatened, brutally treated, and invariably obliged to bribe in order to obtain basic social services to which they are entitled as citizens.

Although the components and principles of good governance are immutable and universally applicable, their precise domestic manifestations are subject to local conditions. What might be considered to be an important manifestation of good governance in Sweden and Germany [generous citizenship entitlements] may be regarded as symptoms of bad governance in the United States of America. Good governance is not determined solely by the adoption of the appropriate components, principles and institutions. All African countries have constitutions in which virtually all the components of good governance are enshrined, conduct periodic elections and yet these have not stopped bad governance appearing in many African countries.

Whilst governance is a natural process that is inherent in all human societies, bad governance and good governance are deliberate human products. Neither happens by chance; though it is possible for

the former to occur by neglect or default. Good governance does not occur by miracles. Good governance is the product of deliberate, careful planning, commitment and implementing. Its fulfillment, promotion and long-term sustainability require dedication, competence, commitment, integrity, honesty and political will. In the last analysis it is the people and their leaders---those in authority and those at the receiving end---that are ultimately responsible for good or bad governance. Two fundamental questions confront us:

- How to make those in authority including Presidents, Ministers, Judges, civil servants/bureaucrats, policemen/women, soldiers, customs officers, etc. observe and practice the principles of good governance? Constitutions, laws, rules, regulations and conventions exist obliging them to conform to the principles; and yet they renege.
- How, and by what means, can the people be empowered so that they can effectively persuade, compel, or ensure that those in authority behave exactly as obliged by the Constitution, mandated by the electoral processes, or required by the cultural traditions?

Only when the poor and the disadvantaged people are empowered economically, politically and constitutionally/legally will they be able to articulate and promote their own interests as conceived by themselves. And those in positions of authority/power will be bound to be accountable as constitutionally obliged and politically mandated via the democratic electoral processes. But that will take place only in a situation of good governance, where all institutions operate in accordance with the law, are effective in the performance of their stipulated objectives; when those operating them are competent and legitimate, accountable and responsive; when the people---particulalrly the poor—are empowered to participate in the development and democratisation processes, in the decisions that affect their lives and livelihood.

However, for all these things to begin to take place an initial enabling environment of basic peace is needed. In the absence of violent conflicts there will, obviously, be better prospects for the creation of the enabling environment facilitating the release of peoples' energies, talents, skills and enterprise leading to wealth creation and employment opportunities for many people. Foreign investment would be attracted and the prospects for development assistance would be considerably enhanced. As both domestic and foreign investors incrementally gain confidence in the capabilities of the institutions of governance, and the effectiveness and fairness of the governance systems, they will likewise enhance their investment and business commitments. With the growth of the economy so would be the ability of the government to provide the essential services to the citizens. Thus expanding the potentials for poverty reduction and its eventual elimination as is now known

Gradually the social and political tensions, economic frustrations and alienation from the system of governance will be eased as more people participate in the political processes, there are more employment opportunities and the essential public services are available. If the momentum of the positive changes is maintained and sustainable peace is achieved, so would the prospects for sustainable human development. Good governance fuels, as it were, the engine that generates peace, security and stability. It facilitates the release of the peoples' energies, skills, capital, enterprise, and entrepreneurship for creative and productive purposes---conducive to growth and human development. When a point is reached where good governance, sustainable peace and sustainable development are co-existing a much wider virtuous-circle of good governance-sustainable peace-sustainable development-good governance will be achieved. Each will be dependent on the other and reinforcing each other, thus establishing a perpetual regime of peace and development, continuously expanding the horizons of freedom, and enriching human life in all possible ways. Achieving such a virtuous-circle is the major challenge facing Africa in the 21st Century

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