

Globalization and Development Communication in Africa



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Africa and Global Challenges: The Need for Integrated Development Communication

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Introduction

The current discourse on development began in the 20th century with the emergence of independent African nations at the end of the World War II and the death of political colonialism in the so-called Third World nations. This discourse became imperative because 60% of the world's total population (as at then) were living below the poverty line which obviously called for concern and concerted efforts towards development issues.

However, the issue of development has remained debatable, necessitating a paradigm shift. But whatever position taken by any school of thought, the issue of human development must remain a priority because, the level of development of the human capital basically measures the development and progress of any society. Put in another way, human development is at the heart of nation building. The reasons for these assertions are obvious. A nation or a continent without people is not a nation or continent. Nigeria and Africa for instance, are only names; it is Nigerians and Africans that make such names a nation and a continent respectively. Therefore, there is no way Nigeria as a country can be developed while the majority of Nigerians are impoverished. On the other hand, there is no way Nigeria will be highly developed in all facets of human endeavours and Nigeria as a country will be described as underdeveloped. This scenario is not possible. Therefore, the challenges of human development in Africa are the challenges facing Africa's march towards sustainable development.

Furthermore, it should be noted that no nation has been known to have reached the "developed nation" status on her natural resources alone. Infact, most of the nations in the developed society cadre have very few sustaining natural resources. What I see most often in such nations are natural disasters and other ecological problems. But they

have gone beyond these natural inhibitions and even turned some of them to advantages through human capital exploitation. It is the argument in this chapter that no nation will ever develop beyond her human resources or human capital. This means that Africa's development is hinged on human development. This also justifies the call for Integrated Development Communication (IDC) for Africa's many development challenges.

The Present State of Africa's Development

The development of any society is measured by the provision of infrastructural facilities, technological sophistication and innovations, military might, human capacity index, as well as its economic and socio-political stability and well being. If there are fewer controversies about these indices mentioned above, then Africa is about 200 years behind America and Europe in the development ladder.

According to Anyanwu (2001: 61-62):

Africa is not a military power. Africa has no atomic bomb or nuclear weapons. She has no missiles or hydrogen bomb. The combat aircraft and warships African countries can boast of were bought from America or Europe. Till date, Africa has not been able to manufacture common but sophisticated Ak47 assault rifles. Compared to America, Japan, Germany, France etc, Africa is at the lowest ebb of technological advancement.

With regard to economy, African economies are in shambles with mounting external debts burden. Majority of the thirty (30) poorest nations in the world are in Africa and it appears the continent is the only place where poverty is expected to continue. This is the major reason most Euro-centric scholars associate the continent with 'backwardness'. Herskovit (1963: 36) regards Africa as haven "fallen behind in the world's progress march with ways of life akin to early stages of human evolution and civilization", while Omer-Cooper (1966: 168) sees Africa as "static and stagnant, developing if at all with infinite slowness and needing the impact of outside influences to break out its ossified shell of countless years of tradition".

These statements might be insulting and dated but is the truth far from them? Africa's 'lack' is a paradox. The same way Nigeria's poverty status is embarrassing, notwithstanding the abundance of

natural resources in our motherland. God has endowed the African continent with rich mineral deposits and sufficient human resources. Her soil is also fertile and the climate very mild and susceptible to all year round cultivation and exploitation. This is unlike Europe, North America, and parts of Asia where winter, cyclone, Tsunamis, earthquake, etc. pose as climatic and environmental obstacles to all year round development. What then is Africa's problem? According to Anyanwu (2001: 63) Africanist scholars like Chinweizu, Walter Rodney, Adu Boahen, Basil Davidson, A.E Bret, etc blame Africa's woes on colonialism. They are strongly of the opinion that Africa had a glorious past, but so strong was the colonial impact that the glorious past was dislocated and disrupted. Dismissing this argument, Anyanwu (op. cit.) further posits:

Admittedly, colonialism exploited Africa. But all that is now history and Africans should allow it to remain so. There is no gain in perpetually bemoaning our colonial past. It must be pointed out that at one time or another, other societies of the world were equally colonized or had one form of setback or another in their progress march. Israel was for many years under Egyptian bondage and during the Second World War, the Jews were killed in their millions and were scattered all over the world. Britain for instance was colonized by the Roman Empire. China and Korea were colonized by Japan, while America was colonized by Britain.

Most of these societies/nations have put behind their colonial past and some even became colonial lords. Anyanwu (2001) therefore, identifies ethnicity and bad leadership as the major challenges facing Africa's development. This author, however, adds poor followership and lack of philosophy or guiding principles as factors having their fair share in Africa's economic cum socio-political challenges.

The Concept of Development and Sustainable Development

The concept of development has passed through some stages to what we now refer to as the new paradigm. In the old paradigm, a society was considered developed if it is modernized along the lines of western civilization. This was the major thrust of modernization or dominant paradigm of development. This paradigm hoped to produce the same level of development found in the advanced western societies in the developing world, through the application of the same principles that got such western societies to the level they are now, in

the development ladder. Soola (2003: 11) captures this argument better. According to him:

The old or dominant paradigm of development represents the western model of the 50s and 60s, designed and packaged as a 'development-made-simple' panacea for the perceived backwardness of the underdeveloped nations of the world. With a strategy of injecting western socioeconomic and political theories and practices in the developing process, its goal was to repeat the model's feat in developing countries.

The failure of this school of thought necessitated the re-conceptualization of the concept of development. Fortunately, some of the outspoken or leading voices in the failed school of thought were also at the forefront of this new thinking (see Rogers (1976); Schramm (1979)). The new paradigm of development shifts attention from modernization to public participation in the development processes and procedures. Soola (2003), citing Oladipo (1996), notes that development (in this new thinking) should be environmentally, economically, socially, politically, and intergenerationally situated within an overarching concept of sustainable human development. Oladipo (1996) in this position, differentiates between human development and sustainable human development; but Ekeanyanwu (2005a) views sustainable development as human development.

According to Ekeanyanwu (2005a), human development is the conscientious, systematic and organized efforts towards the enhancement and advancement of the total well-being of the human person and the human race. These efforts to be effective must, however, be with the knowledge and participation of the individual as a member of a group; a group as a member of a community; or the community as a cultural entity. The brand of human development proposed here is the one that must help transform the individual to a total being.

A total being according to Ekeanyanwu (op. cit) is a person who knows and believes in himself; knows and believes in God Almighty; and has a vision and purpose in life which he/she also believes in, ready to die for, and pursues to a successful conclusion. According to Martin Luther King Jnr (cited in Ekeanyanwu (2005), 'one who has not discovered what he is willing and ready to die for is not fit to live'. Sustainable development, which we consider as human development in this chapter, must get the individual to this level before we can comfortably say that such an individual is developed.

Do not forget, the development of individuals within a group and society is the development of such a society.

Development Communication (DC) and Integrated Development Communication (IDC)

One critical and common factor in the conceptualization of development is that communication constitutes an important factor in the development process. The issues that have followed from this understanding are numerous, but are mostly captured in this question: How may the factor of communication be effectively and efficiently applied in the process of moving underdeveloped societies to the realm of developed societies? The answer to this question summarizes the major thrust of this chapter.

Development Communication (DC) is conceptualized as the systematic, effective, and efficient use of communication structures for development purposes. Soola (2003: 118) citing Jayaweera (1987) views DC as a:

Systematic utilization of appropriate communication channels and techniques to increase people's participation in development and to inform, motivate, and train rural population mainly at the grassroots level.

Soola (2003: 118) goes further to cite other scholars who have aptly captured the concept of DC. Citing Mercado (1992), he says that DC has been redefined "as a subsystem of the larger system of communication with emphasis on the planned use of communication resources to gain multi-sectoral support in attaining and sustaining national development goal". From this perspective, Soola (2003) distinguishes between development communication (DC) and development support communication (DSC). He says DC is top-down, development-oriented, and government-to-the-people communication. DSC, according to him, is an offshoot of DC and is basically "people-centred, development-goal-directed, two-way participatory communication, with emphasis on grassroots receivers, message structures, and effect". This concept of DSC captures our argument for the need for integrated development communication (IDC).

Integrated development communication (IDC) should be a more robust, decentralized, participatory, community-based, and multi-cultural approach in the use of communication structures for development. It should be multifaceted in nature and must aim to capture every sector of human existence. IDC should make the people

it hopes to change as their own change-agents. This is the core of the argument in the call for this brand of DC perspective.

From the point of view of the objective of DSC, little differences exist between it and the concept of IDC that this chapter is pushing for, especially for African nations. However, a clear emphasis that marks out IDC is in its ultimate goal, which is human development. Human development has been captured in this chapter from the perspective of Ekeanyanwu (2005a). Sustainable development from whichever perspective one sees it is human development. This brand of development outlives its initiators. Development that transforms all sectors of a people's life and makes living worthwhile for them. Development that changes a people as it changes the society too. This is what IDC must target in the use of communication structures for development.

The Media and Africa's Development Challenges

As pointed out earlier, many challenges exist as clogs in Africa's wheel of progress. However, some of these challenges are not peculiar to African societies alone, that is why they are regarded as global challenges in this chapter. But it seems these challenges are rife in African nations. Some advanced and developed nations of the world have surmounted these problems but Africa is still in their stranglehold.

The major challenges obstructing Africa's march to development are numerous, but for this chapter the following rank very high in the order of damage to developmental initiatives.

1. Hunger and Poverty
2. Disputes, Wars, and Disarmament
3. Underdevelopment and Unemployment

Hunger and Poverty

One of the most serious challenges facing mankind today is hunger and poverty. In many countries today, the gap between the rich and the very poor is so wide that there is no middle ground. Current United Nations' figures indicate that about 70% of the world's population live in extreme deprivation. Majorities of this population percentage live in Africa, Asia, and some Latin American nations. They are bereft of the necessities of life—food, shelter, water, education, motorable roads, etc. The same statistic also indicates that six percent of the world's population consume almost 50% of basic commodities; and the disparity, in per capita income, between nations situated at either ends of the development index is 1 to 200. These figures are expected to triple in 10 years time if nothing urgent is

done. This is very alarming indeed and points to a singular conclusion—there is hunger and poverty among the citizens of the world (Ekeanyanwu 2005b).

Hunger and poverty have remained—from the beginning to the 19th century—at the top of the ladder of destructive images that currently face the world. These issues have also led to a number of deadly diseases that are threatening the foundation of human existence. Hunger and poverty have also led to a lot of other ills in the society, because men must continue to look for food to eat; and would stop at nothing in their search. This keeps the society in continuous ferment and strives. The causes that have led us to these ugly situations cannot be overemphasized. The minority is in control of the vast resources of the world and the distribution, therefore, favours them to extreme disadvantages of the majority. This is applicable to nations, as well as individuals within these nations. To worsen the situations, the few rich are getting dangerously richer by the hour, while the many poor are getting poorer by the minute. It is either you are now rich or you are poor. There is no meddling in the middle. The so-called ‘middle class people’ are finding it extremely difficult to meet up with their basic needs of life.

In addition, you cannot easily remove the issue of overpopulation from the causes of poverty. This is probably the major reason China took the dramatic steps to reduce her population by regulating the number of children families could have. And this really worked for them. Today, China is a superpower, by all standards. Other causes of hunger and poverty are identified as unemployment, lack of productive education in the African nations, bad leadership, and of course, poor followership.

Our major concern in this chapter, however, is the role of the mass media in changing the situation. The international media frequently provide striking reports of famines, floods, epidemics, diseases, and other forms of disasters suffered by the developing nations. These reports help bring the situation in these countries to the knowledge of interested parties; prompting governments, corporate organizations, and multinational companies to come to their aid (Ekeanyanwu 2005b). However, “the media”, according to the MacBride Report (1981: 179), “should go beyond the state of promoting initial relief and reconstruction, they have to contribute to development and change, as such, they also have to analyse the causes. Such a shift of interest towards what is now referred to as development journalism is also essential in the case of the national media of the developing countries themselves.”

It should be noted that even when the international media are encouraged to highlight these ugly situations so as to bring the world's governments to help, the Western media's method and intent are highly questionable. According to Robert Galley, a former Minister of Cooperation of the French Government, "the Western mass media portray Third World countries as 'cadger' when they seek our financial aid; responsible for making life expensive, when the price of oil or coffee continues to soar; and for creating unemployment, when they develop their own industries." This is in line with the much touted opinion that the Third World nations only make news in the media of the Western world when famine, flood, disaster, coup (d'état), destruction, disease, crimes, etc. take place. They (Western media) report these negative events not because they are interested in bringing the situation to the knowledge of would-be helpers but because they want to tell their own people that the developing nations are countries of continuous strife and deprivation (Ekeanyanwu 2005b).

Nevertheless, it could be more dangerous and harmful for the international media to abandon the task of informing and alerting the world public of these negative situations. The media portrayal of the hunger and suffering of the Liberian people led to the mobilization of global sympathy and subsequent mounting of intense pressure on President Charles Taylor to step down from office; which he eventually did. Food and other aid materials then came in from here and there to alleviate the sufferings of the Liberian masses.

In conclusion, the view of the MacBride Commission on this issue is cited here for emphasis. According to them, "in our interdependent world, the overcoming of poverty is in the interest of all countries, whether developed or developing. Communication, therefore, should pursue three aims:

- To increase understanding of development problems
- To build up a spirit of solidarity in a common effort
- To enlarge the capacity of men and women to take charge of their own development.

And I add the fourth one which is, to contribute towards change and development through cause and effect reporting. Finally, the media could also reduce hunger and poverty by helping the society build up a spirit of solidarity in a common effort towards societal re-engineering and development

Wars and Disarmament

In Afghanistan, there is a war on terror going on and many of her citizens, visitors, and neighbours have fled the town—now ravaged by war. In Iraq, a bitter and controversial war was fought to remove Saddam Hussein and his evil regime. The people of Iraq, still alien to foreign occupation, are fighting to force the United States and her allies out of their lands. The election of the first female president in an African soil has only mitigated the cries of revenge and pain from the different groups in the Liberian conflict. There are still pockets of war-related violence in Angola, Congo DR, Ivory Coast, and many other cities too numerous to mention. Pakistan and India are there, flexing muscles, wishing to test their nuclear build-ups on the human race.

We cannot also forget what is happening in the East, between Russia and the independent states that rose from the defunct USSR. The Middle East conflicts and violence are gradually graduating to full-scale war, with no solution in sight. The United States sponsored "road-map" to peace has hit the rocks again and again. In Darfur, the international community is watching helplessly as genocide continues. The politicians, as usual, are busy playing politics with human lives. The conflicts in the Nigerian Niger Delta region (which I call the oil crisis) are gradually taking very dangerous turn that, if nothing serious is done and urgently too, then African nations should be ready for a terrible and catastrophic consequences of a full blown war in Nigeria. I am not a scholar of doom but the way things are presently, I smell doom. Is it in the East, West, North, or South, there is one form of conflict or the other tearing the regions apart. War is a situation we have come to live with; and the media like any other institution, cannot shirk their responsibilities to the people.

Before we delve into the role of the communication industry, we need to identify why these conflicts persist. First, is the struggle for power and control of government machinery and treasury. Of course, in developing societies like Nigeria, the only thriving business is "government business" and politics. Second, is the issue of domineering tendencies of some developed and bigger nations. Third, the struggle for economic, technological, and intellectual power has its destructive tendencies and encourages conflicts. Fourth, is also the issue of bad leadership, corruption, and greed which has impoverished most third world nations. Yet again, is the unavoidable challenge posed by hunger, poverty, and unemployment. Then, for most religious conflicts is the issue of hateful ideology.

One of the major functions of the media is to inform the people of major events and happenings around them, no matter how unpleasant

and undesirable such events or happenings may be. However, it is not entirely out of place for the media to report these unpleasant events objectively and factually; and at the same time present sentiments that will make the people understand that peace is always better than war; and that there is always a possibility of peaceful solutions to conflicts. The MacBride Report (1981:177) highlights this fact thus:

We live, alas, in an age stained by cruelty, torture, conflict, and violence. These are not the natural human condition; they are scourges to be eradicated. We should never resign ourselves to endure passively what can be curbed. Ordinarily, men and women in every country—and this include a country depreciated as “the enemy”—share a yearning to live out their lives in peace. That desire, when it is mobilized and expressed, can have an effect on the actions of government. These statements may appear obvious, but if they appeared more consistently in the media, peace would be safer.

This brings us to some of the attitudes and behaviours of media organizations and professional communicators towards war and conflict reporting. MacBride *et al* identified five categories of these attitudes and behaviours of communicators towards war and conflict reporting. They are modified and summarized below:

1. Those who see it as a duty to inform or report the news untainted, and are not concerned or do not consider it necessary to weigh the consequences which their method of reporting could have on the prospects of peace or war.
2. Those who consider it their professional duty to maintain complete neutrality, no matter the nature or seriousness of the issues at stake.
3. Those who assume that the mission of the mass media of communication is to promote social harmony and that they are therefore, in the service of peace; and against any form of war or conflict.
4. Those tied to their respective governments' apron strings and see it as their professional duty to support the government in all situations and circumstances.

5. Those who consider it incumbent and a moral obligation to prepare the public minds and views for any eventuality including war.

Nevertheless, no matter the attitude adopted, the role of the media as an instrument of social change, especially the change concerned with peaceful co-existence, cannot be disputed. Furthermore, the media should strive to initiate the growth of a global consciousness of the adversities associated with war, conflicts, and political instabilities. They should also promote the emergence of a public that is seriously concerned about peace; convinced of the need to tackle controversial issues so as to nip them in the bud—problems that could degenerate to serious conflicts or war; and ready to assist government in seeking genuine solutions to conflicts when they do arise.

We have not forgotten that the issue in this section is not on war alone. It is also about disarmament. The arms race or the quest to become a nuclear power or pile up deadly weapons, either for defence purposes, or for the prosecution of wars is a reality of our age. The Iraq War of 2003 was justified on the grounds that the Saddam regime refused to disarm 12 years after the 1991 Gulf War ended, and after two United Nations Resolutions calling on the government of Iraq to disarm. Resolution 1414 warned of “serious consequences” in the event Saddam refused to disarm; and United States and Great Britain interpreted the “serious consequences” to mean war. Today, Saddam is no more, but the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) are yet to be found, which means the world is still in “danger”.

The disarmament crises have shifted to Iran, Syria, and North Korea where the governments in these nations have been accused by the United States of violating the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty signed under the auspices of the United Nations. North Korea and Iran have even come out openly to say they are building up their nuclear capabilities for “defence” purposes and that they do not give a damn if the United Nations, or any country at all, is not happy with the situation. What do we really need these Weapons of Mass Destruction for? Is it for the extermination of the human race, or for the domination of one nation over another? These questions are begging for answers, but the obvious answer is that we do not need these weapons. The earlier the so-called world leaders understand the truth—that it is far cheaper to live in peace—the better for all of mankind.

What we are trying to establish here is that, most nations of the world are gradually becoming defence conscious and therefore,

investing heavily and dangerously on the military, especially on the acquisition of arms and ammunition of mass destruction. Former countries ravaged by countless civil wars and conflicts (especially those involving rebel groups) are not left out in the disarmament efforts, because leaving arms and ammunition in the hands of civilians and militias is equally dangerous. Therefore, they must all disarm, and the media must also play a leading role in this disarmament. The media should intensify their efforts towards this because, the subtle move to stop the arms race is news as far as the present global situation is concerned. The North Korean Nuclear Row, which the CNN (as an international news leader) has taken up, is a recent case in point. We are daily bombarded with the news of the row; the issues involved, the major players, the threats, the negotiations, as well as the consequences of intended actions (Ekeanyanwu, 2005b). The CNN has lived up to its billing as an international news leader. An average international media audience is very much aware of the North Korean situation, and pressures are being mounted on the United Nations to send her nuclear inspectors to North Korea to verify the extent and nature of threats posed by the nuclear build-up to the region in particular, and the world in general.

Another area the mass media should focus on is the exposure of highly placed government officials and individuals involved in the arms deals. Corrupt officials and business tycoons usually facilitate the illegal purchase of nuclear raw materials, as well as arms and ammunition. The mass media should, as a matter of urgency and priority, be alert in their investigative journalism so as to fish out those arms dealers who are helping to flood the world with illegal weapons. The same efforts should be channeled to the local scene. In Nigeria, for instance, the government claims that there are more guns in Warri (an oil rich area in the Niger Delta region) than human beings. How did these guns get into the hands of those people? This is food for thought for the Nigerian media.

The media should also transform into an instrument of change, especially, change concerned with peaceful coexistence. There should be a massive mobilization, sensitization, orientation, and re-orientation of the global public about the ill effects of war and socio-political instabilities. This process could lead to the emergence of a public—seriously concerned about global peace. These roles are encapsulated in IDC.

Underdevelopment and Unemployment

Underdevelopment and unemployment are two other seriously related realities of our time. Infact, these two—directly lead to poverty and

its associate—hunger. The threats associated with these two global disorders, far outweigh that of war because these two lead to hunger and poverty, which are capable of throwing up other societal ills. With regard to underdevelopment and unemployment, only the Western capitalist nations of North America and Europe, and some parts of Asia and Australia are well developed to talk of self-sufficiency. Other parts of the world like Africa, Latin America, parts of Asia, and Middle East are still “developing”. These developing nations account for more than 60% of the world’s population and majority of the world’s natural resources are found in their lands; still they wallow in abject poverty and deprivation.

The resources of the world are not equitably distributed and this affects the level of development. Unemployment is a direct result of acute underdevelopment. The concentration of wealth, through industrialization of the metropolis and the neglect of the original owners and producers of the wealth are the remote causes of underdevelopment and unemployment. Corrupt leadership and poor followership could also be linked to the immediate causes of these global disorders. These disorders are at the global level and therefore, require global attention. This is where the mass media come in. Communication, as we stated earlier, is an instrument of social change, mobilization, sensitization, enlightenment, and promotion of genuine causes of action, as well as facilitation of concerted efforts towards the identification and eradication of social ills and global disorders. But the media should not be credited with unlimited powers (as imagined by the bullet theorists), because it is beyond their power to solve these socio-economic problems or carry through—the process of development. Their contribution should be focused on identifying the problems, influencing public opinion, and drawing attention to the problems. They could also engage in highlighting opportunities, fighting obstructions and inhibitions, mobilizing support and participation where necessary. This view has led to a new type of thinking in journalism, especially in the Third World and Second World, called Development Journalism. This model of journalism is better referred to as Development Communication (DevCom). It is this brand of journalism that this author agrees should be more robust, participatory, and multicultural in approach. This is integrated development communication.

DevCom came about to help address the needs of developing and underdeveloped nations of the world. Before the advent of DevCom, the type of journalism or communication practised by the dominant Western capitalist nations of North America and Europe, were no longer in tune with the socioeconomic-cum-cultural realities of the

developing nations. Thus, the need for a communication system that will help address the socioeconomic-cum-cultural status of the Third World nations, led to the emergence of this brand of communication.

Furthermore, to give theoretical backing to this new form of journalism, the Development Media and the Democratic Participant Media theories were formulated. These two frameworks support the use of the mass media for development purposes and state categorically that this can take an overriding interest over anything else. These theories also propose that the media should involve the people at the rural communities in their activities, or create the atmosphere for the emergence of community-related media of communication. The understanding of these two theoretical support to development issues in African societies, will definitely result in a better appreciation of the need for integrated development communication for underdeveloped or developing African nations.

Africa's Need for Integrated Development Communication

Communication, in its broadest sense is an instrument of social change. UNESCO recognizes this role in resolution (41.01) on culture and communication. The resolution states, *inter alia*:

The role that can and should be assigned to communication is awakening the conscience of, and sensitizing public opinion to, the major problems confronting the world; and to their indivisible and global character; and in helping towards their solutions.

UNESCO's media Declaration, Article One also states thus:

The strengthening of peace and international understanding, the promotion of human rights and the countering of racialism, apartheid, and incitement to war demand a free flow and a wider and better-balanced dissemination of information. To this end, the mass media have a leading contribution to make. This contribution will be more effective—to the extent that the information reflects the different aspects of the subject dealt with.

The theory that the mass media have powerful effects on people has not been entirely proved wrong and is not baseless (Ekeanyanwu 2005b: 114). The media of communication do—actually affect people as regards their opinion and views on certain issues of current or

contemporary concern. The reinforcement theory, the catharsis theory, cognitive dissonance or assonance theory, as well as many other theories and paradigms on media effects, have in one argument or the other shown that the media could change the opinion of people on issues of growth, development, and public discourse. What has remained an issue of scholarship debate is the degree and nature of effect the media could cause to happen.

The gate-keeping and agenda-setting theories of the press, which have been accepted in communications studies, also show, in a unique way that the media could condition or influence the way people see issues and understand them. The gate-keeping theory specifically states that the media determine the flow of news from the source to the consumers. The implication of this assertion is that what the media audience calls news is only what the mass media have defined in their own terms as news. This is also applicable to agenda setting, where the media are credited with the power to set agenda on the issues and topics for public discussion. With such powers, what the media do not consider important is relegated to the background and only those issues that catch their attention are allowed prominence in the media.

The discussion in this section is not primarily about the effects or powerful nature of the media; it is about the need to effectively use integrated development communication. The rationale for the above introductions is for the reader to appreciate, *ab initio*, the qualities of the media especially their powerful nature in influencing social and developmental changes. With this understanding, it is the opinion of this chapter that, communication structures or channels could be used to achieve sustainable development. This could be discerned from the discussions on the section that talked about the role of the media in curbing or eradicating the identified global challenges.

In summary, however, integrated development communication (IDC) could be used to eradicate the identified challenges in the African continent in the following ways:

- A channel for information sourcing and dissemination on issues related to the identified challenges.
- A means of promoting initial relief and reconstruction for poverty-stricken and war-torn African societies.
- A primary agent towards growth and development through cause and effect reporting.
- Helping a community build up a spirit of solidarity in a common effort towards their own development.

- Helping to enlarge the capacity of men to take charge of their own destiny and development through meaningful education (re-education), sensitization, mobilization, and socialization.
- Promoting the emergence of a public that is seriously concerned about the ill effects of war and political instabilities.
- Reportage of family planning/population issues.
- Media discouragement of rural-urban migration.
- Responsible application of advocacy journalism.
- Serious engagement in peace, conflict, and diversity reporting.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Africa as a continent has not lost out in the development march. The identified challenges and bad leadership have only delayed her. As already discussed, these challenges are solvable and communication has a major role to play. This role, however, must be participatory, people-oriented, and development-conscious. The situations must also be community based and very flexible. This is integrated development communication, which has the capacity to effectively utilize communication facilities and advantages for developmental purposes.

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