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# RETHINKING GOOD GOVERNANCE: AFRICAN POLITICS AT A CROSSROAD

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## ABSTRACT

*The African political experience since independence in the latter half of the Twentieth Century clearly discloses a sour story in need of a sober reflection. There have been different reasons advanced for the present situation or state of development, political or otherwise, in the African States. One of the most foremost reasons is the Leadership problem that the Continent happens to be riddled with. This problem is reflected in different spheres of life of the post-colonial African States. However, most riveting is the effect it has had on Governance. At most, the form of Governance in these countries, or more explicitly, the manner of governing in the same cannot be said to be good, as the qualities that are attached to Good Governance are lacking in these countries. Therefore, this paper is concerned with the reassessment of the African politics and a redirection of the same towards Good Governance especially at this point in African Development history, it is imperative that there be a turn – around from the corruptive form of Governance practiced in most African countries, to Good Governance since it is the most potent way to save Africa from doom and steer it towards the Development much needed.*

**Keywords:** *Governance, Good Governance, African Politics and Development.*

## INTRODUCTION

The emphasis on Governance allows the authors to focus not only on the Institutions in Government but also on the State as a whole including the attitudes of the Civil Society. The implication being that although the administrative apparatus responsible for dispensing values is very much part of the issues concerning Governance, there is also the need to consider the factor of the citizens in the State. Governance is very important in the contemporary world where Globalization has made States open to diverse issues that need thousands of officials to sort out. Governance stresses on the way and manner in which a nation is governed, and this implies that the term is also concerned with ends and impacts felt and seen.

There are the neutral and the non – neutral definitions of Governance (Ikpeze, 1994; Eneanya, 2009). Thus, Good Governance and Bad Governance emerge as two natures of Governance.

African Politics was originally rooted in its culture, but between the periods of Colonialism and Independence till now, it has experienced a change that has always been negative. Governance in most African Countries is not of a good nature. This is easily noted when there is an obvious absence of the features that is associated with Good Governance. Hence what is seen in most African Countries is corruption, a sit – tight mentality to leadership, 'rulership' instead of leadership, 'warlordism', and all manners of vices that are detrimental and

derogatory to the State. Following from this, the authors clearly deduces the reasons for the lack of positive socio – economic transformation in most of the countries in Africa. The Transparency Index highly classifies most African Countries as corrupt, and this has a connection to why development continually eludes us in Africa.

There is need for Good Governance which has to do with transparency and accountability (Obadan, 2003), to be carefully cultivated in these countries as to eliminate corruption and other features of Bad Governance. This therefore necessitates a rethink of strategies on the part of African Countries so as to foster good Governance. The tales of woes ranging from poverty to political instability in the continent have to be put to an end. This cannot happen in a day but rather through a carefully articulated, conscious and cultivated process, there can be a successful fostering of Good Governance in African politics, which will then lead to a change in the sour story of the continent to that of development.

These authors, therefore, delves into the definitions, meanings of Good Governance, its features and the need for projecting Good Governance in African Politics which is gradually tending towards a crisis point if not remedied in the nearest future. In addition, the author examines development, the connection between Good Governance and Development and the need for Good Governance in Africa, if any development will be achieved.

### **THEORIZING GOOD GOVERNANCE**

These authors, earlier on had inferred that the concept of Governance is consequent to diverse interpretations and definitions. This has made the concept problematic due to its elasticity. Pierre and Peters (2000:7) observed that Governance is a notoriously slippery concept, frequently used by social scientist practitioners without a concise definition.

Governance, ordinarily means how public institutions manage public affairs to ensure the effective use of resources to achieve the good

life expected of citizens in a given state (Agagu, 2010:39). Here, there is an allusion to the process and manner by which public institutions carry out their role. And this is reflected in the public policies that are formulated by the institutions. There is thus a relationship between Governance and Public Policy, in that, policies and their implementation determine whether a government is good or bad (Eneanya, 2009:230). Moreover, it also reflects the participation of the citizens of the State. Clearly among other things public policies are central in all matters of governance.

There are neutral and non-neutral definitions of Governance. A classic example of non-neutral definition is Boeninger's (1991) definition of Governance as "good government of society". It is considered a non-neutral definition; first, because it precludes the possibility of bad government; and second, because the author equates Governance with Democracy in the treatise. However, while on one hand, government might not necessarily be good, on the other hand democracy is only one of the alternative forms of Governance (Eneanya, 2009:220).

This conception of Governance then wrest recognition from other forms of government and rests solely on Democracy. That democracy could promote good governance explains why it has been acclaimed to the best form of government. Indeed, there are natural linkages between Good Governance and Democracy to the extent that Democracy also maintains some tenets that are imbued in Good Governance. According to Hyden (1997), authority which is regarded as a key property of the Governance realm expresses the legitimate use of power in a manner that allows the people to elect and control their leaders' actions and conducts.

A good example of a neutral definition of Governance is the World Bank's (2001) definition which conceives Governance as the exercise of political power to manage a nation's affair. When a nation's affairs is managed, the

way it is done is very important, that is, whether it is managed credibly or otherwise is very important; it goes a long way to determine several outcomes. This conception of Governance dwells on political power giving weight to the government and institutions involved in public administration. SDC (2009:1) argues that Governance refers to the diverse and complex mechanisms, resources and institutions through which groups and individuals in society articulate their interests, find compromises in a maze of differing interests, and exercise their legitimate rights and obligations. Clearly, this definition introduces the part the citizens also have to play apart from the government institutions as elucidated by World Bank. Adejumobi (2004) admits that the range of definitions that have surfaced on Governance can be subsumed into two broad categories. The first category focuses on the State and its Institutions while the second category is much more inclusive in its approach; it goes beyond the State and its Institutions, and adds non-state actors as necessary and important participants.

In the second conception of Governance, the citizens in a State derive gratification from the State in that the State is viewed as an agent that enables various mechanisms and others, to ensure the safeguarding and promotion of the citizens' rights and interests; moreover, the fulfillment of the obligations of the citizens is ascertained. The citizens will then be able to participate in political activities which will foster transparency and accountability. This is very much absent in African Politics, in that the citizens have not been accorded their rightful place in governance. Governance should be about the people; thus, the people should be involved in the decision-making process that affects their well-being. This, to an extent, explains the sudden peoples' revolution in Egypt, Libya and some other part of Africa. Even the recently concluded elections in Nigeria portrayed a slightly developed attitude toward politics when compared to disparage past records.

IMF (2007) defined Governance as the process by which decisions are made and implemented (or not implemented). Within government, Governance is the process by which public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources... (IMF, 2007: 128).

It is very obvious that Good Governance is only a part of the very large concept of Governance. Eneanya (2009) noted that it is Good Governance that is required for growth and development because Governance, in its broad sense, connotes both good and bad.

According to the Sweden definition of Good Governance, it "implies an efficient and predictable public sector incorporating participation and the rule of law, i.e., with the characteristics of Democratic Governance. In the concept of Democratic Governance, a stronger emphasis is placed on central democratic institutions like a democratic constitution, a parliament, general elections, participation and an active civil society, as well as, human rights" (SIDA, 2002:6). This is further based on one of the earlier assumptions made that Democracy is usually agreed to as the best form of Governance. In the Sweden conception of Governance, an effort has been made to crystallize the symmetry of Democracy with Good Governance.

The German definition did not stray far from that of the above as Governance was conceived as "constituting effective political institutions and the responsible use of political power and management of public reasons by the State. Essentially, it is about the interaction between Democracy, social welfare and the rule of law. Good Governance thus extends beyond the public sector to include all other actors from the private sector and the society. Good governance is guided by human rights and by the principles of rule of law and democracy, such as equal participation for all" (GTZ, 2009:1). Once again there is that reference to Democracy in the conception of Good Governance. Participation, rule of law, effectiveness and efficiency in management is also gleaned from the description of the concept. Contrasting or in opposition to Good

Governance is Bad Governance. In Bad Governance, there is a direct contrast of the qualities that are identified with it and that of Good Governance. An example is the opposite effect between corruption and accountability. The World Bank (2001, 2006) aptly highlight the major characteristics of Bad Governance to comprise of: failure to properly distinguish between what is private, leading to private appropriation of otherwise public resources; inability to establish a predictable framework for law and government behavior in a manner conducive to development or arbitrariness in the application of laws and rules; excessive rules, regulations, licensing requirements and so forth, which impede the functioning of markets and encourage rent – seeking; priorities that are inconsistent with development, thereby resulting in misallocation of national resources; and an exceedingly narrow base for, or non-transparent, decision-making. Good Governance, therefore, connotes efficacious and operative public administration, good decision-making and the adequate management and control of the nation's resources.

From the foregoing, there is clarity in evaluating that most African States have not yet integrated Good Governance as a necessary imperative in their political lexicons. Most countries in the continent have no effective political institutions, though the institutions and structures might actually exist in theory but with no practical and obvious utility as it relate to addressing the repugnant situations (poverty level) of the citizens. There is inefficiency in the performance of the role required of these institutions. There is a lack of responsible use of political power, leadership ineptitude is prevalent in the former and more grueling is the archaic and crude interpretations of leadership and sovereignty by African leaders. There is an incessant misuse of power that has enhanced the usage of public goods for private purposes which alarmingly bother on chronic corruption. Meanwhile unlike African politics, the politics of the developed countries referred to as the Global North, is very much commendable and a pointer to the foundation or secret behind their

successful development. Democracy in these countries remains a model for African States especially the level of maturity displaced during elections. In regard to the Nigerian elections, the International advocacy group, Human Rights Watch, while acknowledging that the elections were relatively democratic, said they were also “among the bloodiest” in Nigeria's history. Around 800 people were confirmed dead and 65,000 displaced. Infact, the number of people killed during and after the 2011 elections is at least twice as high as the figures from a 2007 poll (BBC Focus on Africa, 2011:8). Then, it is true, from what is deduced here, that democracy has not yet been successfully implemented in Africa when a country such as Nigeria, reputed to be one of the most prominent countries in Africa, is still lagging behind in exhibiting stable and peaceful post-electoral behavior. It is then safe to assert that good governance is lacking in Africa but it can be gradually introduced and cultivated through conscious efforts on the part of the individuals and leadership, and in addition, the recognition and the deliberate practice of the qualities that pertain to Good Governance.

## **THE NUCLEUS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE**

Enclosed in Good Governance are parameters and basic concepts that better elucidate and describe it. These concepts have been regarded as pillars, features, qualities, characteristics of good governance. These basic features are accountability; transparency; participation; rule of law; consensus; efficiency and effectiveness; equity; responsiveness. These features encourage the operationalisation of Good Governance. Various governments have always boasted of good governance and their commitment to it but the states of affairs in these countries prove them wrong. Governance can be measured, whether it is good or bad, by recognizing the manner of proficiency of the nucleus of Governance in the government's decision-making and service delivery in the country. The manner in which the features mentioned above are applied goes a long way to determine the quality of governance.

Participation entails the involvement of the

citizens in the governing of the state. This feature is no doubt very important as it incorporates Democracy with Governance. Participation is to be viewed as a foundation necessary for the other features to find expression. When there is lack of participation on the part of the citizens, the government is void of public opinion and there will definitely be distortions. Unfortunately, also, if the leaders are not modest, they would take advantage of lack of citizens' participation to enrich them. This seems to be the experience of most of the African countries. To start with, the public in most of these countries are unenlightened and illiterate to a fault. This condition has advanced the frivolity of the leaders leading to an unguided experiment with bad governance. As earlier mentioned, Democracy is a system of government that puts in high esteem, the participation of the citizens in a country. The link between Democracy and Good Governance provides an important instrument and incentive for good governance. The instrument is the ability of the people to remove corrupt, unaccountable or ineffective leaders at regular intervals". The emphasis here is on "ability", which participation gives verve to. Recently in few African countries, there have been an increase in the participation of citizens in governance which has impacted positively on their governance. This allows us to see a correlation between participation and governance. According to Gaventa and Valderrama (1999:2), participation involves search for new, more direct ways through which citizens may influence government and hold them accountable.

Consensus involves general agreement and harmony among the people as it concerns public policy. Consent is gotten from the people when the policies of government promotes and protects their interests. Therefore, government has to take into consideration the opinions and views of the people in the processing of outputs and in the distribution of values. Moreover, it should seek to formulate policies that will enhance the well-being of the people. In this case, the agreement of the majority to a moderate decision of government and a good, principled leader, would speak a lot for the

manner and acceptability of the government. A consent – based governance in Africa is still largely absent. Most leaders take a forceful approach to politics, whether democratic or otherwise. Might is right. An instance is Libya's Gadaffi, who despite the lack of consent on the part of most of the Libyans, refused to vacate office until the battle became intensive such that he had to escape.

Transparency means openness in government action, "...and entails the features of freedom of expression on the part of the citizenry, the willingness on the part of government to receive and evaluate new ideas, easy access to information and leadership, among others (Obadan, 2003;213). Transparency involves quite a lot, of which is fiscal transparency where concern is centered on the utilisation of public funds. Public funds are to be used rightly for the purpose for which it is kept, that is, in the interest of the State as it concerns the profiting and development of citizens. Transparency and Accountability go hand in hand, it is necessary that a government be transparent and open in every of its dealings with citizens and public assets so as to evoke trust in government which indirectly invoke patriotism in the people. This is what should be encouraged and cultivated in African countries where most of the activities of government are shrouded in secrecy. In Nigeria, under the former administration, there was unnecessary procrastination among most governors when they were told to declare their assets at the beginning of their tenure in office. This will enable the public to keep track of any sudden over accumulation in their assets during and after their tenure. But the dishonesty of some African leaders has worsened matters. Infact, the public fund are appropriated for private gains. These leaders engage in all manner of accumulation of properties and assets, allowances are approved to further enrich themselves, and contracts are awarded among themselves with a view to embezzling. This is really disadvantageous and has not benefitted Governance in Africa. For Caddy (2001), transparency is about "the provision of information, which has to be objective, complete, relevant, easy to find and easy to understand"; but this is not what obtains in

African countries.

Accountability is a slippery concept in African politics. There is a high rate of unaccountability among the African leaders to the citizens. Accountability is the requirement and expectation of government to justify their activities and decisions. It means sticking faithfully to the constitutional provisions. Public accountability is in no doubt central to modern government and public administration (Ezeani, 2003:1).

On a salient note, accountability is required by government to promote transparency and confidence in governance which translate to development. Abe (2010:93) confirms this link stating that, "while governance stresses the judicious management of resources, accountability holds that people, especially, those in authority, should be answerable for their actions in the course of discharging their duties and responsibilities. These are undoubtedly, necessary preconditions necessary for achieving the aspiration of development". At this point of African politics, where there is lack of certainty in what to do both on the part of government and the individuals, accountability is a very good point for the government to take – off but this still rests on responsible and responsive leaders.

Rule of law has to be adhered to and observed by government and citizens. Consequently, as part of the rule of law, the president and the political leadership are accountable to the people (Zimako, 2009:90). In addition, the citizens must also obey the laws in the country by fulfilling their obligations and ensuring utmost cooperation with the leaders. However, this is only possible when the leadership is an exemplary one, which is presently lacking in African politics. Most African political leaders are above the law; they also interpret and change the law to suit their whims.

Government has to be efficient and effective in its administration and policies. There should be as little as possible distortion in the delivery of outputs. Moreover, adequate infrastructural need and amenities is to be provided by a good

government. This indeed indicates that African leaders have not been committed to Good Governance due to their inefficiency. In some African countries, there is absence of good road networks which has not only affected transportation but also trade and many citizens have also lost their lives to automobile accidents.

The Transparency Index (2009, 2010) rate of most African countries as most – corrupt countries in the world. Apart from corruption, there is unequal distribution of values, among other things. Furthermore, the judicial system of these countries is a write-off with justice acting as a "convenient convenience" to the privileged, triggering an adverse effect on the poor. This has resulted in individuals taking the law into their hands. There is a high level of criminality in Africa as a result of lack of accountability, efficiency and effectiveness of government in providing for the basic needs of the people and engendering economic growth and development. This has given African countries a bad and tarnished reputation or image among the comity of nations. Really, African politics has nose-dived and is continually at crossroads, and Good Governance is the way forward. There is need for a commitment to the cultivation, adoption and sustenance of Good Governance in African politics to restore the dignity of the continent. To do this, African countries have to consciously imbibe these nucleus of Good Governance outlined above

#### **DEVELOPMENT: A NECESSARY IMPERATIVE IN AFRICA**

Development can be interpreted subjectively implying that it can differ in meaning to various people. The orthodox development theory treats development as the economic growth measured in terms of relationship of the Gross National Income (GNI) to per capita income. Development is not easy to come by especially State-wise. In personal terms, development also requires effort and capability. It is not mere wishing or imagination. It takes commitment, honesty and hard work done consistently.

Development depicts a specified state of



growth or advancement in which case changes are noticeable. Though development is widely known and generally desirable, its achievement differ from one country to another, therefore, scholars classified countries into developed and underdeveloped depending on certain parameters. These parameters of development are national income; per capita income; level of inequality; rate of literacy; maternal health; life expectancy; industrialization; technology and skill; high level of infrastructural development; basic nutrition; social services; universal housing.

African countries are generally classified as underdeveloped; the measurement of development in Africa is poor and disconsolating. There have been different reasons advanced for the poor state of development in Africa ranging from the exploitation in colonialism, the traditional societies of Africa in need of modernization to the leadership ineptitude; advanced respectively by the dependency theory, modernization theory and leadership theories.

However, there is a general view that development will lead to good (positive) change manifested in increased capacity of people to have control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology; and obtain physical necessities of life (food, clothing, shelter), employment, equality, participation in government, political and economic independence, adequate education, gender inequality, sustainable development and peace. This is why some people have argued that the purpose of development is to improve people's lives by expanding their choices, freedom and dignity (Igbuzo, 2006:1). It is sad to note that all African countries are underdeveloped in the real sense of the concept. Recently, South Africa and few other countries have been commended as developing. It is ironic that African countries have most resources and strategic raw materials needed and utilized for global economic development, yet they are underdeveloped.

In this paper, it is necessary to point out that the

need for development cannot be over – emphasized in Africa. It is most important in all aspect of life in these countries. It has been established by research that Africa fares poorly in all development indices. The average annual percentage growth of GDP in Nigeria from 1990 – 2000 was 2.4, in Ghana 4.3 and in Egypt 4.6; compared to that of developed countries, it is indeed minute coming from the wealthiest among African countries, what then is to be said for the poorest? Dismal! Thus, the need for development is obvious. Efforts have also been made to engender development in these countries; they involve Millennium Development Goals, Foreign Aid, Integration and others.

Development is necessary to increase the standard of living in Africa; it is necessary to revive Africa from the doldrums of poverty; it is needed to restore the dignity of Africa and give Africa a hope.

Africa's desire to develop should involve a conscious process in harnessing optimally its human and natural resources, which should be encouraged by investing in human capital. Todaro (1982) defines economic development in terms of reduction or elimination of poverty, inequality and unemployment within the context of a growing economy. Goulet (1971) went on to distinguish three basic components or core values that must be mentioned in any meaning of development. They are life sustenance, self-esteem and freedom. Life sustenance has to do with the provision of basic needs such as feeding, shelter, etc; self esteem is about confidence in one's own worth or abilities while freedom means the power or right of people to act, speak or think freely. In 1990, there were alternative measures of economic and social development as the former became insufficient. The UN (1990) Human Development Report analyses that these measures are; Human Development Index (HDI) and Sustainable Human Development (SHD). Human Development Index is a process of development which create conducive environment for people, individual and collectively, to develop their full potential and

have a reasonable opportunity of leading productive and creative lives under a fixed atmosphere that engenders individual's productivity. Sustainable human development is a development that meets the development needs of the present generation without sacrificing the needs of the future generation (UNDP, 1990).

Earlier on, these writers mentioned that MDGs, Foreign Aid, integration and other have been proposed as a solution to the problem of development in Africa. Browne (2007) posits that development can be induced by other factors other than aid. Such other factors include export proceeds and remittances from abroad. But so far they have yielded little results. Riddell (2005:3) maintains that "the international aid system is no longer fit for purpose especially in relation to the poorest country. It needs to be radically overhauled...". This implies that some of the approaches taken to development by these countries are inadequate and in need of not only reparation but innovation that stems from a holistic analysis.

Furthermore, development entails progress, enhancement and advancement. That is, an improvement per time in both individuals and the society at large. Underlining the foregoing is the introduction of the individual dimension to the development process and progress. In contrast, Alan Thomas stated that development and progress are not the same. To Thomas, "progress implies continual development reaching higher and higher level perhaps without limit, whereas development means a spontaneous and unconscious natural process of development from within, which may entail destruction of the old order to achieve the new. International Development implies deliberate efforts to achieve higher level in terms of set objectives". (Thomas, 2000:1). Therefore, deliberate efforts need to be applied for Africa to develop and achieve a higher level in their set objectives. Igbuzo (2005:22) contend that there are three perspectives from which we can view development. "The first is to see development as a vision, description or a measure of the state of being of a desirable society...the second

perspective of development is to see it as an historical change in which societies are transformed over a long period of time...the third is to see it as consisting of deliberate efforts aimed at improvements on the part of various agencies, including governments and all kinds of organizations and social movements..."

From the foregoing, it is obvious that development is a complicated concept and even more demanding in practice, it defies a simple conceptualization. However, it includes all the efforts, policies and programmes that can encourage and strengthen democracy, promote human development, reduce poverty, and more, necessary for an improved and high standard of living. For this to be possible, Good Governance among other radical changes must transpire.

#### **DEVELOPMENT AND GOOD GOVERNANCE: THE AFRICAN QUEST**

In precedence, there has been an allusion to the correlation between Good Governance and Development. The positive influence of good governance on national development is a derivative of the checks and safeguards it provides against anti – development forces, especially corruption (Eneanya, 2009:227)

There have been development projects embarked on in Africa but they have achieved little. This is because Good Governance is the only force that can make the other variables responsive. Good Governance comprises of effectiveness in leadership and followership. Governance has to do with the way power is exercised to meet the defined organizational goals. In organized political societies, State governance is carried out by the government, while the ends of governance are directed toward the interest of the people and the development of the society as a whole. However, governance means different things to different people or organizations. While some leaders construe governance as a call to service, others construe it as an avenue for self – enrichment. In most African States, governance is perceived by some leaders and followers as a means for accumulating wealth. African

countries are involved in a crisis of governance to a very large extent. Indeed, the African problems include the conduct of governance within an ethnic framework; personalization of leadership and irresponsible use of power which is at variance with the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy, crass opportunism of a political class sacrificing national economic, development objectives for selfish material gains, weak, shallow and badly-run institutions and total neglect of social welfare; sacrifice of merit on the altar of ethnic exigency - the so-called federal character, corruption and the pursuit of personal wealth at the expense of the common good, all these are antithetical to the achievement of equitable growth and development and are prime factors responsible for present development crisis. As expressed by Ake (2001), many factors have been offered to explain the apparent failure of the development enterprise in Africa: "the colonial legacy, social pluralism and its centrifugal tendencies, the corruption of leaders, poor labour discipline, the lack of entrepreneurial skills, poor planning and incompetent management, inappropriate policies, the stifling of market mechanisms, low level of technical assistance, the limited inflow of foreign capital, failing commodity of prices and favourable terms of trade, and low level of saving and investment. These factors are not irrelevant to the problem. Alone or in combination, they could be serious impediment to development. However, the assumption so readily made that there has been a failure of development is misleading. The problem is not so much that development has failed as that it was never really on the agenda in the first place. By all indications, political conditions in Africa are the greatest impediment to development" (Claude Ake, 2001:1). Here, Ake affirms that the greater barrier to development in Africa is its manner of politics. Omoweh (2003) also argues that African crisis does not manifest most in the economic context and so policymakers should not adopt an economistic approach to the crisis because the root cause is political. Omoweh (2003), "...an African-wide development agenda in the Twenty-First century calls for a deeper articulation of the African crisis and the strategy for its recovery. Not only will it be a

holistic strategy, but places higher premium on the right political fundamentals than economic considerations".

Nelson (1991) believes that, "the link between elements of good governance and economic growth are plain. Clear laws, predictably enforced, reliable information, reasonable efficient expansion, maintenance of infrastructure and basic service, and no more than moderate corruption, are clearly growth-promoting; their opposites clearly hamper growth". Nelson (1991) opines that a commitment to the practice of Good Governance would reverse the development in Africa to a positive one. Therefore, the input of politics in development is crucial and not to be taken lightly; a negative input would hamper development. In fact, the "government-led theory" of economic development (Uwatt, 2000) hinges on this linkage.

Good Governance enables proper management and administration of the State thereby provoking public policies that are beneficial to the citizens and delivering services that in turn inspires development. African countries have to realize, in their quest for development, that external interventions can do little if not nothing. There has to be changes within the African polity, then and only then can there be a positive change in Africa. Development in Africa can only be generated and motivated by a commitment to Good Governance. UNDP conceptualizes governance as the system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interactions within and among the state, civil society and the private sector... (UNDP, 2006:1). The political system is able to aggregate the individuals in a State to do anything due to its political power and legitimacy. If development would transpire in Africa, the political system will be responsible for mobilizing the resources of the State to realizing meaningful development which is first and foremost measured by the State's commitment to the welfare of its citizens. To fail in this is to provide the ground for revolution.

Hence, if the political system must be the

propeller of development, it can only do so through Good Governance which allows the society to effectively organize itself to make and implement decision— achieving mutual understanding, agreement and action. It also allows for the utilization of mechanisms and processes for citizens and groups to articulate their interest, mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations (UNDP, 2006:1). Therefore, Good Governance implies the involvement of both citizens and government with the government acting as the motivator. Development can be initiated and encouraged by the conscious practice of transparency and accountability. A reduction of corruption can go a long way in reducing poverty and providing funds for vital uses. Moreover, there can be cooperation between the public and the private as it concerns service delivery. In essence, the individuals are also given a chance to input their contributions to the society. This promotes creativity which is really a big step towards economic prosperity.

As Agbude (2010) notes that there is a nexus between Good governance and ethical leadership. Ethical leadership is committed to morality which induces accountability, transparency, dedication, responsiveness and responsibility among others. Africa lacks ethical leadership which has accounted for its bad governance, however, as long as this continues to happen there would be no positive development in the continent, notwithstanding external efforts. What this translates to is that Africa would continue to be relegated to the back, politically and economically, in the comity of nations, if it does not commit to cultivating Good governance as the solution to its development problem.

We may argue in favour of the claim that “Trade, not Aid” would develop Africa. But from visible indications, it would be safe to further argue that Good governance, not trade nor aid or any other thing, would develop Africa. Nevertheless, all these other variables are good initiatives but that is all they will ever be. Rather, Good governance is much more than an initiative, it goes deeper and if Africa wants a

solution to its crisis of relevance and development, it has to be something that can transform the roots. This does not imply that these development initiatives are not important but that without Good governance at the base, they will fail. Therefore, Good governance is the solid foundation and sustenance necessary for the other variables to thrive in African quest for development.

## CONCLUSION

Good governance clearly abhors corruption, inequality, inefficient utilization of resources in the delivery of public services, ethnic politics among other things; the foregoing are among what account for the underdevelopment in African countries. Then, if good governance abhors them, Good governance is really what Africa needs to filter out the 'viruses' of underdevelopment and get a reverse result to development.

Furthermore, the fact that Good governance engenders transparency, which requires that government consult broadly to ascertain citizens interests, publicize plans and decisions, share information widely and in good time, and consistently act in an open manner (Centre for Democracy and Governance, 2001:1), reaffirms it as a principal requirement for development.

## RECOMMENDATION

This paper hence recommends that Good governance be instituted in the system of government in Africa by action and not by mere pontificating, and there should be a quick departure from the dubious manner of politics and governance, presently observed. Moreover, this paper reemphasizes the political roots of African development problems and advises that more efforts should be geared towards the redemption of African politics to the practice of good governance, which will spawn development. It also advocates that the government cooperates and enlist the assistance of capable and skilled citizens in the delivery of services. In addition, it recommends the conscious cultivation of good governance in Africa through deliberate efforts and step – by – step application of the basic facets of good

governance. It also recommends the political orientation and socialization of the citizens in African countries. This study posits that good governance is as much the duty of the leaders as well as the citizens, and it recommends commitment and consistency to it on the part of both.

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