

# **RETHINKING AFRICAN GOVERNANCE**

**By**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Discussions on the future of African development led in the late 1980s led to a critical refocusing on governance. Since then enormous resources have been poured by African governments and development partners into improving governance. This paper reviews this experience and suggests a different approach to enhancing African governance, taking a cue from the present consensus on the subject.

States exist to promote the welfare of their citizens. They do this mainly by providing public services, services that cannot or will not be efficiently, effectively or equitably provided by private sector agencies without prodding from public authorities. The quality of these public services has a direct impact on a county's economy, social integration and living standards. But African states have failed where it matters most—in the provision of adequate public facilities and services that will energize economic performance, consolidate democracy and peace in the continent. This paper situates this systemic failure in the triple failure of African public service management institutions to attract and retain talent, to mobilize resources to pay for scarce skills and also to create appropriate institutional mechanisms that would ensure high productivity and responsible performance within the public sector.

The paper discusses the present international consensus for assisting Africans to tackle these problems as embedded in the Paris Declaration of 2005 and shows that the program is not only over-ambitious and impractical but also a-historical. The paper then proposes an alternative strategy that responds to the above-mentioned challenges in a way that ensures that Africa modernizes its public service institutions to support democratic developmental states that improve the welfare of their own people in the age of global competition for scarce human resource skills.

## **Introduction**

In 1989, the World Bank in its long-term perspective study on Africa concluded that the single most important challenge confronting African countries was governance. It asserted after reviewing the major challenges confronting African development: *Underlying the litany of Africa's development is a crisis of governance*<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank, Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth, A Long Term Perspective Study, Washington D.C 1989, p.60

For two decades since that time, substantial resources have been poured into improving governance in the region. While there have been improvements in some aspects of governance in the continent, the same assertion can still be made about the relationship between the continent's development and its governance. This is because the fundamental governance challenges confronting the continent have remained. In this paper, we discuss these fundamental governance challenges and assess governance improvements efforts of the last two decades in Africa in the light of these challenges. A different approach to governance improvement in the region is canvassed.

## **1. State Capacity for Public Infrastructure Management and Its Implications for Improved Governance and Development**

That the private sector is the engine of growth has been a common refrain in the development discourse since the 1980s and 1990s. While private sector growth has indeed transformed the manner in which public and private business is conducted in the continent, perhaps the most important lesson today is that the services that the private sector will not or cannot provide are essential for society. Public services are essential for economic growth and nation building. Organizations that provide these services are referred to as part of a public administration system (PAS) of ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs).

Public services (PS) play a critical role in the growth of any economy. The quality of public services (infrastructure) is one of the defining features of economic growth and modernization—it ensures that all economic production can be brought to the market at affordable prices. Quality public services also ensure effective communication, basic education, health care and a host of other public goods. Public services are also essential for social integration. They are important in all states, but especially in those that are just emerging from conflicts or colonial and post-colonial oppression. Finally, public services and public administration systems are essential for democracy.

Classical theorists claimed that democracy cannot be formed or consolidated unless the state has a reliable, competent bureaucratic organization at its disposal for three principal reasons. First, a democracy requires a state (bureaucracy) that can carry out its main functions of citizen protection, collection of taxes, delivery of services in an orderly, predictable and legal manner. Secondly, bureaucracy is crucial as an impersonal but accountable instrument for carrying out state functions in a democracy to assure state legitimacy and ensure that it serves all of society, not segments of it (an issue that is responsible for much of the conflict that goes on across the continent). Finally, a permanent, professional bureaucracy lessens the pain of regime change from one party to the other in a multiparty system if the top echelons are recruited not on the basis of party affiliation but professionalism and technical expertise (Suleiman, 1979).

Public services are categorized into basic, intermediate and final goods. A distinction is also made between *provision* and *production* of public services. Provision has to do with authority while production is the conversion of technical inputs into outputs. While the latter can be undertaken by any organization on behalf of the public, the former can only be undertaken by the public sector itself—hence the need for a cadre of persons who understand the scientific issues and technicalities required for tackling social problems. They make public policy proposals, which are authorized by the political executives and implemented by another cadre of public servants. In all, four main groups of public servants are required to process services to the citizens who are the ultimate consumers of the public services. These are: *Scientists, Professionals, Administrators* and *Politicians*. These have been consolidated into two major groups in most PASs, although a third group, advisers (with either political or technical expertise), is increasingly becoming important. These straddle the two broad groups -temporary political groups that provide executive leadership and the permanent administrative group that provide professional and technical leadership and account for the use of public resources. In some countries, advisers are regarded as a part of the permanent professional officers. In others, they are regarded as a part of the political class. In this paper, we distinguish between *public services* as infrastructure and *public administration* as the system of officials that are recruited and bound by rules to provide and promote public services. We also focus on the permanent professional group of senior civil servants because they provide managerial and professional policy management expertise.

Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the idea of developmental states was coined to refer to countries whose political leadership had either adopted a developmental philosophy or using the state as an instrument of industrialization. In a sense, it is possible to suggest that all states have a developmental thrust to the extent that they commit to building the infrastructure or public goods for development activities. However, the degree of commitment and action consistent with developmentalism varies. In the World Development Report of 1993, the World Bank (1993: 27) classified provision of pure public goods (defense, law and order, property rights, macro-economic management, public health) and anti-poverty programs as ‘minimal functions’ or *basic public goods* expected to be rendered by the state in all countries. *Intermediate goods* were: those addressing externalities (basic education, environmental protection, regulation of monopoly, overcoming imperfect information (e.g. insurance, financial regulation, consumer protection). Final (activist) goods were: coordination of private activity such as fostering markets and asset redistribution (see also Ostrom et al 1993). By this definition, developmental states are those that go beyond the minimal to undertaking intermediate and final goods provision.

Two important policy issues have attracted renewed attention to the concept of developmental states. The first is the discussion on failed states—states that are not able to guarantee the basic needs of their citizens for safety and law, order and justice or any of the other basic needs are referred to as failed states or low income countries under stress (LICUS). A second development has been the fourth global democratic wave that swept the world since the fall of the Berlin wall. Whereas development was regarded as the precondition for the sustenance of liberal democracy in any country, the idea was put

forward by liberal scholars and institutions that democracy was the basis for economic development.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of African countries is the poor quality of their public service infrastructure and of their public administration capacity (World Bank 2004, UNDP 2007). One reason for this situation lies in the failure to attract and effectively utilize scarce skills or talent. But behind this failure are two even bigger challenges: the failure to mobilize domestic financial resources to pay for skilled and essential staffers; and the failure to forge appropriate institutional arrangements that ensure high productivity of units and individuals engaged in the production and provision of public services. These multiple failures define the failure of the African state. In this section therefore, we discuss state capacity and its relationship to improved governance and development because the African state, even after over 50 years of political independence, remains poorly developed.

States are defined by four key attributes: a) geographical penetration; b) social regulation; c) resource mobilization; d) efficient and credible resource allocation (Midgal, 1988). These can, however, be categorized into two broad elements: indicators of the state's own *internal* component or intrinsic characteristics and indicators of its effectiveness in relating *externally* to society<sup>2</sup>. For this paper, we adopt the five-fold classification of capacity into *political* (creation and sustenance of legitimate public institutions), *regulatory* (enforcement of laws over whole territorial space), *technical* (expertise to formulate and implement policies using advanced analytical tools), *administrative* (routine management of personnel and finance using objective management principles) and *extractive* (mobilization of revenues to underwrite state policies, programs) (Polidano, 2000). The poor development of these five capacities defines the contours of the multiple crises of the state in Africa although the most serious is the deficit in technical capacity (Olowu, 2003b, African Development Bank 2005). This limitation of policy intelligence within the state impacts negatively on all other aspects of the society and economy. It also severely limits probable governance improvements.

Unfortunately, for most African countries, it is not only that overall state capacity is weak, there is even evidence that for many countries, state capacity has declined over time (Adamolekun 1988, Mkandawire 2001, Olowu 2001, Olomola et al 2009). It is strange but true that even in states that have invested huge amounts in educating and training their capable citizens, have not been able to attract and retain them due to a variety of factors that are discussed in the next section.

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<sup>2</sup> Other scholars adopt other approaches. Fukuyama (2005:9), for instance, distinguishes the *scope* (different functions and goals taken on by governments) of state capacity from its *strength* (ability to plan and execute policies/enforce laws transparently). Hesselbein, Golooba-Mutebi & Putzel (2006:1), in their work on state reconstruction in Africa, focus on three dimensions of state capacity: political organization, security and administration systems, with the latter emphasizing state revenue performance.

## **2. Human Resource Management Dilemmas Confronting African Public Services:**

The key to effectiveness and good governance is capacity—both institutional and human. Appropriate institutional incentives must exist for high productivity, but even this is impossible in the absence of scarce skills. And this is where many African countries confront a tremendous challenge. The supply and demand for high quality human (technical) resource skills have fallen over time in most African countries. Taking the supply side first, it is well known that the institutions for producing skilled personnel—the higher education system in most of the African countries are in a state of disrepair. Many countries have not been able to invest in higher education, preferring to focus scarce financial resources on basic education as demanded by international finance institutions as conditions for adjustment loan lending (Mama 2004). Yet research conducted by the World Bank (TFHE 2000) and others have confirmed that higher education impact positively not only on development and governance improvement but also on all other correlates of development (Lin 2004, Bloom et al 2006, Awortwi 2008). Only 3 out of 22 country PRSPs (see below) identified higher education as a priority. Six were planning to cut back resources to the sub-sector.

On demand side, governance improvements that lead to enhanced accountability of governments to the governed should lead to enhanced public sector performance but such institutions take many years to muster sufficient fiscal and human resources at national and local levels. In the meantime, in the era of globalization, the available experts are moving into countries where they can attract the highest pay to support their families. This is further complicated by the fact that due to a number of factors (ageing populations, new technologies, mobility of multi-national businesses and finance etc), the rich countries are attracting skills from the developing world with elaborate skilled migrant programs. There is now a clear consensus that this could have an impact on poverty reduction efforts in poor countries.

However, some argue that the brain drain could actually become brain gain under certain conditions. If the sending countries are able to receive huge remittances—some countries like Cape Verde receive over 20% of their GDP from remittances, higher than development aid—such remittances can actually stimulate the economy. The pros and cons of the migration of scarce skills are summarized in Table 1. Africa has suffered more than other regions of the world (see below) but the impact has been uneven among the countries due to differing human resource management policies and prevailing socio-political conditions in these countries (Table 2).

**TABLE 1: Pros and Cons of Skilled Migration**

<b>Possible Positive Effects of Skilled Migration</b>	<b>Possible Negative Effects of Skilled Migration</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased global economic efficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of highly skilled workers and reduced quality of essential services</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good for the individual (in most cases) especially where there are no new opportunities in the home country</li> <li>• Inflow of remittances and foreign exchange benefit receiving individuals and countries</li> <li>• Emigration may reduce unemployment in some sectors in sending countries</li> <li>• Technology and investments and venture capital from diasporas</li> <li>• Increased trade flows between sending and receiving countries</li> <li>• May stimulate investment in education and individual human capital investments</li> <li>• Charitable activities of diasporas can assist in relief and local community development of sending countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced growth and productivity due to reduced stock of highly skilled workers and negative externalities. Lower returns from public investments in education</li> <li>• Selective migration may cause increasing income disparities in sending country</li> <li>• Sending country loses potential tax revenues</li> <li>• Risk of creating a ‘remittance economy’ and dependency among receivers, a problem exacerbated when remittances decrease over time</li> <li>• Inflationary potential of remittances especially on real estate, in some areas</li> <li>• Reduces the size of (relevant) political classes</li> </ul>
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Source: Ferrant et al, *Migration and Development: Opportunities and Challenges for Policy Makers* International Organization for Migration Research Series No. 22, 2006, p. 8

TABLE 2: ESTIMATES OF THE BRAIN DRAIN FROM AFRICAN COUNTRIES: EMIGRATION RATES FOR TERTIARY EDUCATED, 2000

<b>% Of Nationals with Tertiary Education abroad</b>	<b>COUNTRIES</b>
>50	Cape Verde, Gambia, Seychelles, Somalia
25-50	Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sao Tome & Principe, S/Leone
5-25	Algeria, Benin, Burundi, Cote d’Ivoire, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Congo DRC (formerly Zaire), Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Morocco, Rwanda, South Africa, Senegal, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe
<5	Botswana, Lesotho, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Egypt, Libya and Namibia

Source: Davesh Kapur & John McHale 2005

Poor (African) countries thus confront a dilemma: they need their scarce skills, but given the erosion and compression of salaries paid to scarce skills in the public service, there is both internal and external migration of such skills—out of the public service and out of the country respectively. A number of studies have documented the stagnation of African public sector wages and its high compression levels. Even though African countries do not have comparable levels of civil service employee size as other regions of the world, the problem is that public sector wage bill is such a huge proportion of total gross domestic product. This is because of low productivity and the tendency to employ the wrong types of skills—a large number of low paid laborers while huge vacancies exist in different segments of the public service. Whereas reform efforts focused on reduction of public service size and cost in the 1980s, the most important challenge was to have a pay policy that attracted needed skills and it is only in the present century that many countries began to adopt a progressive pay policy to attract and retain the competitive skills (Kiragu & Mukandala 2005, Olomola et al. 2009)

Just to take two country examples, one from the southern and the other from the western parts of the continent, a World Bank/Malawi government study on Malawi's civil service found that the structure of the civil service was 'seriously skewed'. *Lower grades such as watchmen, cleaners, workmen, messengers, were overstaffed whereas senior positions often remained vacant for years due to the lack of qualified staff to fill them. Further compounding this problem was the fact that the exact number of junior civil servants in the industrial and subordinate classes was unknown. This was attributed to the fact that recruitment of the lowest grades was delegated to individual departments, who often used this authority as a form of patronage by hiring large numbers of clients or to create so-called "ghost-staff", that is non-existing employees whose salaries went into the pockets of senior civil servants* (Dulani 2009: 87-88). Malawi's human resource skill shortages were described by the World Health Organisation as 'the greatest challenge facing Malawi' with only 10% of its 617 health facilities satisfying the human resource requirements for delivering essential health care (DFID 2006). Nearly 75% of posts remain unfilled (ibid, p. 120)

Similarly, the implementation of a policy of rightsizing in Nigeria led to the removal of 67,840 public servants in 2005 enabling the country to inject new skills with a high-flyer programme planned at 3000 staffers for the next three years. In addition, the monetisation of ten specific perquisites in June/July, 2003 (residential accommodation, furniture allowance, utility allowance, domestic servant allowance, motor vehicle loan, fueling, maintenance and transport allowance, leave grant, meal subsidy, entertainment allowance and personal assistant allowance) in the same country helped the government to reduce its recurrent expenditure from 80% of total expenditure in 1999 to one half 40% in 2006 (Olomola et al 2009: 146).

Donor policies (e.g. stabilization/adjustment including cutback management) and practices of creating enclaves have further aggravated matters because they ensure that expatriates earn huge monies at the expense of indigenes. But many African national governments have also departed from meritocratic recruitment into patronage and

ethnicity and the dominance of privileged groups in access not only to good jobs but also quality education. Hence, on both the supply and demand sides, scarce skills have become difficult to attract and/or retain.

A study sponsored by the British Department for International Aid (DFID) estimated that while brain drain (the emigration of tertiary educated persons for permanent long stays abroad) was a global phenomenon for all countries and especially developing countries, the latter lost 10-30% of their skilled talents in 1990 but Africa was the worst affected among the world's regions. The continent lost 75% of its tertiary educated work force followed by Asia/Pacific (52%), Latin America (48%) and Eastern Europe (20%) (Lowell & Findlay 2001, 5). Paradoxically, it is the poorest countries that actually require the services of the scarce skills for which they are unable to pay in a globally competitive market and must lose them to richer and better-resourced countries. With respect specifically to Africa, the United Kingdom *Commission for Africa* (2005) laments that the continent spends an estimated US\$4 billion annually to recruit some 100,000 skilled expatriates who replace some 70,000 African professionals or managers that leave annually to work abroad. Complex push and pull factors underlie the decision of African professionals and managers to migrate but the consequence is that high quality of professionals and managers declined precipitously in most public and private sectors of African countries in the 90s and in the new millennium—in spite of increased aid commitments by donors<sup>3</sup>. The AIDS/HIV virus and Africa's precarious health infrastructure especially in the rural areas have further aggravated this decline.

Other research findings from across the continent confirm this reality. Kiragu and Mukandala (2003) did a review for the British Department for International Development (DFID) and concluded that 'on the basis of global experience ... low public salaries are a principal deterrent to the recruitment and retention of highly qualified and motivated employees among the professional and managerial ranks' in Africa (2, see also Olowu, 2003a). Comparatively poor pay at the higher levels has remained in spite of enormous efforts at public or even civil service reform and Africa has been worst hit. In their sample of seven African countries, they found that all the countries except for two, Uganda and Tanzania, have experienced declines in salary levels in real terms. Within the sample, Botswana had the highest pay levels of US\$40,000 per annum followed by Uganda, US\$12,908 with Ghana being the least with US\$3,373 for the highest paid public servants. Paradoxically, unskilled, semi-skilled, low-grade personnel are comparatively less poorly paid than the senior, more highly skilled grades when compared with private sector comparatives due to compression of salaries in the years before reform.

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<sup>3</sup> The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2006) estimated that even though 25% of Overseas Development Assistance or \$US15billions were spent per annum was spent on capacity development, mostly in African countries, capacity actually declined during this period. Similarly, World Bank's Operations Evaluations Department found that less than 40% of projects completed by the end of the 1990s—most of these in Africa--had significant, sustainable institutional development impact. World Bank, *Capacity Building in Africa: An OED Evaluation of World Bank Support*, (2005) and the UN's Millennium Report, *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals* (2005).

There are several consequences of this lopsided situation—first, turnover and vacancy rates are high at top levels. Second, in the absence of competent and highly motivated professional supervisors at the higher levels, leadership in the public service suffers—not only in terms of technical inputs but also in terms of serving the gate-keeping function—and this is an important function of senior civil servants in all democracies, hence their role as accounting officers. Moreover, as the research findings (especially from Tanzania and Uganda) demonstrate, poorly paid civil servants resort to different strategies to make ends meet—moonlighting, absenteeism, extortion, padding allowances and perennial conference attendance and official travels, etc.

What compounds matters is that African leaders and their development partners perceive this problem primarily as one of financing. Many African countries are dependent on aid finance for their development and in many cases even their recurrent expenditure. Countries like Uganda or Mozambique are barely able to provide a quarter of their total budget. But many of the Francophone African countries are not any different. What is not often fully understood though is that most African countries have not really tapped into their revenue possibilities. Examples from across the continent shows that when a dedicated effort is made—through executive agencies—countries have been able to raise substantial sums from their domestic economies. There is also evidence that a lot of financial opportunities—that were once exploited such as property taxes in most cities outside of southern and eastern Africa and graduated taxes in east Africa—are not being utilized today. Moreover, the experience of most countries that are mineral rich (like Angola, Nigeria, Congo or Chad) underscores the point that the problem may not be one of lack of resources as with the fact that effective institutions do not exist to ensure the effective, responsible and accountable use of such resources. Unfortunately, as we shall see below the prevailing international regime for assisting poor countries could actually further disadvantage these countries. This has been compounded because the large fiscal deficits of the 1980s and 90s meant (ranged from –3.9 to 1.1 in the continent for 2000–2003) meant that many African countries had to rely on international finance institutions in the hope that they can reverse their growing expenditures and weak revenue base over time. An important question therefore is whether the present international consensus on governance and development provide an adequate response to the human and fiscal resources dilemma confronting poor countries as exist in much of Africa. This is an issue we focus in the next section.

### **3.Challenges arising from the Present Development and Governance Improvement Consensus**

Once it was accepted in development circles that economic development must go beyond economic policy of getting prices right that was embedded in the structural adjustment programs of the 1980s, there was a shift to the focus on institutions. Governance rose to the center stage of development discourse and, for international financial institutions, became an important explanation for development failure in poor countries with particular reference to Africa as cited in the opening paragraph.

Key elements of the development/governance consensus have been woven into the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and also the Paris declaration (PD) on aid effectiveness of 2005, which is regarded as an improvement on what was referred to as the neo-conservative Washington consensus (Harrison 2007). The main elements of the Paris declaration include:

- *National leadership and ownership of the development process, Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks and annual budgets; Strengthening of ‘Country systems and institutions and procedures for managing development resources that are effective, accountable and transparent by recipient and donor countries. ;*
- Donors align with partner strategies for development and where appropriate use *common budget support mechanism* to deliver aid; harmonize their assistance to partner or recipient countries to promote *complementarity, collaborative behavior, and use of common arrangements that simplify procedures.*
- Donors and recipient commit to *mutual accountability for development results in partner and donor countries. .*

The Paris declaration represents progress on many fronts. It commits donors to increase aid while at the same time prodding recipient countries to enhance their system capacities and especially to strengthen their financial and public management reform. Some specific indicators have been devised to monitor progress or otherwise at international and country levels especially tying progress to MDG targets. Finally, donors and recipients commit to improving their accountability frameworks and the five principles of ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results and mutual accountability.

The problem is with the implicit frameworks– political/institutional, economic and financial--that have been constructed to guide this program. The most serious institutional and human resource implications are highlighted below.

First, the governance or ***political/institutional framework*** is overly ambitious. It assumes that poor countries with long histories of autocracy and repression can be transformed into democracies overnight. That this is impractical is reflected in the spasmodic record of countries in the region on multi-party elections. A review of national elections conducted between 2004 and 2008 in Africa shows that with the exception of only 6 of the total of 51 country case-events, there was either no change at all in the leadership or no regime change. In Libya and Swaziland, there have been no changes since independence and in two cases leadership/regime change happened for the first time since independence. Unfortunately, one of these two was Mauritania, which imploded recently in a military coup. Among the electoral events are those of Togo and Congo where the electoral system merely confirmed the emergence of monarchy as life-presidents successfully turned their rule over to their respective sons; another country (Egypt) might suffer a similar fate. Elections have been marred by violence (some of the most

publicized cases occurred in Ethiopia, Kenya and Zimbabwe in recent times), alleged and verified vote rigging and other forms of corruption of the electoral process and the absence of a level playing field for all participants. Even though the OECD gives a glowing report of how ‘more and more countries..were legitimizing their governments through universal elections’ in a report issued in April 2008 on recent trends in African politics, it also noted that ‘turn-out rate was particularly low and instability rose slightly even in traditionally stable countries.’<sup>4</sup> Specifically, it noted that ‘what distinguishes the continent is the very high level of violence associated with demonstrations of social dissent’. Such demonstrations are regarded as an important barometer of good governance.

And when we turn to the available statistics on governance in the continent, there is not much to cheer about. We review two of the most popular assessments of governance. The first is the World Bank Governance surveys of 1996-2004 and the second is the African Governance Survey undertaken by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA, 2005). What do these assessments/measurements tell us about the state of African governance today?

**TABLE 3: LARGE CHANGES IN GOVERNANCE 1996-2004**

	- Change	+ Change	Total Number	% Negative Change
<b>ALL COUNTRIES</b>				
Voice & Accountability	8	11	19	42.1
Political Stability	15	6	21	71.4
Gov't Effectiveness	4	3	7	57.1
Regulatory Quality	4	9	13	30.8
Rule of Law	5	9	14	35.7
Control of Corruption	6	7	13	46.2
<b>AFRICAN COUNTRIES</b>				
Voice & Accountability	4	4	8	50
Political Stability	4	4	8	50
Gov't Effectiveness	3	1	4	75
Regulatory Quality	2	0	2	100
Rule of Law	3	0	3	100
Control of Corruption	2	0	2	100

Source: Calculated from D. Kaufmann, A. Kraay & M. Mastruzzi, ‘Governance Matters IV: Governance Indicators for 1996-2004’ [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org), Table 4.

<sup>4</sup> An ADB report (2006) notes that over half (57%) of all of the world’s fragile states are in Africa –55% of the total population and 76% of sub-Saharan Africa..most of these states are in conflict or just out of one.

**TABLE 4: AFRICAN GOVERNANCE REPORT—CORE AND SUB-INDICATORS<sup>5</sup>**

<b>No</b>	<b>Indicator/Sub-Indicator</b>	<b>Score (%)</b>
1	Political System	72
2	Political Party Freedom & Security	68
3	Power Distribution	66
<b>4</b>	<b>Political Representation</b>	<b>65</b>
5	Electoral Process Independence & Credibility	61
6	Investment Policies Attractiveness	57
<b>7</b>	<b>Civil Society &amp; Media Independence</b>	<b>53</b>
8	Judiciary's Effectiveness	53
9	Legislature's Effectiveness	53
10	Pro-Investment Tax Policies	49
<b>11</b>	<b>Economic Management</b>	<b>49</b>
12	Respect for Rule of Law	49
<b>13</b>	<b>Human Rights &amp; Rule of Law</b>	<b>48</b>
14	Law Enforcement Organs	47.5
15	Respect for Human Rights	47.5
<b>16</b>	<b>Corruption Control</b>	<b>47</b>
17	Institutional Effectiveness & Accountability	46
18	State Structure Management	45
<b>19</b>	<b>Executive's Effectiveness</b>	<b>44</b>
20	Civil Service Transparency & Accountability	43
21	Gov't Services Efficiency	42
22	Tax System Efficiency & Corruption	41
23	Decentralization of Structures	38

Source: *Economic Commission for Africa, Africa Governance Report 2005*, Addis Ababa

Table 3 shows that African governance has actually declined over time rather than improved, compared to other nations of the world. Table 4 shows that progress has been made in the most superficial areas—elections and political representations (with the qualifiers shown above). However, the scores are lowest in the areas that matter most—institutional effectiveness, human rights, accountability, economic management, taxation and decentralization.

<sup>5</sup> *Political Representation*: Indicators 1-5, 7; *Economic Management*: Indicators 6,10 22; *Human Rights & Rule of Law*: Indicators 12, 14, 15; *Institutional Effectiveness & Accountability*: Indicators 8, 9; *Executive's Effectiveness*: Indicators 18, 20, 21, 23

In spite of this, the assessment of those who have compared the progress made by present-day developing countries with today's developed/industrialized countries, is that the former have been precocious as far as institutional development is concerned. Institutional and political systems take time to change as they reflect wholesale human behavior and they require sustained incentives to change. Chang (2003:115) notes that it took the now developed countries (NDCs) decades, if not centuries, to develop institutions (such as democracy and bureaucracy) from the time when they perceived their need for them. Therefore, the problem of the present institutional development/governance framework is that it is oblivious of the realities on the ground and perhaps out-of-tune with the history of institutional development globally. Moreover, the experience of the NDCs also shows that there is not only one model of democracy: each country has chosen the one that is best in accord with its fundamental political cultures: majoritarian or consociational (Lijphart, 1984).

The *economic and financial framework* is grounded in the PRSP framework, which is itself based on the Comprehensive Development Framework (International Financial Institutions response to the weaknesses of both state-led and market-led development). Reviews of PRSP processes in nine African countries: Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda (Forster et al, 2002, Booth 2006) show that the most important achievement of PRSPs is that most countries either have a PRSP in place or are preparing one because it is the major condition for accessing the HIPC funds

But PRSPs are criticized for their ambitious expectations as well as their operational methods. First, donor behavior was often at odds with country-ownership agenda. Most donors have not actually raised their ODA (Overseas Development Assistance) contributions to the levels expected (0.7%), current flows remain around 0.23%. But the problem is not simply the quantity of donor assistance but of quality as well. Several donors are still reluctant to channel substantial funds through budget support for over the medium term, preferring instead annual project support that is neither harmonized with other donors nor with the country PRSPs.

A second problem is therefore that the weak technical government capacity in the face of tight deadlines imposed by the HIPC timetable means that national ownership has had to be compromised. Combining anti-poverty planning with the multiplicity of the review processes leads to process overload for poorly paid and motivated civil servants. The result is a ventriloquizing by donors of their ideas about development.

Unfortunately, whereas many donors would readily fund separation and retrenchment, they are reluctant to fund pay raise or incentive increase for understandable reasons. Nevertheless, there are some experiments that show that if well targeted, such reforms are not only politically feasible but also economically sustainable (Stevens & Teggenmann, 2004).

Thirdly, critical institutions are excluded from the PRSP process. Legislatures, decentralized organs and other civil society organs are overlooked but these are institutions that are critical to poverty reduction at national and local levels (Barkan et al 2004 Renard and Molenaers 2003). For instance, only a few countries have directly linked their PRSPs with decentralized organs of governance—whether they are local governments, community based organizations or field administrations. Yet, these organs are crucial in ensuring that services reach the largest number of rural people when they are functional—especially given the weakness of other participatory organs as mentioned above. It is significant that in most countries of the world local governments deliver five of the seven MDG target services (Narayan et al 2001).

*PRSPs emphasize Public Expenditure Reform, namely.* Medium term expenditure frameworks (MTEF), which combine multi-year outcome, based plans with annual budgets that reflect clear policy priorities. The expectation that only high priority programs will be funded. PRSPs and MTEFs are therefore natural bedfellows. Furthermore, MTEF offers an instrument for correcting some of the most serious weaknesses of government expenditures (unclear government priorities, poor execution of policies and programs, misallocation and regressive expenditures) in that it enables a shift to be made in spending priorities. But technical problems make MTEF a near impossibility: lack of timeliness of budget submissions and approvals; unrealistic and changing revenue estimates; poor cash forecasting and inability to prevent expenditure commitments from exceeding authorized limits on cash outlays. In one word, budgetary discipline is lacking. The only country of the five on which the study of relationship between PRSP and budgets were conducted that met the necessary conditions was Uganda, because it possessed the in-house capacity for evidence-based planning and performance management (Foster et al 2002).

Again, the issue of human resource capacity has emerged is important although it is just as important to add that salaries alone will not improve performance if there is no strict monitoring of performance<sup>6</sup>. Finally, donors also tend to find it difficult to comply with the discipline of centralized budgeting. One could argue that the framework is constructed in this way because development is seen as being provided for Africans by development partners. Hence only limited effort is made to challenge these countries to tap into their own domestic resources to finance development either presently or in the years to come. While development assistance can indeed play an important part in African development as it did in Europe (Marshall Plan), the Asian tiger countries and indeed in Botswana and Mauritius earlier on, it must never displace domestic resource mobilization as these have fiduciary and accountability implications that go to the heart of public sector management.

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<sup>6</sup> Of the five countries appraised (Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda), Ghana especially suffered from poor in-house capacity, which compromised budget scrutiny and her poverty analysis tended to be 'episodic and consultant-driven and consequentially less influential' (ibid p.26).

It seems clear therefore that development assistance continues to labour under the same old constraints apropos the Paris declaration. These continue to weaken recipient country systems capacity, especially in Africa<sup>7</sup>:

- Aid remains largely uncoordinated and unpredictable in spite of the exhortations to harmonization and higher, sustained aid levels. The actual aid delivered is often less than commitments made.
- Aid is still largely focused on projects, with parallel agencies and is increasingly bilateral. Indeed, many donor countries do not subscribe in principle to budget support and use of poor country systems etc. Only 26% of all aid to 14 countries went to budget support in 2004 and only 20% of all bilateral aid. Multilateral aid has increased in recent times compared to the past decade, due in large part to debt relief, but it is still only less than 30% of all aid.
- Aid is going increasingly to social sectors. While this is understandable because of the focus on achieving the MDGs, it also takes support away from development and growth objectives and sectors, especially agriculture and industry, in particular SMEs. This raises the question whether the underlying causes of poverty are being addressed. Social spending as a proportion of technical cooperation in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) rose from about 50 (1992-96) to 70% (2000-4) while the share of economic infrastructure fell from 7 to 4 % within the same period. We already noted that most SSA PRSPs attach no importance to higher education.

All of these have invidious implications for public administration capacity. But the problems cannot be placed at the doors of Africa's development partners alone. Africa's own partnership framework, the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) expects that the bulk of resources to finance the resource gap of US\$64billion per annum to bring development performance to expected 7% GDP growth would come from outside the continent (Maloka 2002:493). The critical management changes in the public sector are yet to be implemented.

In the meantime, it is instructive that the entry of China and India into Africa as investors has had significant impact on the continent's development. A recent research shows that SSA's exports to China increased at an annual rate of 48% between 2000 and 2005, 2.5 times as fast as the rate of the region's exports to the United States and 4 times as the rate of exports to the European Union. According to this research, Africa's trade with the EU (its traditional trading partner) has dropped by half so that Asia now buys about the same size of the share of the US and EU. And within Asia, China and India have eclipsed Japan and South Korea, buying 10% and 3% respectively of all of Africa's exports. Whereas this trade initially concentrated on the oil-exporting nations of Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria, Congo and Sudan, the economic boom of these two dominant Asian countries has included a number of other commodities, especially cotton and food processing. Africa is also importing capital goods from these two countries that are

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<sup>7</sup> UNCTAD, *Economic Development in Africa: Doubling Aid: Making the Big Push Work*, Geneva, 2006

helping to bolster the competitiveness of the continent's industries that are assembled or processed in Africa and shipped to other international markets. Moreover, these countries' FDI in the continent has also increased (it was 1.3 and 1.8 billion respectively for China and India), though less modestly than trade, and is also moving away from a concentration on a few countries (Broadman, 2008).

It is instructive that China and India that were once-poor countries of continental proportions that have invested heavily in boosting the capacity of their respective local and national state over a period of time. There are important lessons that Africa can learn from this experience. Both countries' efforts at transforming their central government civil services and modernizing their local governments are well researched (Ma, 2005; Crook and Manor, 1998; Kohli, 2001; Shah, 2006). They clearly took their cue from the astounding economic and bureaucratic reform trajectory of the Asian tigers. The lessons are that when global, big push reforms are not feasible; it pays to focus on incremental change targeted at the permanent bureaucracy at the top and also on providing an opportunity to enhance the capacity of local governing elites through effective local governance.

In highlighting the lessons of the Chinese local governance experience for developing countries, Shah (2006) concluded that 'a stronger role for local government in public expenditure has helped to promote foreign direct investment, improve efficiency in public resource allocation and foster economic growth'. It also helped to alleviate poverty, stimulated greater effort to levy and collect taxes, and stimulated private enterprises and state-owned enterprises (SOE) reform. Furthermore, decentralized governance has helped to build citizen-state trust by helping public officials to focus on 'results-based accountability to citizens' as it created incentives to improve local public services and responsiveness to local preferences.'

In spite of the huge institutional challenges confronting these countries, they focused on those areas where incremental changes over time would make a difference—in rebuilding technical human resource capacity at national and local levels. This has helped to reduce the costs of doing business in these countries and stimulated local energies in the productive process<sup>8</sup>. This is what African countries need to do.

#### **4. Proposals for Rethinking African Governance.**

The premise for rethinking African governance stands on two main stools. The first is the reappraisal of governance assessment and the second is the case for a progressive transformation of governance, starting with the modernization of the public sector—

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<sup>8</sup> A recent report shows that it costs over ten times in money terms (\$4,581) and 52 more days for an exporter to ship his containers to neighboring Cameroon from the Central African Republic (CAR) than it costs an exporter to ship his goods out of China. CAR is in the same category with countries like Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso and DR Congo. On the whole, 8.1 documents are required on average by exporters in SSA compared to only 4.5 in OECD countries (Africa Report 2008:11).

focusing on developing and sustaining technical human resource capacity at national as well as local levels for improved policy management.

#### **4.1 Reassessing Governance Assessment Tools**

Present universal governance assessments are more helpful to donor organizations than to the recipient countries. They give a sense of certainty that convinces the electorate in those countries that aid monies are being well spent. The reality is of course wholly different, as the literature on the subject makes abundantly clear. Of the various governance assessments produced, the World Bank's Institute World Governance Indicators is perhaps the most popular and used for policy purposes especially by aid-giving agencies. Yet, close students (Pollitt 2008 citing a large number of experts in the field) have highlighted its several limitations that include the following:

- The indicators do not flow from any theory of governance that could predict how factor variables change and why
- There is no coherent, explicit definition of governance other than as traditions and institutions by which power is exercised. This is only one suggestion among a cacophony of voices (see Olowu and Sako 2002)
- Lack of clarity of meaning: each of the six main sets of indices is a composite measure of inputs, processes, and outcomes and these are then submerges in 'a weighted composite index of even greater complexity' (ibid).
- Accessibility and Transparency of its data sources are problematic: only 140 of 310 data variables are user accessible. The data sets come from business sources and are expensive. There is no listing of all data sources from which countries can cross check.
- Difficulty of using indices to estimate changes over time partly because the data sources change year by year
- Bias towards business and less towards citizens
- Data for whom: WB places a disclaimer to these data and some countries have objected to the compilation of this type of data by the Bank.

A wealthy Sudanese businessman (Mo Ibrahim) has since 2007 initiated a governance index that is supposed to focus on Africa, African Governance Index (AGI), which is expected to avoid all of the above problems. Its governance indicators are based not on subjective perceptions but on objective indicators of actual performance by governments on a set of 5 categories, 14 subcategories and 55 sub-sub categories. Unfortunately, it also suffers from the same problems as the WGI. Its definition of governance is the deliverance of political goods or performance. The indicators also include processes (e.g. international sanctions, number of days it took to settle a dispute, pupil/teacher and doctor/population ratios etc) as well as performance that it indicates constitutes its main focus. Some of the data are based on perception (e.g. property rights index, business environment—how many days it took to start a new business). It is curious that the countries of North Africa that seem to have done well in respect of governance but not democratic rights are excluded and the data reliability is quite questionable. AGI is indeed more comprehensive than others however data for a range of issues are missing for many years for many countries. In one particular case the data on tarred roads fell by

10,000 in RSA for 2006 and the authors decided to ignore it. As is to be expected the report gives a glowing report of governance improvement in Africa. Perplexingly its 2008 report indicates that Ethiopia was the country that had shown the most improvement even though the data set is based on 2006, a year when the opposition leaders at the national level were fighting for their lives for winning the votes in Addis Ababa against the incumbent president, over trumped charges of treason. By the AGI or MII, two thirds of all 48 African countries had improved on governance! The main problem of a performance -based index is of course that it assumes that all improvements in governance are imputed to government actions. More importantly these indices leave out the most critical issues: the effectiveness of policy processes at the national and local government levels and the supply and demand forces that keep them ineffective. These, I have argued in this paper, are the crucial parameters that need to be focused to improve the intelligence and capacity governments in the region.

#### **4.2 Governance Reform focused on Improving Policy Intelligence in the Public Sector:**

The consolidation of peace, promotion of steady and sustainable economic growth at current or higher levels, and democratic governance are goals that all African countries are committed. Each of these lofty objectives requires a modern public service capable of managing and implementing public policies in these realms. For that to happen they need to have *capable, efficient, intelligent, professional, highly motivated and ethical officials*. Unfortunately, the governance indicators do not really focus on this challenge except tangentially. . The task of reform must be to raise high performing organizations within the public sector<sup>9</sup>:

What then should be the elements of the African PS Modernization Strategy?

The broad strategy advocated in this paper is not the ‘big push’ effort of state capacity building on all fronts but rather a longer-term, well-articulated strategy of targeted and unbalanced development of selective aspects of the public service. It must come out of a realization that the conventional wisdom a generalized approach to public sector reform

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<sup>9</sup> High performing organizations are organizations that are motivated by strong values. These include: commitment to a clearly described vision and mission, focus on quality services for the client, empowerment of employees, values diversity, effective communication, strategic planning, commitment to excellence and innovation, sensitivity to ethics and cultural aspects of society in a globalized economy in which nations must compete (with one another and with other institutional actors) for investment and resources. A final aspect found in reference to developing countries in particular is autonomy in personnel or human resource management (Grindle, 1997). When faced with the prospect of a number of countries seeking accession to the European Union, one of the most important initiatives put together by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries for these new states seeking to democratize and liberalize their economies was a program of ‘Public Sector Modernization’ (PSM), transformed later into SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Government and Management).

with a laundry list of all reforms is counterproductive<sup>10</sup>. Also negative views of the state and on the civil service have produced the presently parlous state of the African civil services. African civil services might contain excessive numbers in the lower and middle levels and in the areas where they are not required but they also harbor huge gaps in the areas of their greatest needs: professional skills and managers with high-level intelligence, competence, knowledge and motivation to make African civil services competitive both internally and externally. *The focus must be on enhancing the capacity for policy management (analysis, policy making, implementation, evaluation and feedback). This requires improvements both on the demand and supply sides variables as well as in performance as shown in Table 5 below.*

**TABLE 5: POSSIBLE GOVERNANCE INDICATOR VARIABLES**

<b>SUPPLY SIDE Variables</b>	<b>DEMAND SIDE VARIABLES</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE Variables</b>
1.Public Service Inputs-Central/Local Govt	Legislative Effectiveness-Central/Local	1.Quantity/Quality of Physical Infrastructures-Transport/ Electricity
2.Incentive Structure-Central/Local Govt	Judicial Effectiveness-Central/Local	2.Quantity/Quality of Environmental Infrastructure-Water, Sanitation and Land cadastre
3.Vacancy Levels-Central/Local Govt	Civil Society and Community involvement in Policy Process-National/Local	3.Quantity/Quality of Human Development – Basic & Secondary Education/Health
4.Quantity and Quality of Tertiary Education	Public/Private Sector Interface-National/Local Govt	4.Indigenous Institutions in Policy Mgt
5. Effectiveness of National Policy and Public Management Training Centers		5. Revenue Effort-National/Local

These variables would have to be operationalised but their value lies in three key areas. First, the resulting index is connected to a theory of governance—the public policy process in each country. Second, they are inclusive in that they focus governance not only at the national level as is focused in present indicators but also at the local and community levels. Moreover, at each level, governments are assessed at their success in effectively working with other institutional actors in the private and not-for profit sectors.

<sup>10</sup> For instance, the huge resources expended for setting up anti-corruption agencies without a fundamental change of the political system has led in three countries (RSA, Kenya, Nigeria) successively to the incumbents losing their jobs and being replaced in quick succession (*Africa Report* 2008).

Thirdly, an attempt is made to balance the supply and demand sides of human resource and institutional capacities. In particular, the state of knowledge centers (from primary to tertiary levels and training centers) is focused. Fourthly, they focus on process as well as on performance indicators—even though these are yet to be fully operationalised. Finally, the countries themselves can make use of this information to enhance their own critical policy management institutional capacities and their impact.

In addition, the following specific action points would need to be engaged.

1. Commitment to simultaneously developing national and local state technical capacities as complementary elements

To engage state tasks effectively, two domains of the state are recognized in industrialized economies—the local and the national. Each domain requires expertise of the highest quality, therefore, the state must be able to extract resources from society to pay the brightest and best to promote state interests on a permanent basis, serving different political actors who provide overall direction for government on a relatively short-term basis compared with the permanent employed officials.

Unfortunately, in most African countries, overall state capacity is weak and there is even evidence that for many countries, state capacity has declined over time (Adamolekun 1988, Mkandawire 2001, Olowu 2001). An additional reason for decline, besides others already mentioned, is preoccupation with developing the national state almost to the exclusion of local entities (Olowu & Wunsch 2004).

The national and local state complement one another in the provision of public services. In fact, in most of the industrialized countries, the local state has a substantial responsibility for the services that are used by citizens--from basic services like education and health, which must be tailored to the needs of the community to infrastructures such as water, roads, utilities, to planning and land use management etc. In sample OECD countries the local state is responsible for almost 30% of total government expenditures (TGE) and 12.8% of the GDP—some spend as much as 60% of total government expenditure while it ranges from 61% (Canada) to 12% (Portugal) (see Table 1). In contrast, in developing countries, local government expenditure is only 23% of TGE and 5.7% of national GDP and this also reflects in relative employee size. In a recent survey of local governments in OECD countries, Wollman and Bouckaert in Kersting et al (2009:17) found that even though local governments have suffered attrition in the Western world since the 1980s as a result of private sector-like innovations (the new public management), their operations remain sizeable (Table 6).

Table 6: The Local and National State in OECD and Other Countries

<b>Country</b>	<b>LG Employees as % TG</b>	<b>LG Expenditures as % of TG</b>
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	<b>Employees (2000)</b>	<b>Expenditures (2003)</b>
United Kingdom	52.4	28
Sweden	82.7	45
France	48.4	18
Germany	88.5	35
Australia	88.8	30
Belgium	65.6	36
Canada	86.9	61
Italy	42.1	31
Netherlands	25.8	35
USA	86.5	47
China	93.3	55.6
Malaysia	31.8	19.1
Bolivia	11.3	36.3
Chile	34.3	8.5
Indonesia	29.4	14.8
RSA	44.4	49.8
Nigeria	10	23
Uganda	12.6	8

Sources: ILO 2001, World Bank 2004, OECD 2006, Kersting et al 2009.

Whereas other developing countries in Asia and Latin America have begun to enhance the capacities of their local state, only a few countries have gone beyond paying lip service to the development of the local state in Africa (see Table 3).

But the local state cannot be nurtured and developed except by an intelligent and highly motivated public service at the national level that appreciates the importance of devolving some of its own responsibilities to other institutional actors so that it can be more effective in its critical tasks of strategic planning, policy development, monitoring and coordination. Unfortunately, compared to other countries of the world, African public services have fallen behind in terms of number and quality of its public officials—at national and local levels, in stark contrast to presumptions that African public services are oversized or too large. The available data shows that whereas African governments had 2% of their population as government employees (0.9% in the central government and only 0.3% in local government), OECD countries had 7.7% (2.5% in local government as against 1.8% at the national level). OECD is followed by Eastern Europe (6.9%), Middle

Eastern and Northern African countries (3.9%), Latin America and Asia (3.0% and 2.6% respectively)<sup>11</sup>.

An important argument that has been used to discourage any efforts at developing capacity at the local level is their weak capacity. This is a circuitous argument: municipal governments are weak because they have weak absorptive capacities. The argument belies the progress that has been made by some countries within and outside Africa in improving their local capacities. In the meantime, much latent indigenous capacity lies untapped for development.

Advancing the cause of local development should start with a focus on the metropolitan areas. Africa is home to 34 millionaire cities and more than half of the fastest growing cities in the world (The Economist 2008:22). These cities have continued to be growth centers not only demographically but economically and, by 2050, over half of Africans will be living in cities. Unfortunately, we have not yet tapped the huge potential resources for building and maintaining urban infrastructures, starting with effective valuation of property and collection of property taxes. Cities have historically not only been the centers of economic growth for their respective nations, they have also championed the cause of wider public sector reform—just as they do for political change around the continent presently<sup>12</sup>. Success for instance in overhauling the property tax regime would not only boost finances of these cities but also their accountability to their respective citizens and clientele in the cities rather than national governments, as has been the case in most countries.

Moreover, aid/grant resources for infrastructure development can then be released for supporting rural areas that lack the huge latent resources of cities.

## **2. Engagement of Other Institutional Actors in the Policy Management Processes**

Other institutional actors outside the state sector also contribute to the growth and maintenance of high quality public services. They could be from the private business or even better still from not-for-profit sector or from community-based organizations. Indeed, international private finance institutions have now woken up to the huge opportunities that exist in African infrastructure development. *Africa Investor* magazine (August 2008) reports some US\$100billion available to support PPPs (Public-Private Partnerships) involving governments and international and private partners developing ports and other infrastructure in the continent.

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<sup>11</sup> This is data based on IMF statistics. No updated data has been available since this was published in 1998. Teaching and health data were separately accounted. (Schiavo-Campo 1998)

<sup>12</sup> In all countries where democratic election has been allowed in the continent, the capital cities have become launching pads for parties in opposition to the ruling party-e.g.Gaborone, Addis Ababa, Harare, Lagos etc. (Olowu 2005)

Similarly, a variety of services –especially education, and especially tertiary education, health, water and sanitation—have benefited from not-for profit faith based organizations. National and local governments need to improve their capacity of regulating and working with these types of institutions.

National state capacities should focus on developing technical expertise for policy making and development among the five capacities articulated earlier (political, administrative, technical, regulatory and extractive) at national and local levels.

### **3. Integration of Indigenous and Modern Knowledge Systems**

Much research in the last four decades has demonstrated conclusively that indigenous knowledge systems and institutions hold crucial potentials for African development. This is already proven in the areas of natural disaster management and medicinal research. A host of elements have been found to be effective in curing aspects of tropical diseases especially those that cannot be found in more temperate regions. Some have even proven to be universally effective for such ailments relating to blood—especially high sugar levels (diabetes) and other debilitating diseases. A whole branch of indigenous medicine has been recognized and is practiced side-by-side with its more formal forms around the world, Africa inclusive and the same in the area of natural disaster management currently being promoted by the United Nations Environmental Protection Agency in Nairobi, Kenya([www.grida.no/publications](http://www.grida.no/publications)). Indeed, critical attention has now turned to the dilemma of securing the intellectual property rights of Africa and Africans (Mazonde and Thomas 2007).

What remains to happen is the acknowledgement and integration of indigenous institutional systems even though indigenous insitutions have proven to be extremely reliable in diverse situations all across the African continent. In the Sierra Leone it was the ‘kamajaw’ (local hunter) warriors that opposed successfully the rebel armies that were financed from neighboring Liberia by President Taylor’s regime in their fight against government troops. In many cities across Africa, these informal policing systems have proven themselves to be far more reliable than the government financed policing systems. Only in South Africa has the concept of community policing being officially accepted even though these policing systems were extremely successful in the colonial period across Africa ([www.indigenousknowledgepolicy.za](http://www.indigenousknowledgepolicy.za)). Such knowledge systems are essential for crafting institutions at community and indeed national levels –see Ostrom et al 1993, Olowu & Erero 1996, Ostrom V, 1997)

### **4. Invest in Higher Education and Boost Knowledge Base of African Public Administration and Management**

Finally, as earlier noted, African public services have suffered from policies that lack reliable data and rigorous analysis in the recent past. . Presently, governance indicators such as the Country Policy and Institutional Assessments (CPIA) –a core indicator in the World Bank’s WGI that is used to allocate multilateral aid resources among poor

countries by IFIs is based on very rough assessments of administrative quality but much better objective data could be collected. Many countries are just waking up to the fact that higher education as the supplier of high quality officials and research is an important ingredient of stronger development performance and policy intelligence. Indeed, there is a need also for an African Public Policy Management Center that will help to raise the profile of policy studies, research and debate in Africa's national and regional Public Administration training institutes, much along the lines of what African Economic Research Center (AERC) has done for economic policy and Economics Departments across the continent.

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