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THEME: THE WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS: CHALLENGES TO THE
AFRICAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SYSTEMS



TOPIC: THE IMPACT OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS ON AFRICA

DR. FINLAY SAMA DOH
VICE PRESIDENT
AAPAM CAMEROON CHAPTER

INTRODUCTION

As a result of the economic and financial crises, the world economy is facing a deep meltdown. The January 2009 update of the " World Economic Outlook", projected that global growth will slow down from 3.5 percentage point in 2008 to about 1,5 percentage point in 2009. In Africa the growth rate dropped from 5.5 percentage points in 2008 to 3.25 percentage point in 2009. (*IMF Economic Report January 2009*)

Considering the magnitude of the current Global Financial and Economic Crises, preventive steps and measures to preserve the African countries' interests and protect the economy are needed. Initially, African Banks and other Financial Institutions thought they had minimal exposure to the sub-prime or high-risk home-loans securities which are the root causes of the collapse in U.S.A., European Banks and other Financial Groups. In the prevailing financial situation, Africa is not immuned since it is connected to the world in many ways. African countries will be affected by the crash in the international markets. This will not only affect the public financial services but also public service delivery management systems and governance in general, (*CAFRAD, Financial Institutions, 2008*).

As the global economic crisis takes its toll on financial revenues and household incomes, Hilary Ervin and Caroline Muthoni Muriithi, in the "Pambazuka News" of 26/06/2009, fear that the continent's achievements in human rights and development may be reversed, worsening the conditions of

the vulnerable groups in our societies, especially women. Many countries lack the resources to implement policies and legislation nowadays. Programs and projects largely funded by multilateral and bilateral donors are likely to decline as aids dries up, the authors warn.

THE OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

The global financial and economic crisis is hitting developing countries harder than previously thought, according to a study coordinated by the Overseas Development Institute, (O.D.I.) and developing country researchers, the impact of the crisis, and country level policy responses in ten countries: Bangladesh; Benin; Bolivia; Cambodia; Ghana; Nigeria; Kenya; Indonesia; Uganda and Zambia show that the economic and financial crisis have had devastating effects on the developing countries, most of which are in sub-Saharan Africa..

While recognizing the different levels that countries are affected, it is clear that 2009 will be worse than 2008. What is interesting is that the slowdown has come after some of these countries had a period of strong economic growth as a result of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) and the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiatives. The crisis is thus threatening many hard-won development success stories in these countries.

The main "transmission belts" that have been affected are: trade, private capital flows, remittances and aid. The study has also examined the impact on growth and development and policy responses so far. The main conclusions

show that countries will be affected in different ways because of their differences in openness, aid and remittances, dependency, financial integration, economic and trade structures and institutions. One thing is clear that no developing country will be saved.

Key findings: Transmission belts.

- ***Private financial flows*** have been affected. Portfolio investment flows fell dramatically in 2008 in most countries, and there were even shifts from inflows to large net outflows as well as a significant drop in equity markets in 2008 and 2009. There are signs of the tightening of credit conditions for banks in Cambodia, Ghana and Zambia. Foreign Direct Investment (FDIs) has been affected. The issuing of bonds has been put on hold in Ghana, Kenya and Uganda.
- ***The value of trade is declining.*** Prices of most commodities such as copper and oil declined dramatically, affecting countries such as Cameroon, Gabon, Nigeria and Zambia. Cocoa and gold prices have not yet declined but the demand for products like rubber, coffee, palm products, banana and timber have declined.
- Remittances are down in nearly all the countries studied. In Kenya, remittances were down by 27% in January 2009 compared to same period in 2008. There is a strong feeling that with current lay offs in U.S. and Europe the drop will be much greater in 2010.
- ***Aid:*** The studies showed little evidence of an aid pull out so far even though there was a fall in Uganda in 2008, 4.4percentage point.

- ***Economic growth:*** There was a general slowdown in economic growth throughout 2008 in countries with quarterly statistics. The case studies point to even worse effects in 2009 and consistent with forecasts from the International Monetary Fund (I.M.F.) of declining G.D.P. per capita for several countries in 2010. Growth forecasts have been revised downwards in all countries, contrasting with excellent growth records for developing countries in 2007

- ***Employment:*** The garment industry in Cambodia which employed around 350000 people has laid off 51,000 people with women in the majority. F.D.I.-generated employment in Ghana dropped from 15,526 people at the end of 2007 to 10,022 at the end of 2008.

In Kenya, the labour intensive horticultural industry which employs an estimated three million people, had to cut around 1,200 jobs this year and suffered a 35 % drop in export of flowers. In Zambia, 8,100 of 30,000 workers lost their mining positions in 2008.

Poverty

The number of households in poverty will rise far more as a result of the crisis than would otherwise have been the case. Estimates suggest that the number of poor households may rise by:

- Ghana, 230,000 (1% of the population);
- Uganda, 233,000 (0.8 % of the population) and
- Cambodia, 110,000 (0.8 % of the population).

Economic policy responses

Economic policy responses to address the fallout of the global economic crisis range from business to more proactive approaches. Cambodia is considering accelerating growth policies; Indonesia is implementing fiscal stimuli and Kenya is using monetary policy. The study has found out that Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria have established crisis task forces to help them respond to the global financial crisis, just as the CEMAC countries.

The ODI report will continue to monitor the effects of the crisis to stimulate policy responses that are needed as a matter of urgency and hope to present them to the U.N. High Level conferences and G8 meetings. A U.N. resolution 59/55 of 2nd December 2004, entitled "Five years assessment of the progress made on public administration and development" identified a number of priorities in public administration reforms. These are: promoting democratization and decentralization, developing legal and institutional frameworks, economic governance systems, implementing ethics and anti-corruption strategies. Improving resource mobilization and financial management systems are crucial to containing the crisis. The public service need to have a facelift by modernizing the equipment and human resource base.

The future of public administration, according to the report, lies in the institution of measures aimed not only at reaffirming the developmental role of public administration and upholding its core values, but also at reconfiguring public service into open, participative, knowledge sharing, innovating and result-oriented service delivery systems.

There must be managerial flexibility and integrity of rules and difference between domestic concerns and supranational obligations; and between pressing short-term problems and long-term strategic issues.

Economic Activity.

The global slowdown in economic activities has pushed commodity prices down with negative effects on exports earnings, the external current account, physical revenues and household incomes as depicted in figs. 1 and 2.

Figure 1

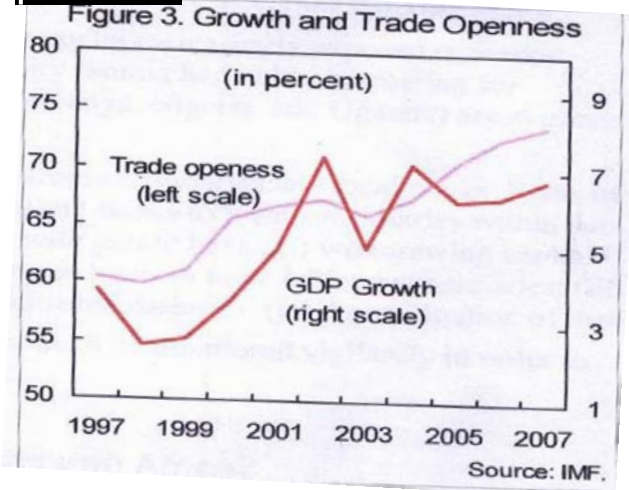
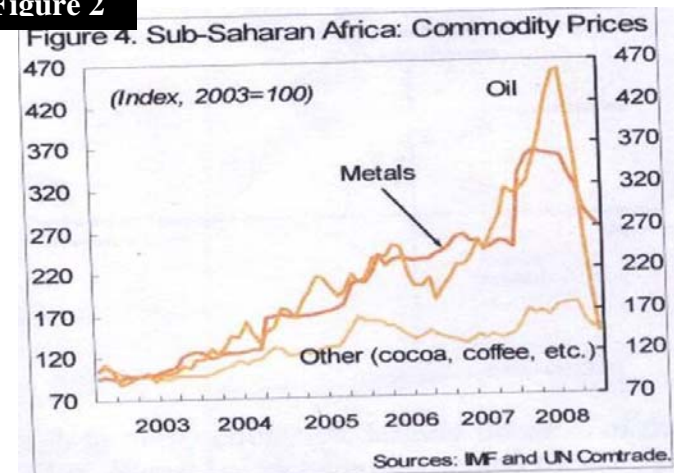


Figure 2



1

Commodity exporters face a major term of trade deterioration. IMF research shows that in the past, a one percentage point slowdown in global growth led to an estimated half percentage point slowdown in sub-Saharan Africa countries. The effects may be more pronounced now that credit is difficult to come by, thus compounding the impact of the slowdown, exacerbating risks for trade, finance and other capital flows.

Fragile States whose political and social situation is inherently vulnerable like Burundi, Guinea-Bissau and Liberia that dependent on very concessional financing will be greatly affected. According to the "U.N. Sunday Independent" October, 12 2008, remittances are expected to decline by 4.4 percentage point in 2009. The report states that between \$40-50 billion U.S. is sent annually to Africa from the over 30 million Africans living abroad. The impact is particularly true for African women who for a long time have been the face of poverty in Africa. Women constitute 70 – 80 percent of the agricultural labour force in Africa, yet they have limited access and control over land and the produce they grow. Their access to credit from commercial banks is limited as a result of having no collateral and the socio-cultural beliefs in Africa. Agriculture contributes nearly 50 percent of G.D.P. in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

As government revenues and household incomes decline, there is need to reallocate the scarce resources and outright elimination of some projects and programs. Even though to some, the full effects of the present economic crisis in Africa are less clear, we know the crisis is already having negative impacts on direct foreign investment, with HIV/AIDS aid funds and abject poverty is steadily installing itself in our societies. Many have lost their jobs and are out on the streets begging for bread. Others are out breaking into houses to steal. Mahatma Gandhi once said: "Poverty is the worst form of violence". Presently in Africa, tens of millions of people live on less than one dollar a day and will continue to live under deplorable conditions for long if nothing is done. The spread of most deadly diseases (HIV AIDS, tuberculoses and malaria) are on the rise. Many people will perish if measures are not taken to contain this crisis. Vaccination programs are now sporadic and food security not sure.

Prostitution and social conflicts are beginning to set in. School attendance is dropping, especially with the girls.

The greatest challenge for the African public administration is their ability to sustain the ever increasing demands from the citizens in spite of the declining State revenues and the probability of carrying on with social programs and projects in Sub-Saharan Africa. Besides, sub-Saharan African countries have poor environment climate to attract investors. A few of these countries have just completed the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) and some from the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) but are now faced with the financial and economic crisis.

The Causes of the Economic and Financial Crisis.

The America President, Barack OBAMA in January 2009, said I quote "Much of the blame for the current crisis goes to unbridled and shameful greed among some bankers in America, Britain and other wealthy countries" end of quote. This combined toxically with far too little regulations of financial services and weak-wrested officials in protecting the investing public reasonably. Another factor includes asset bubbles created in part by the central bankers, which has contributed to the general loss of confidence. When a Central Bank Manager makes an unwise decision, like placing the country's funds into risky deals, money is lost. This was the case with BEAC (the Central Bank of CEMAC region) in 2007; when BEAC's Director General placed several billions of francs CFA into a commercial bank in Paris, hoping to make more profit, but unfortunately owing to the World Financial Crisis lost a

colossal sum of \$16 Billion U.S. for wrong placement (Source: *Financial services in Central Africa Sept. 2006*)

A less noted cause of this crisis is the lack of accountability in the management of public resources and corruption in countries in sub-Saharan Africa. To the exporting countries in Africa, the decline in the demand for cocoa, coffee, timber, oil, banana and rubber and the price fall, couple with mismanagement and lack of transparency has worsened revenue collection for the government and compromised the ability for the citizens to pay their taxes.

Accountability and corruption

Corruption exists in every nation even in America and Canada. However, the degree of corruption is what matters. Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa are known to be very corrupt according to "Transparency International 2007". Even though, some governments have put in place mechanisms to fight corruption, it is still on the rise. In a just ended Cabinet meeting, the Cameroonian Head of State is worried that corruption and inertia were on the rise.

In Calderisi's book, the Nigerian Nobel Prize winner for literature, Wole Soyika is quoted as saying "African dreams of peace and prosperity have been shattered by the greed, corrupt and unscrupulous leadership who can only obtain their egotistical goals by oppressing the rest of us". Calderisi sees bad governance as the main obstacle to better days for many across the continent. Mr. Kofi Annan, former U.N. Secretary General firmly deplores the fact that bad governance deprives the one-tenth of humanity living in 54

African countries of material improvement in their lives (*Challenges and Opportunities Facing Africa, Jan.2009*)

The global slowdown in economic activity has pushed commodity prices down with negative effects on export earnings and External current account, fiscal revenues and house holds incomes.

The impact of the Economic crisis.

The downturn in global growth, the decline in most commodity prices and tighter credit has significantly worsened the economic outlook for sub-Saharan Africa. Risks are rising and it is uncertain how long the crisis will last. Policy makers must learn to walk a tightrope between not aggravating the shocks in aggregate demand on the one hand, while protecting hard-won gains in economic fundamentals on the other.

The current financial crisis is more global than any other period of financial turmoil in the past 60 years. The extent and severity of the crisis that began with the bursting of the housing bubble in the United States in August 2007, reflects the confluences of certain factors such as:

1. Surging asset prices that proved unsustainable: and
2. Prolonged credit expansion.

As a result, the world is facing a deep downturn. The January 2009 update of the World Economic Outlook projects global growth to slow from just under 3 ½ percent in 2008 to about ½ percent in 2009, before recovering somewhat in 2010.

Advanced economies are suffering their worst downturn since World War II, with economic output expected to contract by 1 ¾ percent in 2009.

Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, that enjoyed robust economic growth in recent years that strengthened their balance sheets as a result of both sound economic policies, favorable external environment and increased external support in the form of debt relief and higher inflows, have seen in recent times, food and fuel prices on the rise causing inflation and dampening growth prospects. The global financial crisis has greatly compounded the policy challenges confronting the region's ability to consolidate its economic gains and meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. (I.M.F October 2008).

Frontier and emerging markets:

Through their financial links with other regions in the world, South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya were hit first, suffering falling equity markets, capital flow reversals and pressures on exchange rates. Ghana and Kenya had to postpone planned borrowing and in South Africa and banks is becoming scarce.

THE CEMAC COUNTRIES

The Central African Monetary and Economic Communities (CEMAC) countries include: Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Congo (Brazzaville); Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon. CEMAC was created largely to strengthen the process of regional economic integration and contribute to development of Central Africa. CEMAC is relatively well developed as a monetary and custom union with a common external tariff (CET). It has a defined criteria for macroeconomic convergence and an institutional structure for surveillance, as well as an institutional and historic base through which structural reforms can take place to achieve the above objectives *(Source: "Regional Integration in Central Africa: Key Issues" Africa working paper series N° 52 World Bank June 2003)*.

In CEMAC, fiscal policies are conducted independently by each member country, although there have been instances of regional coordination in taxation policies.

CEMAC created two bodies:

- Central African Economic Union for trade: and
- Central African Monetary Union which specifies the responsibilities of the Central Bank (BEAC) and the Central African Banking Commission (COBAC).

BEAC plays a key role in the integration process. There is one Central Bank, a single currency known as the Franc CFA.

The "Organisation pour l'harmonisation en Afrique du droit des affaires" (OHADA) was established in 1995 with 16 francophone countries as signatories to adopt common business laws in the region. OHADA covers the

implementation of uniform acts on commercial legislation, company law, bankruptcy law, secured transaction law, debt collection and arbitration.

At the outset of the crisis a few months ago, Cameroon and the rest of the CEMAC countries thought they were fenced off from the immediate effects of the slump. Unfortunately, the exports of the area started feeling the effects. *The first signs that showed that we were far from insulation came from the wood sector, a principal source of foreign exchange from all CEMAC countries except Chad.* The six Heads of States last January 30, 2009, asked for the grouping of ministers and representatives of all sectors affected by the crisis to analyze the depth and impact of the crisis and make proposals on ways of fighting the crisis or at least keeping some of the effects at bay.

The ministers and the representatives concerned met in Douala, Cameroon in June 2009 to evaluate the impact of the World Economic Crisis on agriculture, fishing, forestry, and the banking sectors. *The sub-region which depends essentially on exports, notably oil, agriculture and forest products, now has very few customers. A recent report by the Customs Department of the Douala port in Cameroon, which serves Cameroon, Chad, the Central African Republic, and Northern Congo, showed that custom revenue from forest exports had dropped by 33%. Thousands of timber workers have been laid off.* Insecurity is on the rise and poverty may rise far more as a result of the crisis than would otherwise have been the case.

Urgency is begging and the countries of the sub-region can no longer afford their well-known political rhetoric void of real political will to work together, when it is known that forestry products account for a good percentage of export earnings for most of the CEMAC countries, coming only after

petroleum. The Douala port situation can only be seen as symptomatic of the effective presence of the crisis in the CEMAC region.

EMERGING REVITALIZATION MEASURES AND TRENDS

The complex and dramatic challenges facing sub-Saharan countries place a heavy burden on public administration. The signs that point on the horizon increases awareness on the part of Governments and their civil society partners that the world of public administration is on the threshold of change and needs assistance in making the right choices.

Macroeconomic stability and steady progress toward medium – term development goals are both vital for sustaining growth in Africa. Thus, in responding to the crisis, countries should strive to maintain stability and consolidate their hard-won gains while being mindful of general development goals. Countries should also seize the opportunity to advance their structural reform goals in order to boost growth prospects.

Fiscal Policy

Governments need to walk a tightrope to conserve gains in economic stability without aggravating the impact of the slowing external demand on domestic activity and especially on the poor. *In countries that have created fiscal space in recent years, automatic stabilizers should be allowed to work. In low-income countries, stabilization of revenue collection is necessary. A slowdown in activity tends to lead to lower tax revenue but unfortunately, on the expenditure side only a few automatic stabilizers are available, owing to the increase in social demands on the state.* Fiscal revenues will drop most dramatically in oil producing countries. Luck goes with those who saved much

of the recent windfalls during the oil boom. Countries without savings will have tough times to cushioning the negative impact of the World Economic Crisis.

In designing fiscal stimulus, policymakers should be mindful of how different types of expenditures will affect the country's external position and economic activity. Any countercyclical fiscal policy can exacerbate the loss of foreign exchange reserves. Over the past decade, debt relief initiatives have significantly reduced external debt and improved debt indicators in sub-Saharan Africa.

To support growth and create fiscal space, all countries are advised to persevere with structural fiscal reforms. Broadening the tax base and ensure that tax rates are within the reach of those who venture to create small and meddle size companies ; there must be efficient tax administrative reforms system to enhance and reduces collection cost.

Monetary and Foreign Rate Policies

As inflation falls, monetary policy could be used. The fall in fuel prices along with the more modest decline in food prices is providing a deflationary impulse that in many countries has reduced the need to tighten monetary policy and in others has allowed monetary easing. *But with countries still experiencing demand pressures and excessive inflation, there may be need to tighten monetary policy.* Introducing new controls on capital outflows should generally be avoided. In sub-Saharan Africa low-income countries in particular, capital controls have been ineffective even in normal conditions. Nevertheless, each country's own circumstances should be individually evaluated.

Financial sector policies

There is need to strengthen supervision and enhance contingency planning. Most sub-Saharan African countries have no direct linkages with the toxic assets affecting major financial centers. However, as the slowdown continues, monetary authorities need to safeguard against financial vulnerabilities like rising credit risks and possible cross border contagion, considering that many financial institutions in Africa are foreign.

Monetary authorities should identify banking system vulnerabilities. Banking supervisions should also insist on high frequency data to continually assess bank liquidity and solvency and conduct credit risk diagnostic and stress testing.

Procedures for handling a systemic crisis or failures within all financial services markets should be drawn up promptly in preparation for contingencies.

Africa should track current G-20 initiatives to strengthen regulation of cross border financial flow and restore investor confidence in order to unfreeze international credit markets and encourage capital inflows and intraregional lending. Government funds should be used to protect the safety and functioning of the financial system.

How the international community and IMF can help

Now is the time for Africa's development partners to honour their financial commitments and even scale up aid funds to African countries. Current financial constraints make it even more important for donors to respect the

Paris Declaration- that aid is predictable, transparent, and aligned with the policy priorities of the recipients. Aid would be particularly useful now as fiscal pressures are building up, to prevent undue compression of investment budgets and make it possible to maintain the scope and size of social safety nets.

Stalled global trade talks need to be resumed to stimulate global growth and welfare. Successful conclusion of the Doha Round would help to better integrate developing countries including those in the sub-Saharan Africa, into the global trading system, which will spur global and regional growth to facilitate African attainment of the MDGS (Source: IMF Financial contribution to the crisis, Jan. 2008)

The IMF increased its financial support to African countries during last year's food and fuel price crisis and remains a catalyst for critically needed donor support.

The Exogenous shocks facility was modified in September 2008 to provide assistance more quickly and in larger amounts to low income countries dealing with exogenous shocks. Malawi was the first country to benefit from this facility. IMF has increased access to the poverty reduction and growth facility for a number of countries.

IMF is considering further major reforms of the architecture of its financing facilities to meet the diverse and evolving needs of low – income countries.

The IMF will continue to provide extensive technical assistance to strengthen public sector capacity in Africa for efficient public financial management

The African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group called for urgent solutions to financial crisis. ACP countries are amongst those hard hit by the crisis and want solutions to focus on countering the effects of the crisis. ACP states have experienced major falls in their export earnings; foreign direct investment has slowed down, official development aid declined and remittance flows have shrunk. ACP cited sub-Saharan Africa as an example, where growth outlook has dropped to 1, 5 % for 2009, against 5.4 % in 2008 and 6, 8 % in 2007 (source: ACP secretariat).

A joint statement by the African Development Bank, European commission, and World Bank calls to align support to mitigate the impact of the economic crisis. The statement outlines the concerns shared by the three institutions. They have announced their willingness to increase the volume of aid needed in support of rapid recovery, job creation and promote long term growth.

The Public Administration

However, any policy response must also take into account the impact on the poor and seek to incorporate social safety nets. At the present, access to basic necessities of life (food, potable water, housing, fuel and energy) is highly restricted in Africa. Social services and infrastructure have largely collapsed owing to lack of resources for their upkeep. Life expectancy in Africa declined from 49 years in 1999 to 46 years in 2009 owing largely to HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. In the absence of a substantial infusion of resources, child poverty in the world's poorest countries (with the majority in Africa) will not be reduced in 2015 but after 150 years (*U.N. resolution 59/55 of 2nd December 2004*).

Notwithstanding the magnitude of the financial and economic crises, there are innovations required that will enable current measures to have a substantial and lasting impact on the economies of sub-Saharan countries. *Besides the need for good corporate governance based on principles of effective management of the crisis, the public administration in Africa must embark on revitalization efforts that include the following:*

- *Promoting ethics, transparency and accountability,*
 - *Enhancing public service efficiency and effectiveness especially in the delivery of public services;*
 - *Responding to citizen needs and legitimate demands;*
 - *Promoting human development in view of the millennium development Goals (MDGS);*
 - *Promoting economic growth and macroeconomic stability;*
 - *Preventing and resolving conflict and development of emergency preparedness and community policing;*
 - *Applying modern communication and information technologies to improve internal management processes and external service delivery systems;*
 - *Repositioning the public service for the current challenges in the 21st century;*
 - *Creating conducive environment to private sector growth and development as well as the civil societies; and*
 - *Coupling pay and employment reforms with the reassignment of posts.*
- (U.N. Report of the Economic and Social Council A/57/262-E/2002/82 of 12 July 2005).*

CONCLUSION

The developed economies have set the stage for the world economic crisis, and the third-world countries are going to pay an enormous price for it. The global financial crisis will have a major impact on growth and development. According to the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), output loss of the global financial crisis for sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) alone is around U.S. \$ 40-50 billion in 2008-2009. Prices of export commodities continue to fall and demands for these commodities continue to dwindle.

Both governments' revenues and household incomes are uncertain, causing growth and development difficult. Unfortunately, the countries in sub-Saharan Africa have no strong economic base to attract foreign investors and corruption abounds. Consequently, the future is very bleak for our children if immediate remedial measures are not put in place and our developmental partners come to our aid.

Sub-Saharan Africa is blessed with enormity of economic resources that the developed countries cannot do without but continue to look for them. It is time to review the Trade World Order and see how Africa's share of world trade can pass from 2 percentage point to between 5 and 7 percentage point in 2010.

As concerns aid, time is come for the implementation of the Paris Declaration. Aid should not be open ended. For Africa to survive, the roles of the Government, the private sector and the civil society must be well defined. Public Administration must get rid of corrupt officials and mismanagement of

public funds, intellectual dishonesty, nepotism, participatory and result oriented.

The three branches of Government need to be repositioned to provide an enabling environment for development and quality service delivery, by ensuring that good governance is guaranteed, social and political stability ensured to spearhead growth and development in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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