

Bonn Symposium 2015

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The Resource Issue

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The Importance of the Issue of Sustainability for African Municipalities and Communities

- Africa is fast urbanizing. Its rate of urbanization soared from 15% in 1960 to 40% in 2010, and is projected to reach 60% in 2050 according to UN Habitat. Urban population in Africa is expected to double in the next 50 years.
- The continent’s urbanization rate, the highest in the world, though can lead to economic growth, transformation and poverty reduction it has rather led to increased inequality as well as urban poverty. And the proliferation of slums, poorly connected to public transport or essential services such as clean water and electricity; coupled with natural disasters such as floods. A case in point is what befell Ghanaians on June 3, 2015 in Accra where about 200 people perished through floods and fire.
- Now Sustainable Development Goal 11, (SDG11) - make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable has two main objectives:
 - ✓ By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situation, women and children, persons with disabilities and older persons
 - ✓ By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities

- This goal and the targets appear very relevant and important to addressing the numerous challenges facing Africa's growing cities and communities
- As such, various national associations of local governments in Africa such NALAG (Ghana), ALGAK (Kenya) etc. should use their platforms for the discussion and exchange of ideas, viewpoints and information on matters of common interest relating to the SDGs with a view to helping member local government authorities to solve their own problems through training, education and information sharing
- Specifically, Municipalities and Communities must place emphasis on strengthening local authorities participatory planning and service delivery; improving local authority budgeting, financial management and revenue mobilization; and rationalize centre-local financial relations
- We also need to rebrand Technical and Vocational Educational Training and general skills development as a means of stemming the growing youth unemployment in Africa
- However, Goal 7 – Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all- remains a major challenge in Africa. For example, in Ghana within the last three and half years the nation has been plunged to darkness; that is erratic power supply, with no immediate solution in sight. And it is on record that some countries in Africa are facing similar erratic power supply affecting both domestic and industries.
- We therefore need to enter the SDGs with a lot of hope and thus the SDGs must be of much important to the continent. There seems to be promise in this direction

Is Greater Commitment in terms of SDGs a question of political awareness and will or rather of resources

In the context of developing countries, commitment to implementation of the SDGs may be a question of resources and political will, rather than political awareness

- Experiences with the implementation of MDGs in Africa point to the fact that, politically all countries were aware of the international goals and worked towards it. Admittedly, although some of the political parties in Africa that won elections and formed government had their manifestoes that were not linked to the MDGs; their inability to meet the targets was largely the result of inadequacy of resources
- The commitment for OECD countries to provide 0.7% of GDP as Official Development Assistance (ODA) is already 45 years old, but despite the ongoing efforts of campaigners, very few donors have achieved that minimal target let alone committed to increase their contributions to levels that are commensurate with urgent global needs. Developing countries need additional resources for sustainable development. There is a need for significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources and the effective use of financing, in order to promote sustainable development
- The implementation of sustainable development goals will depend on a global partnership for sustainable development with the active engagement of governments, as well as civil society, the private sector, and the United Nations system

Where should this Resource come from?

Rough calculations from the intergovernmental committee of experts on sustainable development financing have put the cost of providing a societal safety net to eradicate extreme poverty at about \$66billion a year, while the annual investments in improving infrastructure (water, agriculture, transport, power) could be up to a total of \$7 trillion globally

- At the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda), Member States alluded to the need to tap all sources of development finance, public, private, domestic and international to finance the implementation of the SDGs
- The intergovernmental committee of experts on sustainable development financing indicated in its report that public finance and aid would be central to support the implementation of the SDGs

- The Committee also noted that money generated from private sector through tax reforms and through a crackdown on illicit financial flows and corruption was a vital source financing SDGs in Africa
- Strengthening domestic resource mobilization, including thorough international support to developing countries to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection
- Developed countries to implement fully their ODA commitments, including to provide 0.7% of GDP as ODA to developing countries of which 0.15-0.20% to least developed countries
- Developed countries should assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries (HIPC) to reduce debt distress
 - Finally, as far as the resource issue for SDGs for African Municipalities and Communities is concerned, Goal 16.5; 16.6 and 16.7 are very crucial for us as Africans. We need to rebrand Africa as a continent ready to attract investors particularly with today's Africa oil industry
 - We need to reduce corruption and bribery in all forms; develop effective accountable and transparent institutions at all levels including the local level; and ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision making at all levels.
 - In other words, I believe that Africa is not really “poor” as portrayed; rather it is poorly managed. Its inherent natural wealth is yet to be fully unlocked. Municipalities and communities in Africa must be committed to the implementation of the new SDGs.