

# Democratic Governance in Africa: Myth or Reality?

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## Abstract

If the strings of a guitar are too loose it will never produce the melody and if strings are also too hard it will cut. Therefore rulers and leaders should not rule with powers but with heart, though is important to rule with carrot and stick. It is true that democracy does not guarantee development but democratic principles can ensure sustainable development more so human development. We have witnesses that development by authoritarian leaders e.g. Libya are both not sustainable as their countries end up in rebellion and unresolved conflicts thereby destroying the infrastructure and endless wastage of human life. You can only become a warrior when you break the walls. Meaning you can only become a good and effective leader/ruler when you are able to convince your followers with your positive thinking, actions and result oriented mind for uplifting the living standards and protection of rights of your people. This calls for instituting strong and dynamic institutions for the state to function in a more effective and efficient manner. A leader without followers is a fish out of water. In other to ensure efficacious management of public resources, in 1998, countries like Rwanda conducted a general census of the civil servants particularly in the education sector. This was effective as ghost workers were identified and eliminated. In a similar move in August/September 2014, the Kenyan Government also instituted such a reform (Biometric system) to align the government structures and its human resource with the requirements of the constitution to eliminate corruption and ghost workers which is making the country to loose huge sum of money and this is geared toward strengthening the functions and responsibility of its decentralized structures. Surely all these efforts are to strive for sound democratic governance in their countries. This paper focuses more on issues related to Democratic Governance in Africa, the pros and cons of how Africa receives and perceive Democratic Governance and what next for our beloved Mama Africa.

**Keywords:** Democracy; Democratic Governance; Ethics; Governance; Good Governance; Leadership; Management; Sustainable Development.

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## **1. Introduction**

From the 1960s to the 1980s, issues of good governance and reform did not dominate the agenda of the regional organizations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). During this time the plausibility of the emergence of supranational institutions in Africa was minimal. This was largely due to the fact that the goal of Africa as a collective was centred predominantly on ending colonialism and apartheid as cited from author in [1].

For much of the post-colonial period, Africans tended to live under one-party dictatorship. Today, even the most despotic of African leaders wish to have their leadership affirmed by election. Democracy is increasingly seen as the only legitimate form of government in Africa, but regular multiparty elections are not synonymous with good government, rule of law, and economic development. Indeed, corruption, repression, and underdevelopment continue to scar much of Africa. Instead of paying attention only to the trappings of democracy, African reformers should focus on building free societies characterized by the separation of powers, checks and balances, an independent media and judiciary, restriction on Presidential power, term limits, and so on quoted from author in [2]. The International pressure for governance reforms added impetus to the overhaul of the continental regional integration and regional economic efforts.

The most vital component of any institution is Leadership and Management and therefore for a government/institution/organization to achieve its goals and objectives most have a sound management structure and systems in place to enhance Democratic Governance. In order to effectively manage an organization/government there is a need to have knowledge and understand Management theories and the realities on the ground which is essential for successful management and the realisation of Democratic Governance. Addressing Democratic Governance challenges such as accountability, transparency, respect for human rights, competition, efficient and economical uses of resources and maximum output, knowledge of governance and management in general, realities and theories of management must be a basic requirement.

According to author in [3], "Management is a process of planning, leading, organizing and controlling people within a group in order to achieve goals. It is also the guidance and control of action required to execute a programme for the benefit of the citizens. Therefore, a management system cannot be very effective and efficient in the absence of democratic governance.

This document seeks to argue that, any constructive leadership should integrate democracy, good governance and political participation into its public policy planning and socio-economic policies for an apt foothold in Democratic Governance and the realisation of democratic norms and values within Africa.

## **2. Definition of Terms**

As our discussion will centre on the following keywords/terms (Democracy, Ethics, Governance, Good Governance, Leadership, Democratic Governance, Sustainable Development etc.) there is a need to define some of them in order to make the readers understand better usage of the concepts in this document/paper as they plays an important role in the issue at hand.

## **2.1 Democracy**

Hardly is there any unify definition for democracy. Therefore our definition will be based on two major terms or arguments:

### **2.1.1 African democracy**

Differentiating the term African democracy from liberal democracy as used in this discussion, the African leaders of post-independence Africa such as Nyerere of Tanzania, Nkrumah of Ghana, and Kenyatta of Kenya, dismissed multiparty democracy, a fundamental principle of liberal democracy, as incompatible with the African traditions, as stated by author in [4]. They argued that a system of one-party government was African and an essential part of the African tradition. Therefore, according to their definition, “an African democracy is a form of government based on one-party rule. Political parties may exist nominally- but may not freely organise political activities in opposition to the rulers and the ruling party”. Meaning the African democracy put forward by African leaders of the post-African independence is based on their argument that traditional African societies rested on a politics of consensus not competition a principle they perceived to be promoted by proponents of multiparty democracy. But on the other hand Nyerere of Tanzania later on embraced and advocate for a multi-party system to be accepted and given a trial in Tanzania even though he declined to lead the process as the concept does not match with his consent.

### **2.1.2 Liberal democracy**

While regular elections is one of the necessary prerequisites for creating and sustaining a democratic regime, liberal democracy (western liberal democracy) is, as both Obama and Clinton have pointed out, “more than just holding elections” as quoted from author in [4]. According to Clapham, “it is not sufficient to measure democracy by simply looking at whether elections are held regularly and according to national standards”. Clinton and Clapham are of the view that, in order to ensure good and sustained governance, a true democratic system needs more than regular elections, as pointed out by author in [4].

**Democracy as a system of government in my view, have four major elements, namely;** A political system for choosing and replacing the government through transparent, free and fair elections, the active participation of the people as citizens in politics and civic life, Protection of the human rights of all citizens, and A rule of law, in which the laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens.

## **2.2 Governance and Good Governance**

Other institutions like the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Kingdom’s Overseas Development Agency buying the idea of **governance** as “the action or manner of governance”, go further to link governance with participatory development, human rights and democratization. With this, governance is conceptualized and focuses on such issues as ‘legitimacy of government (degree of “democratization”’, accountability of political and official elements of government [media, freedom, transparency of decision-making, accountability mechanisms] competence of governments to formulate policies

and deliver services, respect for human rights and rule of law [individual and group rights and security, framework for economic and social activity, participation]. This paper identifies three distinctive aspects of governance: Political regime structure; Process of exercising authority in the management of the resources of the nation, economic and social resource: and The capacity of the government to design, formulate and implement policies as well as discharge or execute functions quoted from author in [5].

"In practice **good governance** involves promoting the rule of law, tolerance of minority and opposition groups, transparent political processes, an independent judiciary, an impartial police force, a military that is strictly subject to civilian control, A free press and vibrant civil society institutions as well as meaningful elections. Above all, good governance means respect for human rights", as quoted from author in [6].

### **2.3 Leadership**

Author in [7] defines leadership as "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives". In addition author in [7] also defines leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal." These definitions suggest several components central to the phenomenon of leadership. Some of them are as follows: (a) Leadership is a process, (b) leadership involves influencing others, (c) leadership happens within the context of a group/organisation, (d) leadership involves goal attainment, and (e) these goals are shared by leaders and their followers. This means the development of any country is a collective responsibility and not a one person show.

The very act of defining leadership as a process suggests that leadership is not a characteristic or trait with which only a few, certain people are endowed with at birth. Defining leadership as a process means that leadership is a transactional event that happens between leaders and their followers. Viewing leadership as a process means that leaders affect and are affected by their followers either positively or negatively. It stresses that leadership is a two-way, interactive event between leaders and followers rather than a linear, one-way event in which the leader only affects the followers, quoted from author in [7].

Leadership is basically about the ability to influence your subordinates, followers, your peers, and your bosses in a work or organizational context and in the absence of influence, it is impossible to be a good leader. There is no doubt that having influence over people means that there is a greater need on the part of the leaders to exercise their influence and powers in general but must be done ethically. Therefore, the Leadership of Africa must work toward a common interest or goal in order to positively impact on the life of the people they are mandated to serve.

### **2.4 Democratic Governance**

Democratic Governance is the array of processes through which a society reaches on consensus and implements regulations, human rights, laws, policies, programmes, activities and social structures in pursuit of justice, equality, equity, welfare and environmental and other natural resources protection. The programmes, Policies and laws are carried out by many institutions such as the legislature, judiciary, executive, political parties, public

service, private sector, international partners and several civil societies. In this sense democratic governance brings about the question of how a society organizes itself and operates to ensure equality (of opportunity) and equity (social and economic justice) for all its citizens without partiality and discrimination.

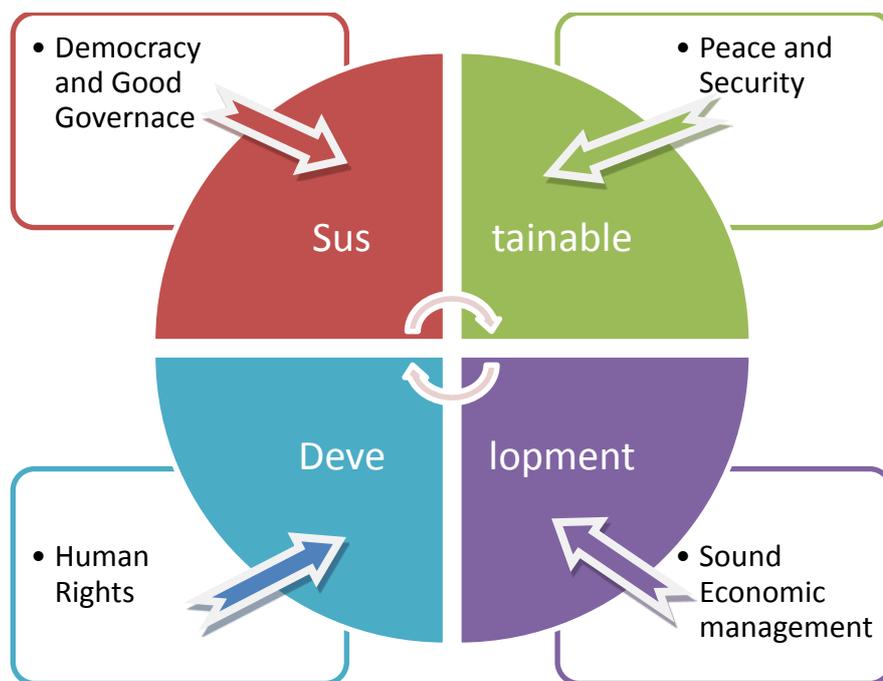
## 2.5 Ethics

In the Western world, the definition of ethics dates back to Plato and Aristotle. Ethics comes from *ethos*, a Greek word meaning character, conduct, and/or customs. It is about what morals and values are found appropriate by members of society and individuals themselves. Ethics helps us decide what is right and good or wrong and bad in any given situation. With respect to leadership, ethics is about who leaders are, their character and what they do, their actions and behaviours in governing the people and the national resources.

## 2.6 Sustainable Development

Author in [8] describes sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Two key concepts being that of 'needs', and in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization in the environment's ability to meet present and future needs.

Based on the above discussions, it is important to note that issues like Peace, Security, Democracy, Good Governance, Human Rights, and Sound Economic Management as conditions for Sustainable Development must be placed at the centre of African governments' agenda for addressing issues related to human development.



**Figure 1:** Elements/Conditions of Sustainable Development Source: Author research.

*It should be well noted that democracy feeds into economic growth and economic growth feeds into democracy in order to create sustainable development and meeting the human development needs.*

### **3. The importance of a Democratic Governance**

According to author in [9], unless a more balanced national governance regime is achieved, violent conflict and poverty will continue within the frontiers of the country. This may undermined the legitimacy, authority of the state in fulfilling its obligations to the people. Some factors threatening effective governance in Africa include issues of **The Contents of Democratic Governance**; Transparency, Popular participation, Accountability, Human Rights, Pluralism, Free Press and Freedom of Expression, Rule of law, Inclusion and not Exclusion, Free and Fair Elections, Sovereignty of the people, An Independent Civil Service, Majority rule, Minority Rights, Responsibility & benefit sharing, Independent judiciary, Government based upon the consent of the ruled, Separation of powers, and An involved Civil Society.

It is important for the state to promote a just and responsible society and not to tolerate poverty, corruption and other social ills that lead to the establishing a disintegrating society. It is imperative to promote sustainable development and economic growth from which all members of the society will benefit. Above all to ensure that globalization does not have a negative but positive effect on the poor, rural, or unskilled members of society as argued by author in [9].

In addition author in [9] argued that the following **Factors threaten Effective Governance and Sustainable Development in Africa**; Abuse of executive power, Poor economic growth, Political instability or fragility of the political institution, structures and judicial system, Serious security problems, food security, functional welfare, life, property, Non-accountability of the bureaucracy and political party interferences, No-separation of powers between Executive, Legislative, and judiciary (checks and balances absent), Foreign support to the state of bad governance, Absence of ethics and moral virtues in the system, and Exclusion of key stakeholder in the development process.

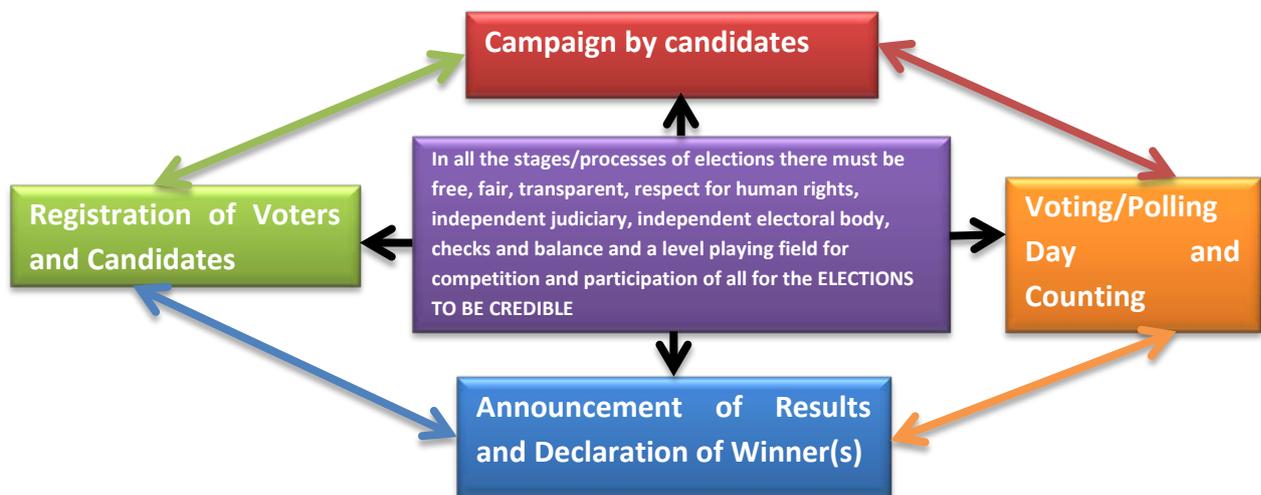
The above stated issues are also unethical issues that needed to be address by African rulers, leaders, and policy and decision makers in order to promote and implement the principles of Democratic Governance in Africa for attaining sustainable and human development.

Moreover, recognizing further that new or restored democracies also face the challenge of consolidating their sovereignty, their democratic achievements, making democracy itself an irreversible process and of ensuring that all members of society benefit from the democratization process and are able to participate fully in the new system of governance it becomes imperative for states to create the necessary enabling environment that should breed the foundation for quality living conditions for all. Hence democratic societies have qualities, which we consider superior to others, particularly those concerned with their participatory, representative and equitable nature. Therefore, democracy, development and respect for human rights of fundamental freedoms are the interdependent and synergic, and democracy is an on-going process cited from author in [9].

Furthermore, author in [9] added that building a passion for democratic governance (Sovereignty of the people,

Government base upon consent of the ruled, Majority rule, Minority rights, Guarantee of fundamental human rights and needs, Equality before the law, Freedom of the press and speech, Responsibility of the citizen, Sense of nationhood etc.). He also argued that Good governance rests on democracy and democracy rests on a number of interrelated tenets. Among these is the centrality of the structure of public power, of a constitution to help protect and safeguard rights and liberties and of diversity of power centres outside the state. A democratic society is an open and transparent society and encourages the free creation, pursuit and flow of information and thus elicits the effective participation of civil society in local, national and international institutions and processes.

Similarly, a government that is in no doubt credibly elected (transparent, free and fair elections) wins and receives the confidence, legitimacy and unflinching support of the people that enhances its credibility within the country and in the international community as a whole.



**Figure 2:** Elements and Stages to determine a credible Free and Fair Elections. Source: Author research.

In addition to the above, Mr. Raynal summarized perfectly the situation of counter-performance in underdeveloped public services; unadapted, inefficacious, plethoric and ruinous, they have proven incapable of solving the developmental role incumbent on them. Rene Gendrame adds that the politico-administrative structures are artificially heavy and too costly for the poor African Countries as quoted from author in [10]. Author in [10] also argues that good government, effective and efficient administrations and sound management are prerequisites of development.

I will therefore totally agree with author in [10] that “in spite of these great speeches all over developing countries, reality proves the contrary. Concrete measures should be taken to ensure that administrations are more functional, effective, efficient, accountable, simpler, expeditious, competent and responsible. To achieve this goal, administrations must be balanced and resources well allocated” reasons being without addressing these issues in Africa, democratic governance will always be seen as the slip of the tongue but not the reality as both sustainable development and democratic governance depends on each other.

#### 4. Theoretical Framework

Many theorists associate governance to democracy seen as the most legitimate form of government. According to Goran Hyden, governance is the conscious and organised management of structures, regimes in order to reinforce the legitimate of the political sphere. He continues that the idea of governance entails the association of all good governments to the value of democracy notably political participation and responsibility, and attentiveness to the public. In the same vein, Robert Charlick holds that the public authorities have to be responsible for their actions and ensure the good utilization of the public resources. **He focuses more on democratic governance, which is characterized by five dimensions:** Efficacious management of public resources; Legitimacy of power and good feedback; Public responsibility; Transparency of information; and Political pluralism, quoted from author in [11].

From this argument, it should be emphasized that liberal democracy entails some features notably the separation and balance of powers, plurality, state of law, rule of law, checks and balance, guarantee of human right and freedoms, independent judiciary, free and fair elections, citizen participation in decision making, decentralization, delegation of powers consent, civil society participation and satisfaction of the people.

Governance is a crucial instrument of development, and the problems faced by many underdeveloped countries have been attributed to mis-governance. The World Bank, in particular, has established that the African crisis is cause by the bad methods of governing. This is due to excessive personalization of power, rampant violation of human rights, generalized corruption and unaccountability. There is therefore a call for democratization and specifically good governance. That is why the World Bank defines governance simply as power in the service of development. However, this institution adopts a technocratic approach which emphasizes on the forms of government that encourage economic growth and less on policies favourable to democracy. Its policies therefore focus on governance that is market-oriented, believes in liberalization and privatization and is concerned with the management of funds. As Africans have failed in their governance they are subjected to the control of international organizations through programmes like the heavily indebted poor countries initiative.

Furthermore, Fred Greenstein in year 2000 rated Presidents on 6 qualities that bear on their effectiveness as leaders and that are: communication, organisation, political skill, vision, cognitive style, and emotional intelligence. In addition, the effective leader should be intelligent, qualified and emotionally matured. She/He should know when to use the various managerial theories ranging from classicalist through human relations to system and cultural. Plato insisted the absolute of philosophers as kings. His focus was on how the people (followers) would fare best. Machiavelli in *The Prince* holds that the end justifies the means and the leader should be at the same time a fox and a lion in order to succeed. The argument therefore is that a good leader is not necessarily an effective and efficient one as claimed by author in [11].

Classical Management Theories were developed to predict and control behaviour in organizations. It emphasis on efficiency, the Chain of Command, Division of Labour, Unidirectional Downward Influence, Autocratic Leadership Style and Predicted Behaviour as behaviours of workers was predicted like machine. The three well-established theories of classical management are: Taylor's Theory of Scientific Management, Fayol's

Administrative Theory, and Weber's Theory of Bureaucracy. These theories were developed in early twentieth century as stated by authors in [12, 13].

**The Classical Management Theories** are typical of African Governments and which may totally delay the realisation of Democratic Governance as the rulers stick more to Classical Management Theories than other theories of Governance and which is not the best approach and not sustainable in governing human beings.

My argument is that African leaders must treat their people as human beings who voted them into power, delegate their powers to them, entrusted the national resources into their hands for the benefit of all and surrendered some of their rights to the state for the society to function better. African policy and decision makers must service their people in the best of the citizens' interest (not individual interest) and not Kama-flashing the situation while they are enriching themselves and putting the people at astray. African Rulers/Leaders should kick out the negative aspects of Classical Management Theories and blend the positive ones with other Governance theories such as Human Behavioural/Relations School, Neo-Classical Management Theory, Open System Perspective, Quality Management Theory and Organisational Culture Perspective etc. **No to "one size fit all" should be the approach.**

## **5. African Mechanisms to promote Democratic Governance**

In its efforts to promote and ensure Democratic Governance in Africa, the African Union and its Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have put in place these mechanisms to be adhered and implemented by African Governments;

The resultant **AU Constitutive Act** created the opportunity for civil participation, responsive agency and accountability in the AU through its organs such as the Pan-African Parliament (PAP). If the Abuja Treaty laid the foundation for structural reform in African integration, the AU Constitutive Act provided the necessary tools and foundation to begin its implementation. The significant point of departure in the Abuja Treaty and the AU Constitutive Act is that, while incorporating the economic and development objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action, these treaties also detail the institutional, democratic and governance framework to support the process of integration in relevant protocols such as the Protocol establishing the PAP, the Court of Justice, the Economic and Social Council etc.

The **African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance** as stated in **Chapter 2, Articles 2 (1)(2)(3)(4)(6)(7)(12)** seeks to persuade state parties to adhere to respect the principles of democracy; the supremacy of the Constitution and constitutional order in the political arrangements of the State Parties; Promoting the holding of regular free and fair elections, reject and condemn unconstitutional change of government in any Member State; nurture, support and consolidate good governance by promoting democratic culture and practice; building and strengthening governance institutions and inculcating political pluralism and tolerance; equally to encourage effective coordination and harmonization of governance policies amongst State Parties with the aim of promoting regional and continental integration; and to enhance cooperation between the Union, Regional Economic Communities and the International Community on democracy, elections and

governance. For example, the unconstitutional change of government in Central Africa Republic (2013), Mali (2012), Guinea Bissau (2009/2012), Niger in (2010), Guinea Conakry (2008), and Mauritania (2008) etc. to that respect they were all suspended to attend and participate in the functions of AU and the RECs until the reinstatement of a constitutional government. In its commitment in promoting democratic governance in African, the AU also continues to condemn attempted Coup d'états and terrorist attacks such as the ones that happened in 2014/2015 in Burkina Faso, Lesotho, The Gambia and Tunisia.

**In addition the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)** was launched with much fanfare in Abuja, Nigeria, in 2001, the result of a mandate given to five African leaders of Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to work out a programme to spearhead an African Renaissance as stated by author in [14], With the main aim of Contributing to Democracy and Good Governance in Africa. Even though there is much more to be done, NEPAD should be credited for conceiving the Africa Peer Review Mechanism which, despite criticism and implementation challenges, remains an innovative mechanism for building democracy and good governance. On the other hand it should be noted that Peace, Security, Democracy, Good Governance, Human Rights, and Sound Economic Management as conditions for sustainable development are placed at the centre of NEPAD.

With respect to the various treaties, charters, declarations, agenda and protocols, the **Regional Economic Communities (RECs)** are meant to foster and act as building blocks for regional integration in Africa. As it has been argued in another context, the extent to which the RECs can really be considered to act as catalyst for effective regional integration is actually a function of the extent to which African member states harbour political commitment (ECA, 2000). Arguably, demonstration of political commitment is important on the part of ruling elites as stated by author in [15] especially at the level of the Union and RECs. Hence, the AU and RECs technically avoids commitment with any unconstitutional changed government so as to encourage the rapid return to democracy for good governance.

In addition to the above instruments, The Algiers decision on Unconstitutional Changes of Government, adopted in 1999, and the Lomé; Declaration on the framework for response to Unconstitutional Changes of Government , adopted in 2000 ; The Solemn Declaration on the Conference on Security , Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa ( CSSDCA ), which establishes the basic principles to promote democracy and good governance on the continent; The Declaration on the Framework for an OAU Response to Unconstitutional Changes face of government; and The Declaration of the OAU / AU Durban on Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa AHG/Decl.1 (XXXVIII) as adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union in July 2002 **are all to support the institutionalisation of Democratic Governance in Africa in order to foster Regional Integration within the continent and beyond.**

With all the greatness of these mechanisms in Africa, the questions should be why disputes/conflicts in Africa, how effective are these instruments and how responsive are Africans in adhering to and implementing the agreed principles in does signed and ratified instruments?

## **6. Role of International Bodies in promoting Democratic Governance in Africa**

The 1990s have seen amplified interest on the part of Western Governments and Multilateral Bodies in funding programmes through the civil society and Africa Governments to promote Africa's democratisation process. It is true that African states such as South Africa, Ghana, Uganda, Senegal etc. have rejected authoritarian rule and embracing open government and open economies in productive “partnerships” with the West even though the interest of the West in these countries is still questionable. Also the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, France, United Kingdom, United State of America, Germany etc. have tied their funding to Countries particularly Africans Countries with the existence and functioning of Democratic Governance principles in their countries.

Furthermore, conditionalities on external aid which mainly based on countries liberalising their economies before continuing to receive foreign assistance/aid. The La Boule Summit (France-Afrique) under the Chairmanship of Francois Mitterand aims at to design the paradigm of aid conditionality e.g. France was to provide aid only to its former colonies that accepted to liberalise their economies... Mitterand stressed on the African leaders to adopt representative systems, multipartism, free elections, freedom of the press, judicial autonomy, no censorship.

The IMF also came in to stress on the question of good governance-accountability, transparency and the introduction of the SAP by the Britten Woods Institution followed and all influencing indirectly the democratization process in Africa in order to certify sound democratic governance.

Of course the above conditionalities based on assistance/aid to African countries with the prevailing economic crisis in Africa, most leaders and countries had no other option but to receive and adopt such liberal practices in a falsifying way.

## **7. Hindrances/Challenges in Attaining Democratic Governance in Africa**

In the post-colonial era, the problem with the consensus under the so-called African democracy in terms of democratic governance as stated in the above definition, was that it was to be achieved mainly between the monarch and his/her entourage (mainly relatives from the monarchs' clan, such as uncles and in-laws) and the ruling elites. The ordinary citizens were seldom consulted as there is/will be no popular participation. Theirs was to obey, not challenge the commands of the ruling elites (obey and complain is the order of the day but not complain and obey). In this situation the powers of the three branches of government, normally separated in democratic states, are concentrated in one man (or woman) at the helm of government in a form of African democracy envisioned by African leaders of the post-colonial era. Finally, except when the change of government is as a result of a military coup, or of an opposition party winning free and fair elections, power in African democracies has tended to be an intra-elite transfer (from the father to the son in the case in the monarchies, or from the incumbent president to a hand-picked successor) in order to protect their corrupt behaviours.

Creating a political party and being made the head of that party do not necessary means you are the owner of the

party. Therefore political parties in Africa should have in place a transitional plan, grooming good political successors in order to ensure transparency, accountability, effective and efficient leadership in both the political parties and governments.

“Africa doesn't need strongmen, it needs strong institutions” When Barack Obama said these words on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2009 in Accra Ghana, Africans were glad thinking that African Presidents and other Leaders were going to turn over a new page in order to realise a sound Democratic governance which today is still far from fetch. **My arguments are that we need to contextualise this statement and critically look at when Obama immediately made this state what were activities that started to unfold in Africa, for example;**

Analysis by author in [16] indicates that President Mamadou Tandjah of Niger started a process to change the constitution of his country to enable him to extend his stay in office since he wanted to finish 'some projects' that he initiated. Even though both the Parliamentarians and civil society protested, President Tandjah went further to dissolve the Parliament and the constitutional court using the military to his advantage. The constitution was finally amended under very dubious and controversial circumstances which the opposition described as a coup d'état. Finally these unexpected decisions led to his overthrow by the same military that he was using.

In June 2014, the Prime Minister Tom Thabene of Lesotho suspended the National Parliament in order to block a vote of no confidence against him. On the 30th August 2014, it is claimed the National Army rebelled against the Prime Minister's planned decisions to fire the Army Commander which led the Prime Minister to flee to South Africa. However, the military have returned to the barracks and claimed that it was neither a coup d'état nor an attempted coup but the beautiful kingdom in the sky was left with a dysfunctional government for some period. The actions of the said Prime Minister are a total violation of the principle of balance and separation of power and lack of strong institutions in the country.

In Egypt, journalists are always harassed, tortured, imprisoned and killed on trumped up charges, while others have had to flee the country. The situation is no different, in Eritrea, Sudan, Angola, Rwanda and others, where writing an article or airing out views perceived to be challenging the top leadership earns one and automatic imprisonment. Media owners in these countries operate under constant fear and harassment and are forced to disseminate content that pleases those in authority as stated by author in [17].

Author in [16] also reflected and said Compared to the European Union (EU) from which ECOWAS and AU take so much inspiration; the African groups are not doing well as expected. It looks as if the strong institutions advocated by Mr. Obama are either not in place or are in place but are not respected. If there were strong institutions which were seriously respected, Muammar Ghaddafi would not have ever dreamt of extending his Chairmanship term of the AU when his time ended. For once, it was gratifying that the AU stood its ground and elected Bingu Wa Mutharika of Malawi as its Chairman.

Article 30 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union stated that, “Governments which shall come to power through unconstitutional means shall not be allowed to participate in the activities of the Union”. Contrarily to this article AU observers have gone to observe very less credible elections but concluded in the usual jargon of

“free, fair and transparent elections” were held and automatically these gives way to endorsing bad government leading to bad-governance.

There have been occasions when the AU and the other bodies like ECOWAS, COMESA and SADC have quickly come to the defence of some leaders when they were supposed to denounce them for such leaders to be arrested and dealt with. It happened in the case of former President Charles Gbankey Taylor of Liberia when he attended a conference in Accra. It took some political “chicanery” from former President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria for Taylor to be arrested. Also when the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant against Sudanese leader Omar Hassan Al-Bashir for some human rights abuses, his colleague African leaders (except Jacob Zuma of South Africa) boldly declared that they were not going to lend any support to the ICC as quoted from author in [16].

DRC’s current President Joseph Kabila is also accused in 2014 by his people of planning to amend the constitution to stay in power by contesting for a third term as his party politicians want him in power (he was president since 2001 after the death of his father) and 2006 elections were painted black by the international election observers for election fraud.

Article 37 of Burkina Faso constitution prohibits the President to go for more than two terms but in August 2014 a referendum was called because the supporters of President Blaise Compaore appealed for him to continue ruling for another term even though he have ruled the country for 24years. This led to massive protest and unrest in the country pushing him President Blaise to flee to Ivory Coast and seeks for asylum. Hungry for power is what is ruining the African continent.

We have also witnessed that Africa has harboured and pampered a lot of leaders who have virtually become political fossils and totally believed that without them in power, their countries might cease to exist in this planet and most of the African leaders have either stolen electoral verdicts or manipulated and mutilated constitutions in their favour or remained in power for too long than expected by their citizens.

On the brighter side, it is argued by many authors that it is only in Senegal, Botswana, Cape Verde, and Ghana, where multi-party democracy is functioning to the satisfaction of the country’s citizens. In these countries, leadership is open to scrutiny, there is rule of law, strong and independent institutions in place and countries’ resource are benefiting all citizens. Minus strong institutions in place where political parties are stronger than their leaders and institutions stronger than individuals who heard them, attaining true functioning multi-party democracy will remain a dream argued by author in [17].

**It must be noted that as much as Africans need strong leaders we must also have strong institutions as people leave but the institutions always remain.**

In a way, author in [18] asserts: when the political party machinery is married to the bureaucracy, there is no quality and efficient management but tyranny, ethnocracy and patronage in the public service, nor is productivity, efficiency and responsiveness attained when ethnocracy, favouritism and marginalization constitute the anvil of the public service. Presently, the Cameroon Governance State Bureaucracy is centralized

and entrenched within the philosophical orientation of the politics of ‘assimilation’.

## **8. Food for Thought**

It is right time for Africans to start asking themselves some of these questions and come up with tangible answers at the best interest of the citizens in order to serve them better;

- What legacy should African Leaders/Rulers leave behind that can sustainably benefit their people/countries and having strong institutions in place?
- Why is it that for almost 58 years of self-rule the majority of African’s population are more and worst poorer today than during the colonial period and still unable to determine the manner of governance and development of their countries?
- Since Africa started having independence majority of our people are yet to adore the basic fundamental civil and political rights and freedoms (freedom of movement, freedom of Religion/worship, freedom of association, free press media, freedom of speech, etc.). WHY?
- Should we (Africans) always “have egg on our faces” whenever we attend international conferences and being given more negative than positive aspects in international reports?
- Where were we (Africans) when we accused people and other countries of embezzling huge amount of our resources? Do we really have strong institutions and systems in place?
- Why is it that most of the African Leaders and those working in the apex of governments swiftly get rich and richer than the masses of Africans living in the villages, towns and cities who cannot even pay from primary to university education for their children and it is from these poorer segment of the society where our leaders and elite derive their legitimacy and authority?
- Why is it that after half a century of self-rule, several economic and social policies interventions have happened but today majority of our people particularly women and youth are still not near to ownership to land, enjoyment of the national honey pot and better living conditions? Where is our resources going to as the poor African people are still crying in their hearts because of poverty?
- What will it mean for Africa if we cannot retain our trained human resource after the African Union and her stakeholders spending huge resources on the establishment of the Panafrican University and training its people?

## **9. Conclusion and the way forward**

For a multi-party democracy to freely flourish, a country must possess a vibrant and free functioning media, judicial independence, freedom of expression, vibrant and free functioning civil society, strong and an independent electoral body, and strong political will. Unfortunately, in Africa, all these exist cosmetically asserted by author in [17].

In most African countries, judicial decisions that threaten the political and economic survival of incumbent leaders are not respected. Judges in Africa are increasingly becoming political cadres working to serve the interests of political leaders in powers. Opposition politicians and political activists are always in and out of

court answering trumped up charges like rape, disrupting law and order, talking to people without police permission, and others, which incumbent leaders use to cripple their political aspirations. We must always remember this proverb **“only the two jaws that make a strong contact with each other can crack a born” meaning Together we stand, Divided we Fall”**.

In my view, one or two countries being democratic do not and should not mean Africa is having a Democratic Governance system in place. We need a strong and sound Democratic Governance Systems in place for Africa to compete with the rest of the world. We must accept that we have more weak institutions in place which is making a Democratic Governance invisible in Africa even though we are trying to make a progress but at a very slow space.

As Amilcar Cabral of Guinea Bissau said, “unless the African intellectual commits a class suicide to detach himself and herself from the oppressive and exploitative class (formerly represented by the colonialist, and today represented by the ruling elite in Africa) and align himself and herself with the rights, needs, interests, issues, concerns and pains of the masses of our people, Africa cannot have governments and institutions in the public, private and civil society sectors that can develop Africa. But for the African intellectual to commit a class suicide, he or she must have revolutionary knowledge and orientation and principles. To acquire this knowledge is not like picking mangoes in your backyard. Revolutionary knowledge is obtained by study and continuous studying for your entire life. Thus these materials and many others would help in giving you that orientation so that you would graduate from rationalizations, philosophising, pontificating, imitating and toying with the conditions and lives of your people, and begin to stand with the people by any means necessary...”

Therefore based on the above challenges and achievements, we cannot totally say Democratic Governance in Africa is a total **MYTH** but is also yet to be a **REALITY** and the following few suggestions are made to add to other recommendations of previous writers/authors and institutions for Democratic Governance in Africa to be a **Reality**;

- This is the right time for Africa to build one Unified definition for Democracy and customise the principles of democracy to suit the realities of African Culture in order to meet the standards of a Democratic Governance for solving the human development needs.
- It is important for the Presidents/Rulers of Africa to starting answering questions/issues of national interest at the House of Parliaments as they are accountable to the citizens who delegated their powers to them.
- African Leaders and rulers must understand that they are elected by the people and therefore they must be held accountability directly to the citizens in order to realise efficiency and excellence for a country to be a modern state.
- African Ministers and other Public Officials must always be ready and fully equip with information to answer any questions from the Parliamentarians. Pre-questioning (sending questions to Ministers by parliamentarians) contributes to ineffectiveness and inefficiency of Ministers and other Public Officials in performing their duties as they are expected to master their domains and administer them well.
- Africa must always be aware that we are living in a global world of technology and therefore putting in place a strong, functional and user friendly E-Governance system is crucial. This will promote within the

governments structures, its partners and citizens accountability, transparency, ensuring citizen and civil society participation in decision making and maximises performance within the public service.

- Reforms of African's Governance system should be top on its agenda as Good Governance implies a non-corrupt state bureaucracy. To accelerate growth and improve the social welfare of the people, Africa must put in place and maintain a sustainable transparent reform impetus. For democracy to operate smoothly in Africa the economic and social environment should be created for the people to flourish.
- Africa must strive to ensure accountability, transparency, reconciliation, consensus, partnership, participation, responsibility and equitable wealth sharing. To ensure good governance, it is imperative to eliminate top-down development and administrative approaches and promote and sustain a bottom-up management system and development approaches for the betterment of the poor Africans.
- The Civil Society is the engine of any government and it should always be lubricated at all times. They need to be empowered and provided with the necessary resources and conducive environment for Africa to realize democratic governance. The civil society must be part and parcel of the custodian of the governance process of the country.
- The need to reinforce the effectiveness of government and encourage the development of the rule of law, justice, legal reforms and other measures to move the nation forward, issues of Checks and balances including an effective and efficient control mechanism can be achieve by putting in place a Human Rights Commission and an Anti-corruption Commission to oversee all government activities.
- Conducting a National Conference (political parties, civil society, media, traditional rulers, women, youths, security, independent electoral commission, stakeholders etc.) on the political situation of a country as a strategy for the democratisation of African countries and its decisions should be binding and respected by all.

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