

The Challenges of Sustainable Democracy in Africa and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

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ABSTRACT

This paper captures the challenges of sustainable democracy confronting Africa and the prospect of using the NEPAD programme to addressing those challenges. Democracy has remained a familiar concept of political discourse in pre and post-colonial Africa because it was believed that the realization of development and socially significant issues such as accountability, social justice and respect for human right which are the major hallmark of good governance, can only take place adequately within the confines of credible democratic space. However, in spite of its centrality to the development process, democracy as currently practiced in Africa is characterized more by democratic deficits rather than dividends thus leading to underdevelopment, corruption and political disputes, amongst others. This research which relies on secondary sources essentially finds that the pre-NEPAD political setting was characterized more by democratic reversal due to frequent military intervention and stage-managed elections and that the post-NEPAD's democratic settings have recorded some measure of democratic consolidation even though many democratic transition programmes are still riddle with various electoral malpractices. The research equally revealed the fact that the post-NEPAD democratic electoral process has improved tremendously in quality, glamour and content delivery in many African countries due to the introduction of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) into the electoral process. In spite of these relative achievements, the post-NEPAD democratic regimes have failed to bring about sustainable development in many African countries due to the dictatorial and prebendal nature of African politics.

Introduction

Democracy, as a system of government has remain a popular and familiar concept of political discourse in both pre and post-colonial Africa (Ilufeye, 2011). The popularity of democracy as a concept is demonstrated more by the fact that other politically and socially significant issues like social justice, human right, rule of law, good governance, amongst others, are often discussed more as the main attributes of functional democracy. With democracy in place, it is assumed that the popular participation of the majority of the people in the decision making process will improve the quality of governance and facilitate accelerated development (Gambari, 2004). Having held strong appeal amongst the ordinary people as a plausible development concept, there has been the continuous increase in the activities of pro-democracy organizations across the world who continues to demand an end to dictatorial rule and its replacement with democratic governance. Though democratic governance competed fiercely with socialist dictatorship during the cold war era, the triumph of capitalism over socialism has equally led to the victory and promotion of democracy over socialist dictatorship globally. Thus the demand for democracy along good governance in the present unipolar world order is so pronounced in such a way as to have become an additional eligibility requirement for international financial aid to Africa.

Regrettably in Africa, in spite of the fact that sustainable development is difficult in the absence of genuine and responsive democratic regimes, much of the earlier mentioned positive attributes of democracy (social justice, human right, good governance) are patently in deficit in many African countries. Thus, rather than becoming a veritable source of meeting the personal and group development aspirations of vast majority of Africans, democratic governance has become more of a direct source of underdevelopment, corruption, mismanagement and a primary source of political disputes and violence in many African countries. The above negative scenarios have led to what is now popularly referred to as democratic reversal rather than consolidation in many African countries. The assumed failure of democratic governance to bring about sustainable development in Africa in spite of its critical relevance to the development process spurs up this study. The paper does

not only attempt to study the foundational challenges of democracy in Africa, but also studies how democratic governance attempts to promote socio-economic development in Africa within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The study adopts secondary source of information by studying relevant data relating to policy and academic discourse on the challenges of sustainable democracy in Africa and the NEPAD.

Conceptual Analysis

Democracy holds its origin to the ancient Greece, especially the city states of Athens (Francis, 1999). The word "democracy" derives from two Greek words "demos" which means "the people" and "kratein" which means "rule of or by" (Francis, 1999). The term democracy is thus translated from the above mentioned Greek lexicology to mean "rule by the people". Apart from its fundamental origin from the Greek city state, Heater (1964) equally traced the origin of modern democracy to such medieval institutions as the British parliament and the jury and from the political theories of the seventeenth century such as the theories of equality of men, the theory of natural right and sovereignty. Francis (1999) argued that the origin of democracy could not be said to be an exclusive source and preserve of the Greek and the Western orientation alone. Some of the recent historical and archaeological evidences have revealed that reasonable elements of basic principles of democracy such as collective decision making process existed in other civilizations as exemplified by the principle of check and balances and aggregate decision making process of many pre-colonial systems of governments in Africa. Such African version of democracy, noted the author consisted of the democratic pillars with universal application.

The principle and practice of democracy right from its elementary stage from the ancient Athens where the concept originated from reveals three major features. First, supreme power was vested on the people as demonstrated by the principle of "ekklesia" which consisted of an assembly of all male adult citizen and in which each was entitled to participate by discussion and voting. Second, democracy permitted freedom of speech that is legally guaranteed and third, the concept allows for open contest of political offices to all qualified citizens. The ancient democracy has equally been known to have been characterized by

reasonable level of checks and balances to prevent arbitrary exercise of power. For Instance, there was no permanent civil service in place. Instead, an administrative council of five hundred people was constituted each year and all the members accounted for their actions at the end of their tenure.

Though ancient democracy could be said to have been characterized largely by direct participation of the citizens in the political affairs of the state, participation was still restricted as those who took part in collective decisions were the citizens (often referred to as collective governors) who happened to be the subject of political authorities and the creators of public rules and regulations. However, the concept of citizenship was only restricted and applicable to only freeborn male adults while excluding women, children, slaves and resident aliens. As posits by Francis (1999), the success of direct democracy was aided more in ancient Greece by the slave mode of production under which the slaves were directly engaged in the production of the peoples material needs including food which made it possible for the constitutionally recognized citizens who governed to have sufficient time to concentrate on political governance.

Held (1993), contended that within the contemporary modern states, the socio-economic condition under which the ancient Athenian democracy thrived have long disappeared as the old city states which were very small to govern have been collapsed into an enlarged modern state system. Thus, the slave mode of production has been supplanted by capitalist ideology which has substituted the concept of collective welfarism of the early democracy with the contemporary individual capitalist accumulation and by implication driving the society further into the antagonist class of the Bourgeois (the capitalist owners of the means of production) and the proletariat (the workers) who have been largely exploited by the former having been overworked and under paid. The prolong struggle between the social class has led to re-theorizing of democratic concepts and ideal. As posited by Held (1993), the contemporary views on democracy have given rise to three main variations of democratic model and ideals. The first old generation model view democracy as involving direct participation of the people in the decision making process as typified by the ancient Greek city states while

the second scholastic views sees democracy as a process of conferring decision making authorities on those who are periodically voted into power on behalf of other people as their indirect representatives. The third model of democracy identified by Held (1993) is the Marxist brand of self governance or people's democracy which extend equality of all citizens from political to the socio-economic realms of life. At the economic sphere, democracy is achieved by allowing equality and collective decisions on the ownership of means of production, distribution and exchange of goods and services through the nationalization of private capitalist enterprises. Democratic equality in social sphere is achievable according to the Marxist democrats through the legalization of and institutionalization of right to education for all citizens, the establishment of social security scheme, automatic employment and free access to medical services and free participation in the decision making process, amongst others.

However, whether the Marxist model should be regarded as a valid model of democracy, especially in the contemporary unipolar world order is still debatable amongst democracy scholars. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, all of which were based on Marxist ideology has greatly undermined the argument of Marxist democracy as a feasible alternative to liberal democracy. Due to the impracticability of direct democracy in the contemporary complex and interdependent global world order and the dwindling influence of the Marxist brand of democratic values. Liberal or representative democracy has emerged as the current dominant model of democracy virtually all over the world. Heater (1964) identified five basic characteristics of representative democracy to include equality and sovereignty of the people, respect for human right, entronement of rule of law and respect for individual liberty. Democratic equality implies "one man one vote" irrespective of the status of all eligible voters in the society. The concept also represents openness of political contest and political participation to all eligible citizens. The ultimate sovereign political power rests with the people as expressed through their votes. The respect for the dignity and worth of citizens in relation to freedom of expression, freedom to live existence, religion and association amongst others are major requirement for representative democracy to endure. Credible democratic values is

equally based on the rule of law which is principally characterized by equality of all citizens before the law, the principle of fair hearing along respect for fundamental right of individuals.

Though Heater's concept of democracy exposes the cardinal content of functional liberal democratic values, his explanation was faulted for its lack of emphasis on the central role of political parties in the democratic process. However, this deficiency was remedied in the explanation provided by Francis (1999) that functional democracy traits entail meaningful and extensive competitions amongst individuals and organized group through credible competitive political institutions either directly or indirectly for the major political positions of governmental power. Held (1993) provided what may be summation of varied opinions on the concept of liberal democracy and its major elements. These include a cluster of rules and institutions permitting broader participation of the majority of the citizens in the selection of the representatives who makes political decisions. This cluster include popularly elected government, periodic, free and fair election, an all inclusive adult suffrage which is safe guided by just law and freedom of expression on public matters broadly defined, amongst others.

We can distill from the above conceptual democratic framework that democracy denotes a set of ideas, ideals, institutions and process of governance that allows for broad mass of the people to choose their leaders and the process that guarantees them a broad range of civic rights. As noted by Raji (1999), the above conception of democracy could be criticized as being narrow in focus having focused only on formal political rights and processes to the exclusion of economic concern. In functional democracy, noted the author, the tempo and temper of political democratic space is largely dictated by the level of economic buoyancy and the just or unjust distributive formats of economic gains in a country. For instance, in a weak economy, poverty often prevent the mass of the people from exercising their political freedom adequately and freely since the concentration of economic wealth is in the possession of few political bigwigs who in many instances use such enormous resources to influence the political thought and decisions of the poor. Such denial of large chunk of the segment of the society of their political and economic wealth, and the inherent optimal enjoyment from such wealth often lead

to state of insecurity in such country. The recognition of the above mentioned paradox, amongst others, has led to calls to broaden the notion of democracy to incorporate social and economic advancement of the masses.

Challenges of Sustainable Democracy in Africa

The increasing level of democratization process and democratic regimes in Africa over the past four decades preceding the creation of NEPAD in 2001 has provided a credible platform of assessing the institutionalization and general performance of democratic governance in Africa. However, as notice by Ogwu (2002), the functioning of democratic regimes in Africa within this period and beyond has been characterized more by democratic deficits than dividends. Thus in many African countries, the practice of democracy has been exhibiting signals that are very detrimental to the process of good governance and socio-economic gains that are expected from African leaders. One of such problems of democratic governance in Africa has been the problem of elite conflicts. In fact, in no country did it pose impediments to development than in Nigeria's fifth republic, under former President Olusegun Obasanjo and President Goodluck Jonathan as the legislature and the executive arms of governments at the federal level were in perpetual antagonism with each other.

This discord was eventually replicated at the lower level of the states and local governments, especially between some Governors and their Deputies and between local government Chairmen and their Councilors. The main conflict issue among these groups relate to parochial interests such as disputes over succession plan, political appointments, contract awards scandal, power sharing and dispute over governmental financial allocations to the legislatures and councilors and sidelining of Deputy Governors by Governors (Kolawole, 2012). The elite conflict obstructs the smooth process of governance as the attention of office holders is often diverted from the needs of generality of the public to suffer. For example, budgets passage was unnecessarily delayed in Nigeria in 2012 due to wrangling between the legislature and the President, and this brought about delay in the proper implementation

of government programmes in the country. In South Africa, constant conflicts between the former President, Thabo Mbeki and his former Deputy, Jacob Zuma (the current President) led to the impeachment of the latter. In Zimbabwe, there was a conflict of succession between the President, Robert Mugabe and the main opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai who eventually became the Prime Minister (Egwu, 2008).

Other major problems of democracy in Africa have been the virtual lack of accountability among the elected political office holders (Ogwu, 2002). Political accountability is part of democratic practices all over the world largely because, elected officers hold their power in trust for the people. However, poor service delivery still bedevils African politics as many elected officers hardly visit their constituencies to give account of their stewardship or collate their people's needs.

The civil society groups and governmental institutions like the Judiciary, Code of Conduct Bureau, and Public Complaints Commissions and so on, are supposed to serve as checks and balances on the excesses of government officials but the above mentioned institutions have been rendered virtually incapable of checking government excesses in many parts of Africa. Apart from the coercive effects of elite political conflicts on these institutions, many of these institutions are often drawn into political conflict in support of either of the two arms (legislature or the executive), especially in support of the executive due to the nature of appointment of the operators of these institutions, which often have direct input from the Presidency. Some of these accounting institutions eventually become an oppressive instrument against opposition. An instance of this tendency has been exhibited in Kenyan politics with the manipulation of the Judiciary and the Electoral Commission by the executive against opposition groups (Egwu, 2008). It is equally believed that the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) in Nigeria is being used by the Executive to persecute political opponents (Deboh, 2008).

Equally aligned to the problem of proper accountability is the outright decrease in the activities of pro-democracy and pro-human rights organizations due to logistic, financial problems and repressive tendencies of governments. For example, about 1,080 people consisting

largely of pro-democracy groups who demonstrated against the rigging of the February 2008 general elections in Kenya were shot (Bolaji, 2008). Many African politicians are also corrupt having been found guilty of diverting public funds into private use. This tendency has retarded the progress of Africa. In Nigeria's fourth republic, for example, virtually all the then principal officers under the Okadigbo led Senate were indicted by Idris Kuta's panel of investigation of misappropriation and diversion of close to 2 billion Naira (Elijah, 2006).

It is also assumed that the immediate pre and post colonial history of many African countries was the root cause of the enthronement of 'god fatherism' and Africa's political systemic disorder (Nnamani, 2003). Though the commencement of the journey of nationhood are basically the same with what obtains elsewhere in the world, making heroes out of the process of liberation struggle, military coups and personalities involved, brought about the imposition of many liberation fighters and military leaders on the African people. The privilege position of many political mentors was also aided by their corrupt access to state resources. From this abnormal ascendancy to power and enormous wealth eventually emerged the culture of "god fatherism" and cult-political personalities in African politics. These groups of African leaders, having successfully hijacked political power from the people ultimately assumed the role of major distributors of political patronage as benevolent masters through the politics of exclusion, favouritism, mediocrity as against the democratic culture of popular participation. Since the basic concern of most 'godfathers' is personal material gains at the expense of majority needs, they often sustain themselves in power through extra legal forces such as "thuggery", bribery and outright manipulation of the law.

The engagement of African youths in acts of "thuggery" and other delinquent tendencies such as bodyguards to many "god fathers" (which thrive on the periodic dole out of financial and material gains by the god fathers) destroy the youths. Thus, the operational dynamic of these negative forces has built into the political culture of Africa, which instead of making virile African youths agents of national growth and development, has built into such youths the culture of violence that is characterized by riotous form of livelihood in many facets

of public life. It is also difficult to make good future leaders out of many African youths who have imbibed the culture of wild life, political imperfection, bribery and political manipulation (Obasanjo, 2003). With much emphasis on political mentors (political god fatherism) politics has been largely commercialized and privatized in most parts of Africa with little emphasis on service and people's welfare. The power fixers have thus "hijacked" the political power and processes, which traditionally belong to the electorate, thus diminishing the content of popular political participation and democratic gains in Africa.

The arbitrary culture of the military and quasi-military regimes in many African countries has also brought about the tradition of forced accession to state leadership, and cult-personality in African politics with little professional competency and proficiency to govern well in order to meet the economic and socio-political needs of the people (Mazrui, 2004). Though African countries still retain their political independence from foreign domination, the cumulative effect of many years of military rule in Africa have brought about loss of self-government and self-determination in Africa for a very long period. This trend has promoted the culture of violence and autocratic tendencies in governance. Unemployment is another major challenge to democratic dividends in Africa as many of the jobless citizens are eventually used as arsonists and hired assassins to eliminate political opposition or destroy their properties. The implementation of the IMF induced SAP along democratic governance in Africa has continued to constitute a "time bomb" for the fragile democracy in the continent, because SAP policies have brought about hardship within the democratic space in Africa, which gears towards peoples welfare. The threat of SAP to democracy manifested itself in many conflicts spots in Africa, where crises arose as a result of introduction of the policy. For example, the introduction of SAP to Somalia which largely cut public jobs, generated intense hardship for the general populace culminating in the eventual collapse of the state (Aluko, 2003). It has also been difficult for many African politicians to face the electorate on the basis of IMF Policies and win elections under a free and fair atmosphere because "it is not possible to intend to make the people poorer through SAP and expect them to vote for you" (Ann, 2003). It is not totally surprising then that many African politicians rigged their ways into offices.

Plump political portfolios are often reserved for party loyalists for working for the success of the party, irrespective of the level of capacity and capability of such loyalists to deliver democratic dividends. Most of the elected officers are also semi-illiterate and grossly incompetent to deliver viable democratic dividends especially at the local or county levels. Their inability to have minimum grasp of the working of administrative and political processes negatively affect the decision-making quality in governance. It thus discourages rational, objective, logical and evaluative judgments, in favour of emotional, parochial and partisan considerations. Another setback to responsive and functional democracy in Africa is the nature of the electoral process, especially as it concerns the conduct of elections (Ogwu, 2002). Elections are very central to the effective running of the democratic system, because they provide the mechanism for peaceful and periodic changes in leadership at all levels of government. In Africa, the conduct of elections is always very problematic. While democratic foundation elections that usher in new democratic regimes are often allowed to stand in many countries (despite high level of irregularity) just to wrestle the power especially from the military, subsequent elections that are meant to provide the framework for hitch-free succession from one civilian government to another are often riddled with more manipulations, outright rigging, especially on the part of the incumbents who are bent on retaining power at all cost. A good example is provided by the Zimbabwean general elections in 2008, in which there were widespread intimidation of opponents, and outright rigging by the administration of Robert Mugabe (Yusuf, 2008).

The European Union Election Observer Mission (EUEOM), who monitored the 2003 and 2007 general elections in Nigeria observed in its interim report that the elections was fraught with irregularities and fraud, as there were cases of multiple voting, illegal stuffing of ballot papers into the ballot boxes and falsification of results (Yusuf, 2008). Democracy in Africa equally lacks sufficient vital pillars such as a sufficiently informed middle class, strong working class, a virile pressure group, an alert civil society and enough local independent media in many cases (Gambari, 2004). Government is undermining effective operation of these groups. Many African electorates and

supporters are also noted to be sycophants, too demanding and highly impatient with government because of their appetite for exaggerated expectations (Aremu, 2008). Another major set back to reasonable democratic dividends in Africa borders on the expensive nature of the democratic process (Ogwu, 2002). Thus the cost of election becomes extremely burdensome for underdeveloped economies like those of African countries. The cost of the electoral contest, in terms of infrastructures (building of party offices as witnessed in Nigeria during Babangida's regime), the budget of the electoral commissions, the cost of security (about N7 billion was spent in the 2007 election in Nigeria), the sensitization budget of the orientation agencies and campaign fund by the parties and the candidates are all examples of how enormous the total cost of funding democracies in Africa is. In Nigeria for example, the failed transitional programme of Babangida's regime gulped about N500 billion (Antonio, 2006).

Added to the democratic burden is the observation that at the end of many election processes in Africa, the election results under the single majority votes that is adopted by many African countries often end up enthroning a minority rule, even where election is transparently conducted in a multiparty democracy (Gadaffi, 2006). For example, when votes are distributed among several candidates, one of them polls more than the other candidates and he is declared the winner based on having the majority vote. However, if the collective vote of the oppositions who received less are added up, such votes could constitute an overwhelming majority. Though the opposition is in the majority in this case, they are neither allowed to form the government nor are they proportionally represented in government. These groups of opposition normally cause trouble for the party in power, especially in Africa where opposition is almost synonymous with enmity. Little wonder then that many African governments focus more attention on managing the opposition than managing the state. All the above democratic challenges, amongst others, have brought about dwindle democratic dividends to many Africans.

NEPAD, Democracy and Good Governance in Africa

The New Partnership for Africa's Development Programme NEPAD was established in July 2001 in Lusaka -Zambia (Gambari,

2004). The NEPAD development framework is divided into long, medium, and short-term objectives. The long-term objectives of the programme is to eradicate poverty in Africa and to place African countries both individually and collectively on the path of sustainable growth and development and thus halt the marginalization of the continent in the globalization process (NEPAD, 2001). Within this objective framework, the NEPAD assumed that the poverty and backwardness of Africa stand in stark contrast to the prosperity of the developed world. The continued marginalization of Africa from the globalization process and the social exclusion of the vast majority of the African peoples from the benefits of the process constitute a serious threat to global stability, hence the need to redress this to promote sustainable development in Africa (NEPAD, 2001).

The concept of democracy and good governance initiative as enunciated in the NEPAD (2001), revolves around a democratic culture in which the people exercise the governing power either directly or indirectly and in which those who rule do so according to the consent and wishes of the people (NEPAD, 2001). The NEPAD's idea of democracy and good governance equally calls for the enthronement of democratized development process in which the people become the means, agents and end-user of development process through the democratization of the decisions making process. It is one process which guarantees the right of people to dignified existence, fundamental human rights and control over their resources (NEPAD, 2001). Good governance as adopted by the NEPAD is therefore the exercise of power by various levels of government that is effective, honest, equitable and transparent (Apam, 2006). The summary of the democratic process within the NEPAD framework revolves around popular participation to promote inclusivity not exclusivity and the involvement of the vast majority of Africans in the development programme right from inception and planning to implementation.

With proper involvement of vast majority in the development process, NEPAD believed that people would be ready to own and defend the development process (NEPAD, 2001). In order to achieve its aim of bringing about sustainable democracy in Africa, NEPAD has adopted the idea of political reforms across African

countries and zero tolerance to non-democratic governance. The programme has equally advocated for a governance peer review mechanism to propel African countries to embrace the ideal of good governance that is based on internationally acceptable standard code.

Appraising the achievements of NEPAD in the area of democracy and good governance, the research shows that African Heads of state have successfully created a number of political structures to manage and oversee the implementation of the NEPAD programme (Gambari, 2004). These political structures include the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee, which provides policy guidance on the overall implementation of the NEPAD. There is also the NEPAD Steering Committee whose primary function is to determine terms of reference and the supervision of the identified NEPAD projects. The NEPAD Secretariat coordinates the activities of the programme in each of the priority areas. In the political domain also, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) has been established and twenty-nine African Countries have acceded to the mechanism as at May 2010. The Panel of Eminent Persons (known as the African Peer Review Panel) has been established and has commenced work. Three countries Ghana, Rwanda and Uganda have been successfully reviewed while their final result has been published. Many other African countries are also under one stage or the other of the review process.

The primary focus of the APRM is to foster the adoption of policies, standards and practices that lead to political stability, economic growth and social cohesion in Africa. The commencement of the implementation of the NEPAD programmes through the above mentioned political structures is a rare achievement in Africa especially when weighed against the background that past "home grown" development programmes in Africa did not witness reasonable level of implementation.

Within the context of the NEPAD's strategy to promote democracy in Africa (NEPAD, 2001), there is consistent and reasonable

level of democratic transitions in Africa since 2002 (HSGIC Report, 2010). Thus, there had been general elections in countries like, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Togo, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, Benin, Burkina Faso, to mention a few. Presently, most African countries are under democratic governance.

In line with the NEPAD's strategy of enthroning democracy and state legitimacy (NEPAD, 2001), African leaders adopted a policy of zero tolerance to coups. For instance, it reversed the coup in Guinea-Bissau and Sao Tome and Principe in 2004 by threatening economic sanctions and political isolation in those countries. Even though Faure Gnassingbe (Togolese President) was initially installed as president by his country's military in February 2005, his government was not recognized until he contested and won an election within the context of democratic norms. Zimbabwe was suspended from AU in 2008 for conducting flawed election. The AU also suspended Guinea-Conakry and Niger from the Union for installing a military government in 2008 and 2009 respectively (HSGIC Report, 2009).

The post NEPAD electoral and democratic process have improved tremendously in many countries of Africa, in terms of its glamour, content and quality (Synge, 2006). The greatest stimulant and lubricant to this achievement was the introduction of the Information Communication and Technology Services (ICTS) facilities in the conduct of elections in Africa. Three key items of technology have helped the electoral system. These are the availability of cheap mobile phones, powerful independent Frequency Modulated (FM) Stations and the Internets. With wider network coverage, mobile phones have improved the accuracy and timely reporting of elections procedures and outcomes. Voters, election observers and journalists alike are equally able to report electoral events almost immediately from polling centres through the use of their mobile phones. Many voters and political commentators used their phones to comment on and report election

conducts including irregularities on local Independent FM Stations and also to the Electoral Commission. Campaigns are also conducted through texts messages. There are now on-line publications detailing political manifestoes and campaign promises while many political parties, the electoral commissions and independent observers have equally set up their own websites for proper and prompt coordination of political programmes.

Through the introduction of information technology into the electoral process in Africa, political conversation is no longer monopolized mainly by the ruling parties as practiced before the introduction of NEPAD. For instance, the success of two key elections; in Ghana and Kenya-where opposition parties defeated the incumbent ruling parties between 2001 and 2004, were attributed to land mark contribution of technology to the democratic process. In each case, many voters were able to monitor the conduct of elections through their mobile phones and made necessary political maneuvering almost immediately. The introduction of the Automated Finger Identification (computer) System (AFIS), which captures the exact finger print of a voter, has reduced the incidence of multiple registrations in Africa. The incorporation of the Direct Data Capture Machine (DDC) into the electoral system equally captures the bio-data of African electorates into the computer network, and thus information on electorates in one particular location can be accessed from other parts of the African countries.

Though the introduction of ICTS facilities has not stopped election rigging, it has nonetheless made it difficult for rigging to take place. Mobile technology has also created improved accuracy in election analysis, monitoring and election observers report (local and foreign). However, the improvement of the electoral process through the ICTS facilities is far from being universal in Africa. For example, the prevailing political climate in countries like Ethiopia and Zimbabwe, with a history of political oppression, has decreased the electoral process through the use of technology. In Ethiopia in particular, the government

has failed to liberalize either the Internet or the mobile telephone industry. In fact, both facilities are sometimes shut down in times of political unrest.

In spite of the relative achievements of NEPAD in the area of political governance, what is noticeable from our findings is that the concept of democracy and good governance is perceived and implemented differently by the three principal partners (African leaders, Africans and Foreign development partners) in the NEPAD project. To the vast majority of Africans, especially the African electorate, democracy is a political process which ultimately leads to the provision of good things of life for the improvement of socio-economic well-being and material transformation of Africans. It then means more job creation, improvement in the provision of physical and social amenities; functional schools, free health care services, good roads, provision of electricity et cetera. In summary, to the African people, democracy is not just about elections, it is also a way of realizing the full potentials of the people to achieving personal and group development aspirations. To the African electorates, democracy ultimately loses its credibility if it cannot satisfy the needs of the citizens.

To the African development partners, especially the G8 members, democracy is expressed more in a liberal sense as an industrial democratic concept which means, more democratization of markets than politics. Thus, the Western concept of industrial democracy centres more on trade liberalization and democratization of the price regimes to promote appropriate pricing of goods and services. It also entails the removal of product subsidy to find its correct value (through the forces of demand and supply). Industrial democracy also embraces the democratization of ownership of industries from sole ownership (the Government) to expand the ownership base to diverse individuals in order to improve the decision making process of organizations. Other concepts of the Western values of liberal democracy include institutional reforms in the socio-economic and political sectors, responsible and accountable governance, rational and sound economic management to curtail corruption in the mismanagement of public funds. It was the above major hallmarks of the neo-liberal democratic conditionality as contained in the NEPAD document that has been imposed on Africa for

implementation by its Western development partners and the pro-West global development agencies like the World Bank and the IMF, with its disastrous consequences of poverty aggravation on many Africans.

As noted by Ben (2003), at first, the Western and the IMF Good Governance conceptual agenda appeared to be politically correct and a progressive addition to bringing about proper utilization of African development fund. This is in realization that genuine development cannot take place in the absence of accountable and prudent leadership, respect for human rights, due process and corporate economic management. However, the effect of Western policy of democracy and good governance as enunciated on the African development policies has generated more of negative reactions from its critics who observed that such a condition embodies an uneasy and anti-development compromise between economic growth and material well-being of Africans. The summary of this position is that the Western concept of democracy and good governance has imposed unprogressive restrictions on the African states as the primary legitimate instrument of development which is geared towards welfarism and whose manifestoes and constitutional roles emphasize free education, free health services and employment opportunity for citizens. The role of the state as the highest distributor of socio-economic patronage for the well-being of Africans has been assigned to the private sector in the NEPAD programme through privatization, commercialization and job rationalization programmes. The effects of these actions include price hike, retrenchment, removal of product subsidy and other untold hardship on Africans. Therefore, Africans have not derived maximum benefits from the West-centric view of democracy and good governance as applied to market liberalization.

To many African leaders and the aspiring politicians, democracy is equated with politics of patronage rather than politics of service. As noted by Dokubo (2004), the whole arrangement is symbolized by politics of prebendalism or patrimonialism in which the state is being used illegally as a mechanism for the accumulation and expropriation of African's natural resources and wealth by a few privileged individuals who control the levers of political power. Such politics of patronage is usually characterized by personalization of political power, which is usually acquired through coups, stage-managed

elections, and violence or threat of violence. Such patrimony democratic trail is equally symbolized by a display of personal loyalty to the rulers or political leaders rather than the state. The relationship that ensues between a political contestant and the political "god" father who are the major hallmark of patrimonialism is often permeated by parochial interest and nepotism rather than rational-official loyalty. The politics of prebendalism also includes the practice of political clientelism bordering on the established network of political patrons and their clients. This mode of relationship is directed primarily, towards arranging services and resources in return for people's vote and political patronage. The effect of prebendalist politics has given rise to a systemic dysfunction in governance in many African countries thus throwing up in many instances, a culture of largely unproductive but powerful dominant class. The culture of political patronage has also encouraged the recruitment of semi-illiterates, sycophants, mediocre and party loyalists with little knowledge of the decision-making process into high political offices. This practice (of political clientelism) has reduced the quality of governance in Africa and promoted more democratic 'deficit' than dividends.

Prebendalist democracy or politics of patrimonialism directly undermines the pattern of democratic consolidation that is premised on credible democratic dividends, constitutionalism, probity and accountability as envisaged by the NEPAD. As a result of Prebendal politics and other challenges of democracy, elite conflicts which basically centres on parochial interest is still a major hallmark of the post NEPAD democratic reforms in Africa as different groups still struggle to control the instrument of governance leading to leadership succession crises in some countries. In Nigeria for example, the long absence of late president Sheu Musa Yar'Adua from office in 2009 almost created a power vacuum at the presidency as different groups within and out of government were bent on frustrating the attempt to swear-in the then vice president (now the President) Goodluck Jonathan as acting President, thus overheating the politics to frightening level. Lack of political accountability still persists in many African countries as many politicians still do not deliver credible democratic gains to the constituencies that elected them. The Africa Democratic Watch (2009 Report), indicates that

less than one third of elected officers in Tanzania initiated county projects in 2009 while about 1,126 mega constituency projects were abandoned in Uganda. Some factors have been identified as being responsible for incessant abandonment of electoral constituencies by many African politicians. The first factor has to do with the greediness of many politicians who serves primarily to protect their personal financial interest from their generous constituency allowances and the greediness of many political power fixers who controls political leverages and patronages which they use to their advantages rather than use it for the benefits of their constituencies. Much of the resources that should be used for the development of constituencies are often diverted to settle the power fixers who sponsored politicians into office. Dwindling democratic dividend to the people is also linked to exaggerated expectations by the follower-ship who often confronts political office holders with all form of financial demand before they perform their civic electoral duties, such as demanding money before they vote for candidates. There is also the practice of paying people to attend political meetings and rallies and other forms of gratifications to perform party assignments.

This democratic culture of demanding electoral gratification is unlike the practice in the Western world where followership is secured on account of charisma of the political leaders and their record of achievements. As a result of incessant demand by the power fixers and other electorates before they sponsor or vote for candidates, many political office holders in Africa does not hold any obligation to serve the people with utmost dedication because they see themselves as having settled the electorates before they got to the office. In spite of the post NEPAD electoral reform also, political power fixers still dictate the political space in many African countries. For example, "Political god fathers" still largely influence party primaries in many African countries as candidates often emerge under arrangements other than party constitutional guidelines while some aspirants often emerge as candidates only after they have taken oath of allegiance to the power fixers in odd places including ancestral shrines. The attitudinal bankrupts of the politicians, the power fixers and the followers need to be reformed before credible democratic gains can be recorded in Africa.

In spite of the central role of the police to provide adequate security during elections, the political environment in Africa are still largely unsecured, as the police and other security agencies deployed for election duties have been documented especially by the opposition parties to have served as the arrow head of intimidation by the parties in power to suppress the opposition. With the regular use of political thugs as a result of the incompetency of the security forces, political power in Africa is being pursued with high intensity of war through the use of guns, intimidation, manipulation and threats. With frequent state of insecurity during elections, many African election refugees often relocate to where they consider most safe until elections are over. As a result of state of insecurity also, private armies and thugs are now recruited to guide many politicians instead of the regular police force. There is the need for the reorientation and the re-composition of the police service agencies across African countries to include the representatives of all the political parties who could also appoint the Inspector-General of Police instead of such appointment coming from the executive. The cost of conducting credible election in Africa is still very high noting this from the amount that is often earmarked for party campaign programme (#1 billion for the president in Nigeria in 2011 election) to the cost of campaign for election in Africa. Many aspiring African politicians are unable to afford such huge campaign fund. As a result of inability of many party candidates to raise fund for campaign, elective office has almost become a mere commodity to be purchase by those who literally invest their money as an avenue to recoup and make profits out of politics.

Politics has thus become business and Primary source of diverting public funds from the need of the people to private use. The will of the people therefore cannot find adequate expression and flourish in the face of high cost of elections in Africa. With so much resources being deployed to capture elective offices, it is not difficult to see the correlation between politics and the potential for high level corruption as many victorious aspirants often steal much of public fund in preparation for the next election. The greatest losers are the electorates whose vote investment in the electoral system is hijacked by money politics which is the current determining factors for outcome of many elections in Africa.

Though elections are still largely rigged in Africa, the post NEPAD political reform has restored some credibility to the conduct of election in the continent. Credible elections were recently conducted by the electoral commissions in countries like Ghana, South Africa, Cote d'Ivoires and Nigeria in the 2011 general elections as the conduct of these elections were certified as very credible by many international observers in those countries (See 2011 EUEM Report). Even though the process of adjudication of electoral dispute continue to exhibit high level of slowness in Africa, the judiciary has demonstrated more determination and high level of judicial will and competency to promote democratic transition in Africa due to the internal reform of justice delivery system in many African countries. In Nigeria which is the largest democracy in Africa, there were many landmark rulings on election matters which ultimately gave judgment in favour of the opposition parties that were robbed of election victories in the 2007 general elections. This judgment has further strengthened the confidence of the people on the judicial system as a genuine platform for the resolution of election matters in Africa.

Aremu and Dulal (2008), using an institutional model of analysis have identified prebendalist politics as being largely responsible for institutional weakness and steady development decline in many African countries. Institutional framework relates to the constitutional rules and regulations which guides government's socio-political and economic policies for good governance and better service delivery. Credible and strategic institutional legal settings thus channel the potentials and the endowments of the people on legally recognized productive ventures, fraud curtailment and self restraints. However, since many African leaders are in power to protect selfish and parochial interest above collective aspirations, they often formulate weak laws or subvert strong rules and policies in order to facilitate their easy access to the plundering of national resources under their management. In Nigeria for example, the legal framework for the privatization and commercialization programme were said to have been weakly designed to make it easier for leaders to buy some of the privatized enterprises (Deboh, 2008). In spite of the establishment of the Liberia Financial Crime Commission (LFCC) in Liberia in 2007, many present and past

leaders in that country accused of financial crime were not prosecuted due to lapses in the crime law (Deboh: 2008). In spite of the creation of the public employment service commission in African countries as an unbiased recruitment institution, many African politicians and public office holders still fraudulently allots plump civil service jobs to their favourites through the manipulation of the employment process (Oyedipe, 2005). Despite its lush agricultural endowments (fertile soil, abundant rain fall, three annual growing seasons), Burundi is poor largely because of its weak security institutional framework to effectively maintain law and order (Aremu and Dulal, 2008).

Apart from formal institutional constraints, other informal democratic institutional set back to Africa's post NEPAD political development could also be identified (Aremu, 2008). These constraints centre on informal democratic norms revolving around the antithesis of a morally acceptable political code of conduct, conventions, customs and norms of political behaviour. Africa's political space, in spite of NEPAD's political reform, is still characterized more by uncivilized and indecent democratic conducts such as political blackmail, character and physical assassination of political opponents. Nigeria is a good example of this unfortunate development where many politicians including the former Attorney-General and the then chief law officer of the country, Bola Ige were killed. Between 2001 when NEPAD was established and 2007, there were official conservative figure of about 28,000 death tolls arising from high profile political assassination and disputed elections in Africa (Maya, 2008). This unfortunate trend is an indication that NEPAD's political reform has not sufficiently curtailed democratic challenges in Africa. Political assassination and thuggery have made political contest very risky in Africa. The trend has thus enthroned political apathy and withdrawal of many capable Africans from political contest. The analytical import of the appraisal of NEPAD's democracy and good governance initiative is that the vast majority of Africans have not benefited adequately from the current democratic process in Africa, except those who are within the power equation or those who are highly "connected" to the corridor of power (i.e. those that are close to those in political power). Africans' group or personal development aspirations have also not been well taken care of under the neo-liberal democracy of the African development partners because of its draconian nature, which has impoverished, especially the poorest households in Africa.

However, while Africans have largely been deprived of sufficient dividends of democracy under the oligarchical prebendalist model- a government of small exclusive group that rule primarily for their selfish interest, there are still few patriotic African leaders that are magnanimous enough to have achieved limited measure of credible dividends of democracy under the aristocratic prebendalist model-a government that is largely dominated and controlled by few powerful dominant political elites but for the common goods of vast majority of the African people (Vilfredo, 2007). This trend thus largely accounts for the construction and maintenance of public road in some states in Nigeria, stable power supply in Benin Republic, Ghana and South Africa, credible mega water engineering project in Kenya and improved telecommunication facilities in Ethiopia, amongst others. This credible democratic trend is far from been universal in Africa. There is therefore the need for sustained reformation of the African states in favour of the vast majority of Africans as envisaged in the NEPAD programme.

Analysts like Agwu (2004) argued that NEPAD has done great damage to its own cherished value of Western democracy and good governance with the manner in which it emerged. And it has subverted its own value of democracy and good governance having lacked adequate consultation before its adoption by the African leaders. Two of the repeated questions being asked in this regard are:-Who elected the pioneer crop of the NEPAD leadership into office? Upon which democratic principle were leaders of the NEPAD Steering Committee selected? It is pertinent to note that none of the leadership of the NEPAD was elected into office. They were rather imposed on Africans. If the idea of functional democracy as enunciated in the NEPAD must be achieved, there is need for the democratization of the decision making process of the NEPAD to bring about more popular participation of other diverse groups in the society (Agwu: 2004). To this end, NEPAD ought to be truly reconnected with far-reaching consultations with Africa's civil societies and other diverse groups beyond the elitist domain of Africa's leadership. Through this way, a genuine platform for a concrete social struggle with the organized popular forces would have been erected to pave way for the emergence of a durable programme for Africa's development agenda (Agwu, 2004).

Conclusion

An attempt was made in this paper to study the nature and dimension of challenges of sustainable democracy confronting Africa and how the NEPAD has responded to such challenges. The research findings confirmed that there are many development challenges confronting Africa including democratic reversal and democratic deficit instead of democratic consolidation and dividends in Africa. The findings equally show that NEPAD has recorded some successes in addressing these challenges. However, the dominant of West centric concept of democracy which is largely rooted in the democratization of the prices of goods and services rather than politics, and Prebendal politics by many African leaders which largely borders on politic of patronage rather than politic of services have largely denied vast majority of Africans an overwhelming benefit that ought to have accrued from the NEPAD's democracy and good governance initiative to Africans. It is on this note that the paper recommends that Africa should enthrone (through constitutional reform) a liberal democracy that places more emphasis on professionalization of politics, where political scientists are primarily in charge of governance to eliminate political quacks and inexperience in governance. The knowledge gained by a political scientist and public administrators (if allowed to be utilized optimally) primarily inculcate the culture and spirit of rational decision making quality, proper planning ability, objectivity and accountability in the task of governance unlike the political artists who practice politics through act of trial and errors.

Furthermore, there should be the enthronement of technocracy as a strategic development approach which should centre on the professionalization of the entire government structures and departments. This would aid correct application of human resource to areas where they are best trained and needed. There should be a mobile political mass literacy school to enlighten the citizens regularly about their fundamental human rights and privileges from, and obligation to the government, to liberate them from political ignorance, intimidation and culture of political apathy. Many of the political thugs are ignorant of the fact that they are been used only to be dumped after the election. Such sensitization programme could reduce act of thuggery and other delinquent behaviours from politics. The political mass literacy

programme could be subsumed into the national orientation programme of each African country.

There is the need for the enthronelement of the constitutional manifestoes (instead of party manifestoes), which shall legally compel political office holders to achieve a minimum performance target within a specific period (e.g. tarring of a minimum of 1,000 kilometer of road per year). This constitutional target could improve the democratic dividends in Africa. Though the party manifestoes have served as programme implementation guidelines for many aspiring politicians in Africa, such guidelines are often abandoned as soon as politicians assume office since it is not legally binding on them to implement it thus leaving many of their campaign promises unfulfilled. Such constitutional manifestoes makes it an act of compulsion for political office seekers to perform to at least the minimum expectation of an average African or be constitutionally forced out of office. Independent political anti-corruption agencies should be established in African countries to prosecute election riggers and other form of political offenders while an independent government performance assessment monitoring committee and public complaint commission should be established to address all forms of sectional or group political marginalization. The enrolment of the above suggestions into the democratic process in Africa could improve and consolidate the dividends of democracy in Africa under the NEPAD programme.

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