

**21ST CENTURY AFRICANS IN LEADERSHIP
– PRIVILEGE OF HUMILITY, SERVICE, RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

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As Theodore Roosevelt (1910) said over one hundred years ago...

"It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood. Who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error or shortcoming, but who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions. Who spends himself for a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails; at least he fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who knew neither victory nor defeat."

Given the undisputed large arsenal of natural resources that Africa is blessed with, is it not a better and smarter deal for Africans in leadership to protect and efficiently manage them and transform Africa into a prosperous continent, for all Africans to benefit from, as well as bequeath a sustainable future for future generations?

Democracy, rule of law, governance, transparency, and anti-corruption have become trendy, familiar, cross-cutting jargons in the lexicon of the leadership's commentary on Africa and its prospects, especially in the century, described as 'of and for Africa' – the 21st Century. Leadership can be described as the ability to motivate towards a vision, mission, strategic objectives, or a destination through action planning and proactive implementation, starting from personal example. Patriotic African Leadership is the ability to enthuse and inspire citizens as the natural, legitimate, key stakeholders towards the total emancipation of the African continent. More pressingly, it is to achieve economic prosperity for all Africans, the same way political independence was attained by the heroes and heroines of political decolonization for every citizen, at national, regional, and continental levels.

However, since the majority of Africans in leadership over the circa, half a century of political decolonization, have not delivered the ultimate objective of African economic prosperity, justice, and equality, the opportunity cost of which is humanly and financially costly. It is unavoidably imperative to hold open and candid debates and dialogue as a point of reference, if not to support those who are privileged to be in African leadership positions, in Africa and the Diaspora. As the greed-driven global economic recession portrays, it is apparent that democracy and free market economics, alone, are inadequate to guarantee sustainable economic prosperity or a fair society that is in harmony with the principles of inclusive and comparatively egalitarian African communalist traditions. As a matter of fact, besides sustainable scientific, technological, industrial expertise pool and global markets from the global north, which Africa is entitled to,

partly in lieu of reparations, the Patriotic African Leadership must look within for innovative economic prosperity paradigms. Continuing to pursue tried, tested, failed, and discredited economic policies hook, line, and sinker, which have only entrenched and perpetuated the impoverishment of Africa, it is, frankly put, pointless. A widely divided society of the super rich and abjectly poor characteristic of the global north is alien and contradictory to African traditional principles of Nguzo Saba. Africans in Leadership must demonstrate 'leadership' to rectify with deliberate haste.

One proceeds from the instructive premise that Africans in leadership must be in tune and fully engaged with the cardinal prerequisites of humility in public service [not lords or bosses], meaningfully connected with meeting the needs of the mass of the African peoples, ethically objectifying and operationalizing of declarations in party political manifestoes, and truthfully and sincerely implementing of promises on political campaign trails. The idea that the political office is an opportunity to amass ill-gotten wealth on the backs of the electorate who also pays the wages of politicians, concurrent with disdainful patronizing of the electorate at democratic elections, dump and race away from them to enjoy the trappings of political and economic power, has devalued the credibility of the political processes in Africa. The completely avoidable and bitterly regrettable war theatres of Africa are illustrative of the ultimate consequences of such reckless lack of leadership. As a matter of sophistication and principle, Patriotic African self-rule must be fundamentally different from the colonialist model of oppression, suppression, brutality, condescension, and insensitivity towards the plight of our own African brothers and sisters. In fact, the existing trend is anti-African, un-African, foreign, borrowed, and unhealthy for social and community cohesion, which needs jettisoning at lightening speed.

It is pertinent, also, to emphasize that for the past fifty years post declarations of political independence, the vast majority of indigenous citizens of Africa have fared poorer, with largely stagnated and, in most cases, deteriorating quality and standards of life. Political independence without economic prosperity has become patently meaningless. If not intolerable in Africa, a reality that does not portend well for national, regional, or continental stability, regardless of the muscles of neo-colonialist state institutions, which, in themselves, have proven unfit-for-purpose in the African Emancipatory process.

Questions of contemporary Africans in leadership arise acutely in the light of the March 2010 report by Global Financial Integrity that suggests that about US \$1.03 trillion per annum of financial capital flight is bled out of Africa through an insidious network of illegitimate and illegal commercial transactions and activities. The report, 'Illicit Financial Flows from Africa: Hidden Resource for Development', is a study that examines a 39-year period, from 1970 through 2008. Introducing the report, Raymond W. Baker, Director of Global Financial Integrity, writes inter alia 'Much attention has been focused on corruption in recent years, that is, the proceeds of bribery and theft by government officials. In the cross-border flow of illicit money, we find that funds generated by this means are about 3 percent of the global total. Criminal proceeds generated through drug trafficking, racketeering, counterfeiting and more are about 30 to 35 percent of the total. The proceeds of commercial tax evasion, mainly through trade mispricing, are by far the largest component, at some 60 to 65 percent of the global total. While we have not attempted, in this study, to verify these approximate percentages for Africa, we believe that they are likely to be of roughly the same order of magnitude.' [Kar & Cartwright-Smith, 2010]

Certainly, this is not the deal or covenant that the pioneers of the African political independence settled for; nor, indeed, the dream for which the martyrs of the African Emancipation shed their blood.

Add to the above, the fact that 6,500 Africans perish every day from preventable diseases due to lack of drugs, while 150,000 Africans die each month from preventable causes, and alarm bells start to ring on various cylinders and radars of the conscientious patriotic African (Bono, 2006).



Figure 1 - Bono at the 2006 National Prayer Breakfast. Photo Credit Dennis Brack

As a person of African ancestry, it is a hard task to stop boiling the blood in ones veins, in the knowledge that hundreds of millions of people who have, and continue, to pay the ultimate price, decade by decade, year by year, month by month, week by week, day in, day out, hour by hour, are kin and kith within the African Continental family, whose sacrifice has, so far, been wasted. Let's not forget the horrors of the slave castles, the point of no return, the 20 million that died crossing the Atlantic, the guillotines of the plantations, the brutalities of colonial oppression, and the barbarities of apartheid, the indignities of afrophobia and discrimination, and the inhumanities of abject poverty, i.e. the African Conundrum of richly endowed, but impoverished continent!!! The question is, how many more must pay the ultimate price by agonize, torture helplessly, blight in their own continent, homelands, and countries, which are all richly endowed by Mother Nature and ruled by our own African brothers and sisters in the government and other leadership positions? How many years of political democracy, without economic democracy and justice?

Africa is the scientifically certified origin of mankind and the cradle of human civilization centered on the world map, second largest continent, and richly resourced on earth. Again, science proves that Africans are as intelligent as non-Africans. Africans no longer bear the crosses of cartel slave trade, colonialism, or apartheid. Africans have ruled themselves for at least fifty years; except Haiti, which is the world's oldest Republic established on January 1st 1804 through a slave rebellion. Significantly, the fact that even after 200 years of independence, Haiti is the poorest country in the world as per the Human Development Index, which is a huge lesson Africans in leadership must learn. Africa's ruling elite live in excessive luxury and yet the majority of the fellow African citizens live in abject poverty, like orphans without orphanages, light years away from the reality of their elected rulers and similar to the reign of the colonialists. For the majority of African citizens, the rich, natural resource endowments have offered them drudgery and a pittance for ownership, at best, and decades of war, at worst. So what exactly is the excuse?

Since the advent of the foreign invasion into the African continent, Africa has been subjected to an unending holocaust, characterized by the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism, neo-colonialism, Afrophobia consisting of racism and apartheid, and not the least a diabolical economic conspiracy of excessive impoverishment and drudgery. This horrifying chain of injustice unleashed a bloodbath that continues to deny citizens of Africa of their fundamental human and global citizenship rights in Africa and in the larger Diaspora. Finding the situation unbearable, hundreds of Africans leave Africa in desperation for 'greener pastures' in the global north, the destination of crucifying record financial and human capital flight; and yet, publicly despised and subjected to relentless afrophobia, while officials of African diplomatic missions, the African Union and African governments remain passive in their distant ivory towers; or do nothing or little to protest these dehumanising treatments that command desirable, credible and tangible results and therefore genuinely demonstrate kinship feeling, solidarity and African identity.

If it were the case that the African continent was barren of rich natural resources, it would have been relatively bearable, albeit still intolerable; but the contrary is the case. Mother Nature has endowed the African continent with a rich resource pool for the benefit, principally of Africans, under able, capable, and patriotic stewardship. Africa has low human density, but with a large quantity of natural resources, including oil, diamonds, gold, iron, cobalt, uranium, copper, bauxite, silver, petroleum, but also exotic woods, cocoa, coffee, banana, orange, yams, pineapples, other tropical fruits, thirty eight species of wild animals, rivers, waterfalls, and oceans. Most of Africa's natural resources are undiscovered or barely tapped. Nigeria, Libya, Algeria, Egypt, and Angola account for 85% of the continent's oil production. Other oil producing countries are Gabon, Congo, Cameroon, Tunisia, Equatorial Guinea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Cote d'Ivoire. Exploration is taking place in a number of other countries that aim to increase their output or become first time producers. Included in this list are Chad, Sudan, Namibia, South Africa, Madagascar, and, recently, Ghana, while Mozambique and Tanzania are potential gas producers.

Alarmingly, at the end of the first decade of the 21st Century, we find that the majority of these natural resources are not in African hands, while Africans exercise self-government. Typically, China owns 40% of Sudanese oil. In fact, Africans have become hewers of wood and drawers of water in their own homelands. A fundamental question of justice urgently arises in the light of these facts, as well as that self-rule is over half a century old in Africa.

It is, perhaps, more poignant to pose this analogy. What would anyone do, upon realization, that the resources of one's parents are being siphoned away, ordinarily, let alone at such alarming rate, quantity, and for so long? One guesses the natural response would be to stop and take whatever steps necessary to stem the tide and retrieve what has been taken away!!! And if one was head of the family or an elder, one would surely pursue justice. Why is that not happening in Africa, by Africans, when Africa's God-given resources are plundered for far too long?

Ever since the abuse of the African bon hommie into cartel slavery through to the decolonization project, Patriotic Africans – justice-inspired Anti-slavery rebels, Anti-colonialist pioneers, Anti-racist icons, and Anti-apartheid champions have SELFLESSLY and, at extreme risks, objected, denounced, and fought against the African Holocaust for the restoration of freedom and justice to Africa and Africans at home and in the Diaspora.

These martyrs of African Emancipation did not seek, for their own temporal, parochial, and, pathetically, egocentric comforts, security and interests. These Saints of African emancipation, laid down their lives for the public benefit of their compatriot Africans and future generations, and, above all, to rescue Africa from the injustices of barbarism, rape, and plunder.

Given the might of the oppressor machinery they were up against, the plantation anti-slavery pioneers could have negotiated special dispensations for themselves, but they chose to be patriotic for us, the present generation. If they had sold out the way Africans in leadership connive and condone with the exploiters in contemporary times, chances are that the dastardly commercialization of Africans could have still been in vogue.

In the light of the unforgivably inhuman, suppressive machinery that confronted them, the architects of anti-colonialism could have settled for lucrative deals with the colonialists; but they chose to be courageously patriotic to Mother Africa and loyal to kin and kith. If the selfless Kwame Nkrumah, JB Danquah, Patrice Lumumba, Leopold Senghor, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Gamal Nasser, etc. etc., had sought only their egocentric comforts, colonialism could have still been in operation today.

Faced with the ruthless, brutal apartheid machinery, including hard graft of the notorious Robben Island, the stalwarts of the anti-apartheid struggle chose to be patriotic to Mother Africa and loyal to kin and kith. If giants, like Nelson Mandela and Steve Biko, had opted to be selfish of today's standards, apartheid could have still been in existence.

Similarly, the icons of Anti-racism ignored all the temptations to sell out for the luxuries of high society, in patriotism and loyalty to the African race. If activists, like Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Rev. Jesse Jackson, Walter Rodney, and Frantz Fanon, had been opportunistic, the chains of racism would have been more consolidated than it is today. Certainly, United Nations Secretary, General Kofi Aanan, and President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, would have been impossibilities.

Why is the legacy of patriotic Africanism not happening at the beginning of the 21st Century? All over Africa and internationally, Africans are in significant positions and are not faced by anything, like the grotesque and brutal machinery of cartel slavery, colonialism, apartheid-lynching, amputations, murders, decapitations, brutal suppression by the attack dogs of state police and security agencies. Yet, we have failed to deliver the ultimate promise of just, justified and justifiable promise and entitlement of ECONOMIC PROSPERITY.

Rather than promote Africa and the welfare of Africans, some Africans in leadership, unbelievably, operate worse than the slavemasters, colonialists, and apartheid savages. It is a worse scenario because slavemasters, colonialists, and apartheid racists protected their own. In the case of some Africans in leadership, they are nastiest towards their own fellow Africans, preferring to cozy up to neo-colonialists in a lackey fashion. Some of Africa's ruling elite have lost sight of the privilege of leadership and are completely oblivion to the sacrifices of the martyrs, who laid down their lives for the freedoms that Africans enjoy in this early part of the 21st Century. Worst still, they pride themselves in being slavish consumers of manufactured products from the global north – from pants to perfumes, and from houses to cars, machinery, and medical treatment. Hardly do they purchase African brands where it exists?! As far as the manufacturers

are concerned, Africans are mere consumers, they like African money and would smile when you spend it. Beyond that, and within the privacy of their four walls, you remain a common African from an impoverished continent.

It is critical to emphasize the generational responsibility and accountability of contemporary African leadership. Our forebears, the martyrs, bequeathed to us a precious legacy which could only be ignored at great collective peril. Africans in leadership must pause, ponder, and pose the question – what value have we added or are adding to the liberation and restorative quotient in African history? Our rightly rebellions, antislavery, freedom-fighting ancestors, bequeathed us the abolition. Our anti-colonial martyrs bequeathed us political independence, not as an end in itself, but as a means to ECONOMIC PROSPERITY, JUSTICE, and EQUALITY. Against this backdrop, it is the privileged responsibility of Africans in leadership to form a winning coalition to map out an unorthodox panacea, trail-blaze and deliver the ultimate restorative dream of the forefathers – ECONOMIC PROSPERITY, JUSTICE, and EQUALITY.

Africans in leadership owe this responsibility and accountability of stewardship to our own selves, to justify our own existence, to the youth, the future generation, and leaders of tomorrow. Africans in leadership must deliver this destiny to justify the space we occupy in the annals of the African continent and its peoples, at home and in the Diaspora. Africans in leadership must heed this call in consultation with progressive patriotic youth groups to whom the future belongs. It is no option to bequeath them with debt sentences of decades. For such would be unfair, unjust, irresponsible, and opportunistic.

Failing the fulfilment of this sacred generational privilege, responsibility, and accountability, not only do Africans in leadership self-inflict similar karmic curses, like the slavemasters, colonialists, and apartheid savages, who are materially enriched with consequential, inexplicable afflictions otherwise, but Africans in leadership invite the wrath of incompetence and irresponsibility from the youth, to whom the future belongs.

Time to wake up, Africans in leadership. Your individual microscopic wealth empires would not exonerate you from the disdain and contempt of the oppressors of Africa's resources. Delivering ECONOMIC PROSPERITY, JUSTICE, and EQUALITY for Africa and Africans, contemporarily and future generations, will. For we came into this world naked and so shall we leave this world.

The 21st century has been dubbed the Century for Africa. As United States President, Barack Obama, entreated in his address to Africa from the Ghanaian Parliament on Saturday, July 11, 2009, Africa can!

President Obama stated, amongst others, 'I'm speaking to you at the end of a long trip. I began in Russia for a summit between two great powers. I traveled to Italy for a meeting of the world's leading economies. And I've come here to Ghana for a simple reason: The 21st century will be shaped by what happens not just in Rome or Moscow or Washington, but by what happens in Accra, as well..... We must start from the simple premise that Africa's future is up to the Africans.' (Obama, 2009)



Figure 2 - US President Barack Obama addressing the Ghanaian Parliament, in Accra, Ghana

It is time for Africa. It is time for Africans in Leadership to deliver economic prosperity, justice and equality to Africa, for Africans in Africa, and the Diaspora. The time is NOW!

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He came to global prominence in October 2007, when he led a successful, historic, international campaign that resulted in the unreserved apology, recantation, subsequent suspension, and retirement of Prof. James Dewey Watson, Nobel Laureate for Science, Father of DNA, and Chancellor of the prestigious Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, New York by the Court of his own university, after insulting Africans of being of low intelligence than Caucasians and damning the prospects of Africa as bleak to the press while on a national book tour in the United Kingdom. Within a week, all the sponsors of several capacity-packed events across the United Kingdom withdrew their support, amid global condemnation and while Professor James Watson was on his way back to the United States.