

Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

My Dear Friends and Colleagues:

This issue of the *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* covers a wide range of topics. The heavily theoretical pieces are inundated with challenging questions of our time and wrestle with fascinating local issues that have regional and community ramifications. Together, the theoretical and applied papers cover the following topics: food security and agriculture; education; infrastructure; environmental quality and biodiversity; politics and governance; international collaborations and cooperation; economics and investment; and HIV/AIDS.

The problem of food security is a global issue, but this problem is particularly serious in Africa. More attention is needed on agriculture so as to produce food stuffs in large quantity and make them affordable to the masses. In the face of acute food shortages, agribusinesses in the United States are clearing vast tracts of land in Africa from which they intend to export crops in order to make large profits. One of the places where this is happening is in Kenya, where subsistence farmers and cattle herders are experiencing hardships because they are being displaced, causing conflict between the companies and the Kenyan farmers. The unnecessary tension should not be taking place. Africans need to be concerned about crop production for feeding the rising population and not emphasize on export crops that do not contribute to the local economy.

The vexing problem of land reform has been the concern of one of the papers in this issue. Land reform can certainly offer solutions to assist in food production. One can certainly see the importance of land use planning as a necessity in sustainable development (*Business Week*, 2009). Confronting the food production problems of Africa will continue to be one of the foci of African governments and, as such, strategies to encourage farmers to do more in their food production will continue to loom large in the development efforts in Africa.

More than two decades after the discovery of HIV, the virus that caused AIDS was discovered in the Western world; however, the cure still has not been found. Therapies for dealing with the problem are gradually increasing. African countries are wrestling with the consequences of HIV/AIDS the best way that they can given their economic realities. This issue has a paper that confronts the perceptions surrounding the problems of HIV and AIDS.



Protecting and conserving natural resources (exhaustible and inexhaustible types) have been the concerns of communities all over the world. For Africa, which is blessed with some wildlife that are only available on the continent and no other places around the world, it is imperative to protect the natural resources for future generations. The conservation efforts and attempts would be economically beneficial for the region and would certainly add to the quality of life of Africans. The aesthetic value would continue to enhance the environmental quality of the region. The park systems of Africa will continue to be resource generating places for the region because domestic and international tourists will continue to visit the parks. African parks have always been excellent destinations for visitors on vacation and researchers who are interested in the biological, anthropological, and socio-cultural phenomena of the region.

The growing unemployment in Africa poses a significant problem. The recent world recession has not helped African countries as their economies are intertwined with the global economy. As a matter of fact, the global recession has exacerbated the economic problems of the region. African countries are generally dependent on the export of commodities and other products useful for the industrialized economies. Many of the papers in this issue have focused on both the theoretical and applied economic perspectives of the countries in the region. Some of the papers discussed economic matters concerned with the stock market structural economic failure.

The land use and land tenure debates in Africa seem to be ongoing because many countries are confronted with the problem of equitable distribution of resources in order to encourage proper and manageable growth. It is not surprising that some of the papers in this issue attempted to shed some light on the land distribution and management issue. One final perspective that has emerged from the issue is the intractable problem of consumption and the fact that unless societies manage this problem very well, it is impossible to achieve the established goals of sustainable development set by governments and the world community. Overall, it is my assessment that this issue of the JSDA is another compilation of solid thought-provoking articles that will further the debates on development, resource control and management, health, crime, and the necessity for preservation and conservation of natural resources and the cultural integrity of Africa.

Thank you for your loyalty, support and encouragement.

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Business Week. (2009). December 7.