

Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

My Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Several months ago, I travelled to Nigeria on Arik Air – an airline that I understand is co-owned by a Nigerian. I must confess that I was impressed by the quality of the service and the amenities of the airline. I was equally impressed when I settled down to read the in-flight magazine – *Wings*. I was mesmerized by the portrayal of African communities, people, fashion, potentialities and the spirit of Africa. As I perused the magazine, I saw images of the greatness of the continent depicted in its music, the grandeur of its major cities, its rich history, museums, modern style of the African clothing, hospitality through its hotels, the beaches, film making on the continent, the significance of a town like Badagry and its past connection with slavery and slave trade, the significance of traditional towns like Ibadan, Ife, and Benin, the spectacular new adventures in Nigeria and other parts of Africa.

This particular trip to Nigeria was to conduct a personal research on my ancestry for my memoirs and a possible documentary. I was inspired by the images that I saw in *Wings* and I was encouraged about my impending research. For the remainder of the trip, I turned to the papers submitted to the JSDA for consideration for possible publication. Reading one paper after another filled the flight time. This issue of the JSDA features the majority of the papers that were read on the flight to Nigeria. The papers that concentrated on economic development addressed matters pertaining to: multi-criteria decision analysis, community ownership, entrepreneurship, empowerment of women, labor movement, remittances and waste of resources, and corruption. The reader is bound to find theoretical and case study approaches in the articles that address economic and political economy matters.

Another set of papers discuss agricultural matters germane to the sustainability of agricultural practices. The papers address matters that focus on the following topics: farmers and technology, agricultural techniques with respect to weed control, farmers and loan dependency, sustainable agriculture and the importance of irrigation in poverty reduction. The theme that one can assess as the thread connecting these papers on agriculture is that agriculture on the continent is complex and governmental and non-governmental entities must be focused and committed to the improvement of agriculture and must embrace both local and mechanized techniques to make agricultural endeavors sustainable businesses. A generalized statement about agriculture in Africa is that there is an inefficient credit system, inadequate infrastructure (immigration facilities, roads, storage services), limited availability of appropriate varieties and crop management packages, and underdeveloped input and output markets (Stambler, 2010).



The papers on the natural resources are quite instructive and informative. They cover a wide range of topics such as pollution, wildlife conservation, development of water management institutions, the problems of the Niger Delta of Nigeria, Bird habitat, mineral development with respect to balancing the economic and environmental consequences of mineral resource exploitation and water quality management. Africa is at the cross-roads of how to preserve the integrity of its environment and natural resources while exploiting the resources for economic development purposes.

The remaining papers in this issue of the JSDA wrestle with matters concerning HIV / AIDS and the morality of making a community tackle the problem head on without the cultural stigma associated with HIV / AIDS. A few papers concentrate on the lack and inadequacy of infrastructure to support development efforts on the continent. The papers on infrastructure focus on: Land use management and transportation and housing and homelessness in urban centers. This issue will not be complete without papers that deal with politics, corruption, culture and religion. The political unrest in Africa has to be addressed by all levels of governments in each country of Africa where political uprisings have loomed since the independence of the countries of Africa. The significance of education of people cannot be underestimated in this regard. Education of the citizens must stress entrepreneurship and the development of people's passions through which they can make significant contributions that will elevate their communities, countries, regions and the world to lofty heights of success.

The sixties and early seventies were periods of enormous changes in Africa. The changes brought about as a result of independence catapulted the region to becoming an important contributor towards global industrialization. The raw materials and commodities of Africa helped to accelerate the world industrialization. These periods also saw the development of African intellectuals through African and European education. African leaders such as Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Kwame Nkruma, Jomo Kenyata, and Julius Nyerere, to name a few, provided the leadership that led to the emergence of African institutions for governance. Their humble beginnings should be instructive to African leaders of today and tomorrow.

Understanding the youth culture is important in the process for development. One of the papers stresses the significance of paying attention to the youth and creating opportunities for proper education and jobs which will definitely steer them away from the life of corruption and crime. It is impossible to have sustainable development in an environment infested by crime, corruption, and the lack of security.

The proliferation of all sorts of religions in Africa is of particular interest to scholars. The proliferation of all sorts of denominations in Christianity is of interest to African scholars. One of the papers in this issue wrestles with the exploration of the connection between religion and development.

It is our sincere hope that our readership finds the articles in this issue provocative and challenging to spur discussion and further research. It is also of importance to the JSDA editorial board that the papers provide some ideas about the proper trajectories for development.

Thank you for your support and loyalty.

References: Stambler, Eric. 2010. "The Puzzle of Nigerian Agriculture" *Wings*, September – November. p. 69.

Valentine Udoh James, Ph.D.; CES; CAQS
Editor-in-Chief
Professor of Environmental Management, Policy, and Planning
Certified Environmental Specialist
Certified Air Quality Specialist
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Clarion University of Pennsylvania

