

## Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

### Summer B Issue

My Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Your enthusiastic support continues to galvanize our small editorial staff to work diligently and indefatigably to bring you the best articles that go through tough and rigorous evaluations. This “Summer B Issue” of the *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* (JSDA) contains exciting and relevant articles and will certainly influence the direction of development in the region. The papers cover several topics and all of them can be compartmentalized into economic, political, and environmental, socio-cultural, agricultural, health, governance, and education categories. As one reads these scholarly papers, one is bound to admire the potentialities of African scholarship and development. The African, European, Asian, and South American scholar who stumbles across the *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* (JSDA) wants to be a part of the many conversations brought about as a result of the work of our authors. Non-academics are more curious about the anthropological, social, and cultural aspects of Africa.



Through the JSDA, our readers are exposed to the festivals in the desert and forest areas of the continent. The challenges confronted in the countries of the Sahel are brought to the attention of the readers. Our readers are also exposed to the political, economic and environmental matters of the Niger Delta; but more importantly our readers become aware of political economies of the ecosystems of the continent. The challenge of balancing development with conservation and preservation rises to the level of policy discussions at the local and national levels of government. It is the authors of the articles that shed light on these matters. They help to pave the way for the understanding of the ramifications of well thought out management practices or the mismanagement of natural and financial resources of the countries of Africa.

At a retirement dinner party for one of my esteemed colleagues here at Clarion University, I had the pleasure of interacting with foreign academics, scholars, educators, and physicians who have had the

experience of working in Africa. Hearing them discuss Africa's development potentials, challenges, and people was fascinating. It was also quite encouraging to listen to them talk quite passionately about the continent that they have fallen in love with. Africa still remains a fascinating place with great and abundant opportunities. They emphasized the fact that Africa needs to train a new group of leaders who are dedicated to sustainable development of the countries of Africa. They contend that African countries need to invest in education; African countries need to rid themselves of corruption; African countries must all accept the fact that haphazard development is not the answer or panacea for poverty.

Deliberate, strategic and well thought out development plans are needed. These are possible through the investment in the education that addresses specific needs of African countries. There is room for private enterprises and government led policy environment grounded in the economic realities of the region. African countries need human capital development, support for small and medium-sized enterprises, logistics to support new and expanding industries, continuous enabling environment for real estate development which enhances the hospitality and entertainment industry.

All of the above mentioned strategic steps must be provided in a well organized society governed by a set of laws, regulations and order which is the imperative for sustainable development. Haphazard development threatens the ecological systems of Africa. The prevailing conditions of environmental degradation in the Niger Delta are a prime example of how the unregulated exploitation of natural resources can result in the devastation of an ecological system. When development disregards the carrying capacity of the natural systems, then the consequences can be irreversible. Development must recognize the assimilative, and the regenerative capacities of Africa's natural systems. When the opportunity for the natural systems to recover from human use does not exist then the ecological system will fail to be productive and people suffer from the destruction that occur and there is a lack of resources to support human existence.

The articles in this issue address all the above concerns and they challenge the reader to be vigilant and ready to improve the human condition in Africa. We hope that this set of articles energize all of us to be cognizant of the development needs of Africa and to do more with less to support development efforts all across the continent.

Thank you for your support and scholarship.

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