

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

My Dear Friends and Colleagues:

The fall 2011 issue of the JSDA is replete with information and ideas about sustaining the different aspect of development in Africa and I am very delighted to bring this issue to you. The Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations emphasize the significance of collaboration amongst countries and encourage sustainable development and humanitarian assistance. Aiding the environment by improving the ability of the natural environment to rejuvenate growth and to assimilate waste that is generated as a result of growth is important to the survival of humankind. Addressing population and health issues such as HIV/AIDS is paramount in Africa and encouraging economic growth and building democracies in Africa are top priorities of the Africa Union (AU). Given the natural and man-made disasters such as drought and civil unrest on the continent, the humanitarian component of sustainable development and sustainability is of great importance to the scholars whose work are published in the JSDA and our readership welcomes the fact that the paradigms of sustainable development and sustainability embrace the subjects of disaster relief and food aid.



James in his Research Office.

There is no doubt that in order to achieve the sustainability goals of the Millennium Development Strategies of the United Nations, one must recognize that the characteristics of the efforts for sustainability must include: a) an integrated approach within a larger economic and social processes existing in the world --the question of how well African countries are linking their products to the commodity chain that globalization has enhanced is of interest to African countries b) A human development which stresses institution building and capacity building must be explored c) political development which operates mainly to encourage governance through democratic process and grassroots development must be enhanced and d) rapid response facility which enhances capacity building and participatory process must be put into place locally, regionally, nationally and internationally so as to provide African countries with the stable governments that they need for governance.

Some of the papers in this issue tackle matters such as poverty reduction, housing, health facilities, HIV/AIDS, waste water, irrigation schemes, seasonal food shortages, welfare indicators, micro financing and poverty alleviation, river pollution, government interventions, water quality, ground water, wildlife legislation and environmental crisis. The themes of these papers are pivoted on sustainable development and they stress the significance of the fact that African governments must set definite and achievable goals and priorities in their development strategies and the policies for progress must recognize the limitations of available resources for development. Embracing innovative programs which are designed to bring about the inclusion of citizens in the strategic sustainability assessment of regions of Africa must be emphasized in all development endeavors. One aspect of Africa's development must focus on the conservation and preservation of Africa's wildlife. The wildlife of Africa is seriously threatened. The country of Sierra Leone has lost all of its elephant population and other African countries have a crisis of poaching which has resulted in a drastic decline in the wildlife populations. These countries include; Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, the Congo and Nigeria. The need for an increased effort in wildlife conservation and protection was recommended a few decades ago. I call the reader's attention to a *National Geographic* 1972:147 publication titled: "African Wildlife: Man's Threatened Legacy" written by Allan C. Fisher, Jr. in which he notes:

Surely only the most insensitive of men can look upon the Serengeti Plain of Tanzania without feeling some deep, atavistic emotion. You see a place of dream-like improbability: an ocean of grass, the light green of shallow tropic seas, endless in expanse, and flecked with the figures of wild animals--thousands upon uncountable, incredible thousands. This is a place remote from the 20th century, and you feel awed, small, and somehow close to the dawn era, time of man's genesis....Timeless, fecund Africa. In their wildlife the African countries hold in trust for all mankind a legacy of surpassing importance. But it is also a temporal legacy, and clearly in mortal peril. Experts estimate that the African wildlife population has been reduced to a tenth that of fifty years ago.

Fisher's article was written more than thirty years ago and the predictions that Africa's wildlife will continue to be threatened and reduced in number have come true. It is high time for the countries that still have wildlife to turn things around and embark on serious conservation and preservation practices. Local, regional, national and international efforts must be mobilized in order to protect the wildlife and the ecological systems that support them. Eco-Tourism must be expanded on the continent. It must be encouraged domestically and internationally. It will entail a great deal of coordination with the international community and a great amount of investment by African governments that must encourage private investment in the tourism industry. The collaboration of the public and private sectors is paramount in the success of eco-tourism in Africa and it must be emphasized that government policies must help pave the way for the sustainability of the industry

A good example of the plight of Africa's wildlife is the dwindling population of the rhino. Peter Gwin, writing in the March 2012 issue of the *National Geographic*, makes the following observation:

AND SO GOES A NIGHT on the front lines of southern Africa's ruthless and murky rhino war, which since 2006 has seen more than a thousand rhinos slaughtered, some 22 poachers gunned down and more than 200 arrested last year in South Africa alone. At the bloody heart of this conflict is the rhino's horn, a prized ingredient in traditional Asian medicines. (p. 113)

Clearly, the unemployment situation and the greed of the poachers are exacerbating the problems in Africa. International and domestic efforts are needed to tackle this problem. A lot of money is made in the sale of rhino horns. An eight pound rhino horn can fetch as much as \$360,000.00 in the black market because of the demand in Asian countries.

The papers in this issue have raised important questions that impinge upon the management of the natural resources of the continent of Africa and we certainly hope that these papers will help to prompt the correct development efforts across the continent. We thank you for your support.

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