

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

My Dear Friends and Colleagues:

The editorial staff and I are delighted to bring you this issue of the *JSDA*. The focus of this issue is on the economic development of the countries of Africa. A previous issue focused on the natural resources and it must be emphasized as a point of departure in the discussion of the theme of the Winter B issue that the sustainability of Africa's economic and social systems rely enormously on the sustainability of the continent's ecological systems which house the very diverse biological organisms of the continent. The transformation of the natural resources (both renewable and non-renewable resources) into finished products have serious economic ramifications. The primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary industries that are created as a result of the extraction of the natural resources can help in the transformation of the economies of African countries. Many African countries endowed with natural resources have not been able to improve their overall economic circumstances even with the natural resources endowment. For many African countries, the role of the government in sustainable economic development should be to set strategic development policies which would enhance the successful transformations of the economies by the private sector. The governments must design policies, in consultation with the private sector, to enable entrepreneurial activities to flourish.



Private businesses and companies will compete and make available finished products (at reasonable prices) to the consumers and the businesses and companies will assist in the achievement of the national economic development goals. There is no question that sustainable economic development will take place in African countries if the following take root in Africa: (1) A clear vision for development that embraces the aspiration of the citizens and all sectors of the country in question (2) Strengthen and empower the political structure built on the democratic principles of equal representation, opportunity, and inclusion (3) Empower and build the capacities of governmental and non-governmental institutions to work in ensuring fairness, equity, and justice in resource allocation and distribution (4) The establishment of organizations and effective local governments (devoid of corruption) will help in the policy implementation. This is essential to sustainable development (5) Creating a reward system and incentive based on performance will enhance the general creativity and entrepreneurial spirits of citizens (6) Creation of an enabling environment for research and policy experimentation. The creation of enterprise zones and business incubators, which will be informed by think-tanks and university

researchers/professors, will certainly keep the countries abreast of cutting edge sustainability strategies and (7) The deliberate distribution of dividends of economic benefits of development is imperative in order to keep the countries of Africa engaged (Adapted from UNCTAD 2012).

The papers in this issue, in elaborating on economic development in Africa have focused on the examination of the general economic climate of the region, the impact of China on Africa, local governments' roles in economic development, globalization, land tenure, national development plans, brain drain, comparative advantage of countries, foreign direct investment and socio-economic impacts.

The authors of the articles in this issue have definitely furthered and expanded the dialogues on economic development in Africa. They have challenged the readership to re-examine the development paradigms in Africa. We appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

Valentine Udoh James, Ph.D.; CEI; CAQS  
Professor of Environmental Management, Planning and Policy  
Certified Environmental Inspector  
Certified Air Quality Specialist  
Clarion University of Pennsylvania