



## Post-Conference Report 2013, 26-28 September in Stockholm

### Sweden



## **CREATING A LEGACY**

The highly successful 1st edition of AFRICA NEW LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE FORUM concluded with four positive messages from Dr. Kobena Hanson, Mr. Demba Ba, Mr. Alain Roger Pagou and Mr. Nana Yaw Osei-Darkwa.

**Dr. Kobena Hanson said:** "Africa has brilliant ideas; these ideas need to be backed by committed institutions and a consistent engagement by African leadership".

**Mr. Demba Ba said:** "Africa Diaspora need to realize that globalization and information technology has created a means to engage in far-distanced development projects, so the diaspora should take this opportunity to start investing back in Africa even if they are based overseas".

**Mr. Alain Roger Pagou said:** "African government should harness the benefits from remittances sent to Africa by creating a financial system that will reduced the exorbitant charges paid by the diaspora to send money to Africa".

**Mr. Nana Yaw Osei-Darkwa said:** "The future of any country lies in the hands of the youths, the inclusion of youths in the leadership structures in African countries should be a priority if Africa is to envision a brighter future".

The first annual Africa New Leadership Initiative Forum took place at the ABF building, Sveavägen 41 Stockholm, from 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> September 2013. This successful event featured 5 speakers and 50 participants from over 10 different countries to set a foundation for dialogue that reflects the development of Africa.

Under the overall theme of “AFRICA NEW LEADERSHIP”, the forum investigated how a new generation of Africans can influence the future development of Africa by engaging in constructive exchange of knowledge and dialogue, and coming up with commitments and specific plans of actions that address pressing challenges in communities in Africa.

To enable participants to embrace leadership skills, a wide range of topics on development were presented, chaired and facilitated by participants in plenary and parallel sessions where they discussed and presented pressing challenges and possible solutions that are unique to Africa.

### **Opening Presentations**

The President and Founder of HelpAfrica organization Mr. Joshua Ndip opened the forum by saying that participants should not get a wrong impression about the initiative as pertained to the name of the organization. The organization's ideals are based on commitments to action and self-determination by Africans as opposed to dependency on foreign aid because this is what has subjected Africa for decades into poverty. He explained that Africa is currently in a crossroad as a hub for investment from all countries around the world, so in order to gain from this potential Africa needs a focused and committed leadership that will put the interests of Africans first and also make sure that Africa's relations with any outside world is on equal footing and mutual interests, not as subordinate. He also reiterated that the world has changed, pointing to the world financial break-down and austerity measures that are implemented in some European countries. There is a tendency for western countries to solve their own problems these days before thinking of Africa. The time has come to engage potential young leaders in Africa to believe in themselves, and this can be done through leadership forums where constructive ideas and knowledge are shared. Africa's development can outpace other continents if African countries can harness the unprecedented African human resource that spans the streets of Africa. There are hundreds of thousands of Africans in the diaspora wasted with unprecedented knowledge but with no jobs. About 60% of Africans in Sweden have university degrees, but unfortunately only about 5% have jobs, the rest survive on temporary or petty jobs that are not consistent with their education. Africa needs to turn around and support initiatives that can engage Africans in a broad platform of discussions and dialogue that can enhance knowledge, best practices, commitments, creativity and innovation. That is what we stand for.



Mr. Ayukekbong, a PhD student in Molecular Biology at Gothenburg University gave a presentation on the importance of biotechnology in Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He stressed the importance of investing in biotechnology in order to mitigate the influence of climate change in food productivity in Africa. He acknowledged that Africa is one of those continents affected by climate change, but only a few countries have responded to this challenge by investing in biotechnology, such as South Africa and Burkina Faso. If Africa needs to protect food security for future generations, African countries need a focus and determined leadership that invests in her citizens in the field of biotechnology to take responsibility of their own future. It's time Africa has to stop importing specialists and scientists from other continents to solve their problems.

Mr Nana Yaw Osei-Darkwa, the founding president of Youth Icons Ghana and the first recipient globally of the Bruce W. Tancrell Memorial Scholarship for Peace and Nonviolence in 2011, a scholarship awarded to an individual doing great work in peace and nonviolence promotion around the world spoke on the critical involvement of the youth in the forward march of Africa under the theme "Preparing the Youth for the Future and the Future for the Youth". He believes that it is not enough to isolate the youth and create a future for them but youths must be main factors contributing to building that future. He indicated that with over 70% of the youth of Africa falling within the youth brackets, it was unfair that some elements within the 30% older folks unilaterally determine the future for the youth. He said that tomorrow begins today and so if leaders on the continent want to see tomorrow they must reflect today. He expressed that "Any society that undermines its youth discriminates against its own future". He said leaders on the continent must engage the youth and also prepare them for the future by educating the youth and actively engaging them in the political discussions that affects their daily lives. He said education remained the only equalizer of opportunity and as such for the African youth to remain competitive on the global stage there should be a balance between education and empowerment.

Mr. Afolabi Giwa, an international marketing student at Linneus University in Sweden gave a presentation on "Securing Africa Greatest Resource. He said the greatest resource Africa can be proud of as of today is human resource, and this resource has to be secured and empowered for an envisioned Africa prosperity. He pointed out that almost three quarter of Africa population is made up of youths between 18 and 35 years old, many with university degrees. Almost 90% of this population is unemployed. He said Africa can change the cause of history if a new brand of leadership is groomed to invest in infrastructures that can empower and secure this valuable resource. We should not allow youths become victims of circumstances as is happening now in the high seas where thousands of young people from Africa lost their lives trying to cross into Europe.

Mr. Alain Roger Pagou, the president of Cameroon diaspora Stockholm and the vice president of Swedish Central Africa Chamber of Commerce spoke on the role of Africa diaspora in the development of Africa. He said Africa diaspora has been the lamplight of development in Africa in terms of remittances in the past couple of years as reflected in the World Bank report of 2010. In this report, the remittances sent to Africa by the diaspora superseded the total foreign aid to Africa within that period. In other to harness this, he said African government through the African Union and African development bank need to set up a money transfer system to help curb down the exorbitant charges paid to transfer money to Africa. He also said it is time for African countries to set up ministries that are specifically in charge of diaspora issues. These ministries will span the world over to encourage African diaspora to invest in Africa by given them tax breaks. Africa diaspora is the core in the current development in Africa, but to achieve this Africa need a focus and a dedicated leadership.



## Plenary sessions

**Leadership, women and girls empowerment, empowering youths to become leaders of tomorrow, democracy and human rights**

On the opening plenary sessions, two plenary sessions were incorporated into one; three speakers outlined their views on how Africa can meet up with the challenges of leadership, women and girl's empowerment, democracy and good governance, human rights and freedom, and empowering youths to become leaders of tomorrow.

Mr. Nana Yaw Osei Darkwa, the president and founder of Youth Icons Ghana, on the issue of leadership explained that he vehemently disagrees with the notion that Africa needs strong institutions. He said Africa already has institutions but rather what are needed is commitment, dedication and selfless leaders who would have the interest of the people at heart and not their parochial interest. He said institutions are manned by people and so if those manning the institution don't reflect the institutions they will not work. He reiterated that Africa's greatest challenge is to lay a foundation that can groom a new generation of leadership, and if that could be addressed; the continent would bounce into its glory. "We need smart leaders who could march up to African reality". He also mentioned that African leaders need to understand that being a leader is not about making money, it is about serving the people. So until this difference is understood, there is still going to be leadership vacuum in generations to come. On the part of democracy he said he is happy with the way his country has embraced the aspect of democracy. He said it is evident in the peaceful transition from one elected leader to another in the past elections. He said no Ghanaian is disenfranchised when it comes to respecting their rights to choose their leaders.

Ms. Cecilia Karlberg, an intern student from Upsala University at operation 1325, women's organizations cooperating with other organizations in realizing UN resolution 1325 shared her experiences on how operation 1325 works in empowering women and girls subjected to cultural norms that undermine their rights for self-empowerment. One of the ways she mentioned was awareness seminars that put women at the forefront in discussing their own issues. She said until women start realizing these efforts by themselves, then they can be able to work out ways that are suitable for their empowerment. She acknowledged that these efforts should also be implemented in girl's education to start building their confidence at an early age.



Mr. Joshua Ndip, the president of Helpafrika organization explained his experiences on how political participation by young people can engage their thinking and enhance their leadership skills. He said that in order to build a realistic political platform that conforms to the norms of the society, there should be an open and inclusive political culture in any society. Youths need to build their confidence and experiences from an early age in order to confront the moral and ethical realities that come with leadership. In most cases leadership comes with experience and this is what is needed to jump start Africa new leadership structures. He explained that every political structure need its own brand of leadership, leadership that is not imported, leadership that is not mixed, but leadership that conforms to the reality of the society. Leadership that works in North America and Western Europe is not the same as leadership needed in Africa because there are different realities between these regions. Africa need leadership that is focused on cementing structures that gives its citizens basic human rights, freedom and equality; and leadership that understand structural inequality in African societies and the world over.

Mr. Joshua reiterated that until Africans understand the difference between human rights, freedom and equality it will be difficult to achieve genuine democracy. Although a vast majority of African countries are making strides towards democratic regimes, more need to be done in terms of involving women and youths in the political dispensation of Africa political systems. Electoral and human rights education for women and young people need to be a priority for African countries.

Mr. Etyang Godfrey reiterated on the fact that leadership is not bind by patronage, it is something that needs to be encouraged and supported through appropriate structures. This can be done if Africans understand and accept their immediate predicaments that no other society can engage in promoting leadership in Africa.

In his conclusion, Mr. Etyang reiterated the need for a continuous engagement and dialogue with different stakeholders in the government, private sector, NGOs, business and civil society in areas of leadership and empowerment.

### **Entrepreneurship and investment: How Africa can gain from nurturing entrepreneurship and promoting investment**

Chaired by the honorary consul of Uganda in Stockholm Mr. Claes Torén, the session saw three panelists and an expert in knowledge and learning Dr. Kobena Hanson from The African Capacity Building Foundation in Zimbabwe discussed the role of good leadership in promoting entrepreneurship and investment in Africa.

Mr. Claes discussed the urgent need to encourage skills in entrepreneurship especially within the medium size industries that employs 100-200 people because they are the ones that can easily reduce unemployment in a growing community of young people from high schools and universities. Of course he acknowledged that it is important to open up for potential investors in big companies to invest in Africa but he said most companies from overseas sometimes get hesitant to invest in Africa



because of the risks involved. So African countries need to design policies that are favourable for both entrepreneurship and investment in order to promote development.

Mr. Etyang Godfrey explained that Africa is a big market, both in numbers and in volume, so these parameters are potential areas where Africa can use to spur development in the continent. He gave an example in the energy sector where he explained the need to invest in local innovations by training young people in the areas of solar energy technology and related fields that can enhance the capacity of African continent to meet up with its own demands. He also said Africa need to realized the immediate need for an inter-continental infrastructure network for easy accessibility to consumers and local made products in other Africa countries in order for a continent wide development. He also explained the role Africa diaspora can play in terms of development if the governments in Africa put in place policies that can encourage Africa in the diaspora to invest in Africa. In order to meet these challenges, Africa need leaders with a vision that recognizes the inherent potential in Africa.

Mr. Nana Osei explained that peace and democracy is the foundation that attracts entrepreneurship and investment. There is no country in the world where investors would like to invest if there are constant conflicts and undemocratic regimes. He cited an example of Ghana where there has been a smooth transition in elections for almost sixteen years. You can find that young Ghanaian entrepreneurs from overseas are going back home every year to invest, this shows the importance of how stable and democratic societies promote development.

Mr. Ayukekbong, a Molecular Biologist at Gothenburg University in Stockholm highlighted on the procedure to create businesses in Africa. He took an example from Cameroon and explained the hurdles that are involved in establishing a business. It takes months to register a business in Cameroon because of the bottlenecks and bureaucracies that are involved, in most cases potential young entrepreneurs get frustrated and decide not to proceed in their endeavours. So in order to create space for young entrepreneurs in Africa, and potential investors from overseas, governments in Africa should lay a leveling playing field to attract investment in Africa.

Dr. Kobena Hanson, the head of knowledge and learning at the Africa Capacity Building Foundation explained that good institutions, good governance and transformative leadership are the main pillars of development. So if everything is put aside and consider good and effective institutions as opposed to individuals, as we find in most African countries, development can be effective and sustainable.

### **Plenary Sessions:**

#### **Science and technology, educational policy, infant industries, international cooperation and corruption**

Chaired by Dr. Kobena Hanson, head, Knowledge and Learning Unit of The African building Foundation in Zimbabwe and an expert in capacity building alongside other panelists outlined how a committed and transformative



leadership in Africa can enhanced the capacity and promotes development in Africa using available resources.

Dr. Kobena explained that it is wrong to perceive African situation to be hopeless but there is a challenge that need to be addressed in order for Africa to move forward in terms of development. He acknowledged that almost all African countries are good at putting out excellent policies but the setback is to translate these policies into effective implementation processes to yield effective results. He outline some of the reasons why there is this lapse in effectiveness; huge capacity gaps on individual level, more terrible gaps at institutional level and more importantly the enabling environment that can make things happen does not exist.

In the area of science and technology, Dr. Kobena explained that it is not what you have that is important but it is actually what you know. He acknowledges that science and technology is critical

but how do African countries build the capacity for science and technology. He highlighted that African higher educational systems are no different from the past except for a few that are adapting to the changing needs of the current environment. So institutional leadership need to change their approach to reflect the current demand of skills based on technological innovations. Higher educational institutions should not rely so much on government funding, they should engage in private partnerships with international universities where they can initiate exchange programs for African students to gain access to some of the best technologies.

On the issue of Africa educational policies Dr. Kobena further explained that the educational system in Africa need to be diversified by identifying what the society needs in order to adapt to the changing educational systems in the world. In many African countries educational policies rely so much on general education, as a result a huge gap need to be filled in the technical and vocational sectors. With the current pace in which Africa is developing, the continent needs more technicians to meet up with infrastructure development.

Dr. Kobena also highlighted on the issue of national borders in Africa. He said a committed leadership should be able to realize that in order for Africa to develop there should be some sort of an arrangement within the African continent to wipe out the borders because this will promote development in Africa. He gave an example in Britain when they were looking for the governor of the bank of England. The governor was hired from Canada, so Africa needs a new brand of leadership to think along these lines.

Mr. Alain Roger Pagou elaborated on international cooperation with African countries. He explained the need for African countries to cooperate on terms of mutual benefit not the other way round, and this need a focused and committed leadership. In many cases African countries sign agreements without properly understanding the contents of agreements because politicians are in most cases involved in these transactions. African countries need to train or employ experts from Africa to get involved in different bilateral cooperation agreements. This is important because many politicians in



Africa sometimes don't have expertise in the institutions they are responsible for. It is also important for African countries to realize that giving tax breaks to international investors is sometimes a waste of time because most companies tend to change their line of businesses just when the term of their tax breaks expires. He also said African leaders should encourage African diaspora by given them tax breaks in order to invest back in Africa because their investments will remain in Africa. So African countries now need a brand of leadership that understands these dynamics.

Mr. Demba Ba from Gambia explained that with the current global world, distance should not be a deterrent for Africans who want to invest back in Africa; other investors from different parts of the world are increasingly investing in Africa. And also Africans in the diaspora should also take the risk to invest in Africa. So Africans in the diaspora should be encouraged by African leaders to invest back in Africa. There are a vast number of Africans in the diaspora who would engage in small and medium size industries in Africa if the playing field for investment is made conducive.

Mr. Joshua highlighted on the issue of infant industries. He explained that despite the fact that liberalization can spur development it is realistic for some medium size industries to be protected in order to empower local entrepreneurs with limited resources. He cited an example in Cameroon where the defunctment of marketing board and farmers cooperatives is a direct result of liberalization. Before structural adjustment program, the prices of cocoa and coffee were very high; farmers could get free farm insecticides and bonuses from cooperatives. Now with the free market system, prices are dictated by free agents, no insecticides and bonuses for farmers, as a result the standard of living for an average farmer has dropped drastically. So it is important for Africa leadership to put in place policies that can help an average African live a better life.

On the issue of corruption, Mr. Afolabi Giwa explained that corruption is not in anyone's DNA. It is as a result of not having realistic institutions and the moral capabilities of separating politics, which entails serving the people, and business, which is about making money. In order to get rid of corruption in African politics a new generation of African leadership has to be encouraged to start engaging in governance dialogue. The young generation needs to be inspired by instilling in them the ideals of moral and ethical commitments and the deep understanding of governance.

Mr. Joshua Ndip, the founder and president closed the forum by making an observation about the event. He welcomed the message of support and encouragement from African embassies in Europe and also recalled the unprecedented initiatives being taken by AU in the areas of African security and Economic realization; this is a testament to the fact that Africa is becoming capable of taking care of its issues.

Looking ahead, he said Helpafrika through AFRICA NEW LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE FORUMS would play a greater impact in converging positive ideas and increase activities that would involve Africans of all works of life. All this would happen if all African countries, AU and other sub-regional organizations in Africa support our initiatives. He reiterated that the forum is, and would be more than just an event; it is a growing community of visionary Africans who don't just discuss African challenges but would put them into perspective by taking real and concrete steps in solving problems. Young Africans will be encouraged to get committed in the development of Africa by engaging in dialogue to discuss Africa unique challenges, and come up with appropriate solutions to Africa unique problems.

It is time for Africans to realize that the solution to Africa development will come only within Africa because we understand our problems more than anyone else. It is time we don't allow other people to write our history or interpret our history to us. We have a responsibility to self-realization and determination.

He thanked participants who travelled from Africa to attend the forum in Stockholm, especially Dr. Kobena Hanson from Africa Capacity Building Foundation in Zimbabwe and the entourage from Youth Icons Ghana led by the director Mr. Nana Yaw Osei-Darkwa. More importantly he thanked African Ambassadors and embassy officials in Stockholm who attended the forum.

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