Introduction

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The desire for the advancement of human rights, the creation of world peace and the need for safety and security within and across national borders has, in the past five decades, increased the need for international cooperation. This is evidenced by the creation of supranational and regional bodies with political and economic interests. The United Nations, the African Union, the Southern African Development Community and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are cases in point. While countries generally maintain their sovereignty, most of their legislations and domestic policies experience a degree of international influence. In other words, the traditional approach of sovereignty that posits its values on territorial integrity, is being, in the main, gradually replaced by the need for countries to develop the capacity to act and win acceptance from the regional or international bodies. One can argue, however, that the acceptance of sovereign states by the fraternity of regional and national bodies is very much a reflection of the acceptance of these states by their own citizenry. Put differently, states that are not accepted as promoting human rights and good governance at home are unlikely to receive favourable acceptance on the international scene. It is thus vital for countries to strike a balance and work in close cooperation with their citizenry while advancing close cooperation with international structures.

This edition of the African Journal of Governance and Development explores this balance. In the opening article, Friday Aworaro discusses the relevance of the regional integration of the African countries and argues, "Regional integration in Africa has been identified as an important strategy for the acceleration of development on the continent." Aworaro notes however, that in some cases, the relevance of these regional bodies is questionable. Some regional bodies have been criticised for their inability to foster regional integration and fast-track development as expected. "It is against this background that the article examines the interlocking nexus between regional integration and development in Africa, and maintains that Africans need to adjust their orientation as well as take a major shift towards economic complementarity among member states of integration blocs for the actualisation of laudable development."

While development can be viewed from a regional or international perspective, the need to filter development policy in partnership with local communities remains relevant. The article by Thomas Buabeng brings forth the prominence of the public, private partnerships (PPP) and highlights the advantage of engaging the private sector in advancing local development. In his study, Thomas Buabeng observes that PPP has been applied in the provision of different local government services in the two districts of (Ga West Municipal Assembly and Adentan Municipal Assembly). The use of PPPs has chalked up some form of benefits amidst major structural and institutional challenges. The study concludes that the use of PPP has good prospects of enhancing the provision of local government services.... It should be noted, nonetheless, that quality provision of local government services is also dependent on the existence of other elements such as financial

and quality human resources. In this regard, the existence of quality leadership is crucial.

In his article, Benjamin Adeniran Aluko discusses the value of "bridging social capital and the imperative of leadership development in Nigeria." Aluko shows how leadership in Nigeria is formed and how it leans on social capital as a resource that influences polity in Nigeria. This article centres its main argument on showing that "there is a nexus between the nature and character of leadership and the stock and genre of social capital in a polity." Aluko's article recognises the existence of social, ethnical and political rifts in the African continent generally and, in particular, in Nigerian society. In this regard, he argues that the ability to leverage this social capital will determine the leadership's success or failure with the polity and, in turn, with the country's policies themselves. Aluko concluded that an adherence to the idea of servant leadership would substantially increase the stock of bridging social capital in Nigeria and radically curb the spate of identity-related conflicts ravaging the nation.

Elijah Babasola Afolabi Agbaje shares this view, in his article entitled 'Theoretical appraisal of multimodal federalism as a framework of governance and the prospect of sustainable development in Nigeria.' Although Agbaje does not necessarily argue on social capital, the discussion of 'uncertain federalism' in Nigeria amounts to the issues of leadership and how it can bridge social cohesion and development within the context of a federal state. Using a comparative approach, this study posits the need for Nigeria to be innovative if it is to move into higher levels of statehood and accelerated development. Thus "as a developing contentious multimodal federation, the leadership class has the arduous task of redefining the process of engagement and reconstruction in order to achieve much needed national consensus towards the attainment of equitable structures and accelerated national development."

A highlight of this issue of the African Journal of Governance and Development is that all articles, with the exception of one, are a synopsis of the Nigerian political economy. This deliberate grouping of the articles has been made in order to give the reader a glimpse of various studies on Nigeria by different authors with a similar theme that relates to governance and development. The final article of this issue discusses Nigerian political parties and internal democracy, authored by Dorcas Akhere Odigwe, and consolidates the debate developed thus far. Odigwe highlights the functionality and relevance of the political parties from the first republic to the fourth. Odigwe laments that the lack of internal democracy in the Nigerian political parties diverts from the core values of democracy, resulting in 'conflicts of interest and rebelling within political parties.' To curb this, the author offers some interesting suggestions to ponder in our pursuit of human rights and world peace. Enjoy the read!