

# Policy challenge and development in Africa

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## Introduction

We present this issue of *African Journal of Governance and Development* against the backdrop of the recently released MDG Report of 2013: Assessing progress in Africa toward the Millennium Development Goals. The forward to this Report states that:

“Africa must commit to inclusive, transformative development that reduces income poverty, creates decent jobs, enhances access to social services, reduces inequality and promotes resilience to climate-related hazards”.

The Report notes that while Africa has made great strides towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) the continent's low development has required more effort to make meaningful progress and that while Africa is the world's second fastest growing region, its rate of poverty reduction is insufficient to reach the target of halving extreme poverty by 2015. For this reason, Africa must thus put structures in place to sustain its development well beyond the MDG timeline.

It is not that Africa is poor on policies that would progressively lead to these ideals. Indeed, it is often said that government departments, while awash with good policy intentions, are always hamstrung by weak implementation of these policies leading to incessant policy failures.

This issue of the *African Journal of Governance and Development* presents reflections on pertinent issues relating to how good policy intentions can, through the public service, be translated into reality and the challenges thereof.

**Kalu and Nwaigwe** report on a study on improving the Nigerian investment climate for enhanced economic growth using data sourced from the *Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Bulletin* and the National Bureau of Statistics. The authors observed many reasons for the poor economic performance of the Nigerian economy, among which was the decline in investment rates. Given the central role of investment in the Nigerian development process, the authors suggest that steps must be taken to create a stable macro-economic framework, ensuring a favourable fiscal regime, strengthening the capacity and integrity of institutions, developing human resources, deepening and diversifying the economic base, as well as enhancing competitiveness, among other policy options, to boost investment.

**Lauer** looks at Africa's challenges from a global and structural perspective, arguing that African presence is essential in forming any agency to express the contemporary effort to develop distributive and retributive principles of global justice. On this basis, her article explores the possibility of creating a forum to develop global justice consensually as the outcome of deliberation and compromise through cultural diversity and the lessons carried within post-colonial efforts at democratic governance indigenous to Africa.

One of concerns raised in The MDG Report 2013 is that of the need to address inequality. In



this regard, the report recommends that countries should develop social protection mechanisms which include health insurance to improve access to high-impact interventions for children, targeting the poorest and most marginalised children and families. South Africa's Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) is a case in point. Mubangizi and Mkhize report on a study that examined how the eThekweni Municipality's EPWP has been conceptualised with particular regard to job creation. It attempts to establish the extent to which the beneficiaries of the EPWP have been able to obtain and sustain decent jobs beyond their involvement in the Municipality's EPWP. The study indicates how public officials and beneficiaries seem to have varying perceptions of what the EPWP aims to achieve. In this regard, Mubangizi and Mkhize make recommendations on how to reconcile these divergent views to yield sustainable benefits for both public officials and project beneficiaries.

**Ondoa, Basheka, Muhenda and Basaasa's** article lends an organisational perspective to policy implementation. They examine the institutional dynamics affecting health service delivery using a regional referral hospital in eastern Uganda. The overall findings confirm that while a referral system in healthcare is indeed welcome policy intervention, institutional factors of inadequate infrastructure and equipment were the dominant factors causing the unacceptably low level of health service delivery. The study attributes this finding to an inadequate procurement process within the healthcare facility.

Implicit in The MDG Report 2013 is a recommendation that Africa invests in rural infrastructure to promote agricultural transformation, boost rural incomes and address rural-urban income disparities. The National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) programme of Uganda was launched as one of the seven pillars of a grand plan to modernise agriculture through improved agricultural service delivery. The programme hinges on farmer groups and their participation in a range of NAADS activities and processes. Kyohairwe and Tibaijuka observed that the subjection of the less technical ordinary citizen to highly technical administrators of the local governments and the NAADS coordinators was a blow to accountability in the programme. Kyohairwe and Tibaijuka recommend that actual engagement should involve establishing relationships, building trust, working with the formal and informal leadership, and seeking commitment from community organisations and leaders to create processes for mobilising the community.

Lastly, **Ruzaaza, Malowa and Mugisha** attempt to understand how policy implementation in the public sector should be monitored by observation of how public sector performance can be improved. Using insights from Uganda, they question whether performance management, as advanced by the managerial model of public administration, is indeed a panacea for effective accountability and transparency in the public service delivery system of a developing country. Their observations bring the inequitable distribution of service delivery to the surface, within the key priority areas of health and education – despite the implementation of the managerial model. Ruzaaza, Malowa and Mugisha conclude that performance measurement cannot be a panacea to accountability problems and that a new comprehensive strategy be adopted to ensure equitable service delivery.