

# Editorial

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*“It is crooked wood that shows the best sculptor”*

African proverb

As I write this editorial, *#ZimbabweanLivesMatter* has been trending on South Africa’s social media platforms for close to 48 hours. Both local and international celebrities have spoken against human rights abuses, said to be on the increase in that country. With the COVID-19 pandemic regulations against social gatherings in full force, people have taken to social media to voice their displeasure. While politicians in the SADC region have, in the main, remained silent on the latest developments in that country, a growing civil society voice appears to be gaining traction with possibilities of straining international relations in the region. The issues in Zimbabwe are multifaceted; they cut across several sectors, administrative regimes and political ideologies. Such issues are also not unique to Zimbabwe since many African countries have had their share of inefficiencies, abuse of human rights and widespread public protests. This phenomenon encapsulates some of the issues explored in this July issue of the *African Journal of Governance and Development*.

The issue starts off with the article ‘Do Economic Blueprints Work? Evaluating the Prospects and Challenges of Zimbabwe’s Transitional Stabilisation’. In this conceptual paper, **Chitongo, Chikunya and Marango** set out to evaluate the prospects and challenges of the Transitional Stabilisation Programme implemented by the government of Zimbabwe in 2019 with a view to draw lessons from other economic blueprints that were implemented prior to that. The article adopts a qualitative approach based on a review of secondary sources of data followed by a thematic approach in presenting and analysing the data. It is noted that the country’s transitional stabilisation programme has faced a myriad challenges, leading to limited external inflows and foreign direct investments and that despite the new dispensation’s ‘Open for Business’ mantra, the new government in Zimbabwe has received a bad global reputation just like its predecessor. **Chitongo, Chikunya and Marango** conclude that Zimbabwe’s socio-economic policies have been affected by poor implementation strategies, corruption and excessive political expediency. Against this backdrop, the authors offer recommendations on policy responses that, if implemented, would place the country on a desirable growth path.

Just like the first article, which critiqued a macro policy response in Zimbabwe, the second article likewise attempts to explore a macro policy response but this time with respect to Nigeria’s international relations. Using archival materials from Nigeria’s Institute of International Affairs together with relevant literature, **Jemirade** investigates the changes to and achievements of Nigeria’s foreign and defence policies from 1985 to 1993. **Jemirade** argues that the foreign and defence policies during this time were successful even if other aspects of the administration were



a failure. It is noted that during the time under study, policy preoccupation with political issues such as African unity, anti-colonialism and opposition to apartheid were replaced with policies such as economic diplomacy, environmental issues and the concept of medium powers. In addition to this change in focus, the choice of officials who handled these policies appears to have played a role in the success of policy implementation. **Jemirade** points out that the then president Babangida chose to work with intellectuals and scholars of high integrity who assisted him in formulating and implementing these policies. **Jamirade** concludes with recommendations on how the interlocking relationship between defence and foreign policy execution can be managed to promote the effectiveness of Nigeria's external relations.

The third article in this Issue, tackles a sectoral response by focusing on procurement and partnerships in Uganda's energy sector. In their article 'Governing with Citizens' Extended Theory in the Practice of Procurement and Public Private Partnerships', **Nduhura, Muyiha Lukamba and Nuwagaba** share the results of a qualitative study on procurement in Uganda's energy sector. The authors draw on the agency theory, seeking to identify sustainable approaches for engaging citizens while contributing to existing theory and a framework for citizen participation in the execution of procurement and public-private partnerships. The authors note that while making citizens' voices heard can result in better choice and public service delivery outcomes, the agency theory was inadequate in informing the desired citizen participation framework in procurement and public-private partnerships' processes in the energy sector.

Against this backdrop, the authors join earlier researchers in confirming gaps in the agency theory – a position that anchors recommendations for an extension of the theory alongside the adoption of the stakeholder theory in execution of procurement and PPP projects. Extending the agency theory, they argue, puts the interests of the citizen as a customer at the foreground of engagement in public procurement and PPP project operations. **Nduhura, Muyiha Lukamba and Nuwagaba** passionately advocate for the need to structure the voice of the citizen in procurement and PPP operations by proposing a Citizen Principal Agency (CPA) model with its focus on a 'people first' principle in the acquisition process for nations. They further propose the adoption of more dynamic approaches for citizen engagement, including a focus on public spaces as centres of gravity for activities of citizen participation as well as plugging into cyberspace or digital spaces so as to widen the benefits for citizens and strengthen citizen participation.

**Nduhura, Muyiha Lukamba and Nuwagaba's** call for a reinvigoration of public spaces is worth pursuing. Public spaces referred to as agoras in Western systems (Gil, Cortés-Cediel & Cantador 2019) have long been areas where community issues are aired. In Africa, community gatherings under a tree or other open spaces are well-known as spaces for discussing issues for the greater good of the community. With development in technology, the concept of agora as a physical space has now morphed into virtual agoras and information communication and technology tools are seen as a window of opportunity for citizen participation that also embraces the notion of self-organisation. This is particularly significant in these times where increasingly citizens feel alienated from their leaders. The lockdowns in many countries following the COVID-19

pandemic mean that virtual agoras (of Facebook, WhatsApp and twitter) are likely to play a significant role in fighting corruption and maladministration.

In the fourth article of this Issue, the concern over maladministration in Uganda is explored from another perspective. In their article 'Rethinking Anti-corruption Strategies in Uganda: An Ethical Reflection', **Okok and Spire Ssentongo** present an ethical critique of the anti-corruption strategies used in Uganda and suggest an alternative approach mainly grounded on a virtue-ethics-theoretical stance. Drawing on extensive literature analysis, the authors affirm that the source of widespread corruption in the country is due to a lack of appropriate moral values among citizens that would motivate them to reject corruption. They thus advance the need to bridge this gap by focusing on the moral development of citizens to nurture virtue. The authors suggest that this can be done through character education of the youth in the school system. It is advanced that ethics can be developed by innovatively teaching content designed to cultivate positive character and ensuring that such character training is made a part of the entire school socialisation process and incorporated in all areas of learning. A fundamental change in ethics is likely to reduce corruption and lead to the more efficient and effective use of public resources.

But the lack of efficient and effective service provisions is not always due to corruption or maladministration. In his article 'Evaluating the Efficacy of Municipal Policy Implementation in South Africa: Challenges And Prospects', **Munzhedzi** evaluates the efficacy of policy implementation in South Africa's municipalities using the 7-C protocol as a framework to assess the performance of municipalities' integrated development plans. **Munzhedzi** concludes that the implementation of municipal policies is not effective or efficient, hence the continuous backlogs often witnessed in municipal service provision. This, **Munzhedzi** suggests, is due to a lack of requisite resources, capacity and commitment to implement their own policies in many municipalities of South Africa.

The next article in this issue shows the strength and value of civil society in setting the policy agenda of countries and regions. In his article 'Evoking the Principle of Subsidiarity: Merit for a SADC Protocol for Children' **Chibwana** provides a rationale for the children's protocol and prospective content. He does this against the backdrop of the push by children's rights civil society in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to develop a protocol for children in the region. In providing the rationale for a children's protocol, **Chibwana** prefaces his rationale by posing pertinent questions using multi-disciplinary approach and proceeds to explore possible areas that the protocol should cover if the idea bears fruition. **Chibwana** notes that existing SADC frameworks do not address issues of children systematically as the institution does not have a children's bureau, concluding that coming up with a protocol for children would prompt a realisation that children's issues need attention.

The last paper in this issue tackles yet another significant matter affecting many African countries – that of migration. The continent Africa is often seen as a continent of mass displacement and migration caused by poverty and conflict but the movement of people across geographies in pursuit of socio-economic values is as old as man (Aregbeshola, 2010). Flahaux and de Haase are of the view that most African migrants continue to move within the continent. They emphasise



that the levels of extra-continental migration are still below those of migration within Africa and remain low for international standards. Nonetheless, some European countries continue receiving migrants from Africa and other regions. This has prompted Sweden to embark on labour integration as a key policy objective. It is in this regard that **Mesfin** and **Mamuye** explore barriers of labour market integration of humanitarian immigrants in Sweden and conclude that despite supportive policies, there is no significant improvement in the overall integration of migrants into Sweden's labour market integration. This is largely due to language barriers, insufficient skills and weak social networks. **Mesfin** and **Mamuye** offer recommendations on how overall labour market integration can be achieved. Their recommendations are directed at the receiving countries and the strategies they can adopt to integrate humanitarian migrants. This is contrary to Akokapri (2006) who recommends a focus on the sending countries. For Akokapri (2006, 126) workable policies by the AU to manage the brain drain are likely to yield more sustainable outcomes. Such policy measures, according to Akokapri, should include a conscious attempt to address the root causes of the so-called 'push factors' that instigate the emigration of Africa's brains in the first instance.

The matters raised in this issue of the *African Journal of Governance and Development* paint a gloomy picture of inefficiency in utilising public resources to positively impact the lives of citizens. This is particularly significant in the context of the pandemic where citizens rely on the public service system not only to save lives, but also to save livelihoods. There are, however, glimmers of hope that can be gleaned from the articles. The role of civil society and its potential to contribute toward positive policy directions is one that offers hope. Secondly, the role that social media appears to be playing in voicing the plight of the voiceless is a positive step in the direction of democracy, and lastly, as **Jamirade** (in this issue) concludes, the contribution of intellectuals and scholars of high integrity should assist in formulating and implementing positive and life-changing policies... just like crooked wood hones the skills of a sculptor, the challenges faced by countries on the continent should inspire African societies to find innovative policy and practical responses.

## References

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