

Editorial

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*“The lizard that jumped from the high Iroko tree to the ground said
he would praise himself if no one else did.”*

Chinua Achebe

The mark of a great nation is in the way its citizens feel safe and unencumbered in their pursuit of sustainable livelihoods and in becoming self-respecting, self-reliant and self-determining. The greatness of a nation also lies in the way it treats its vulnerable citizens – notably the poor, the young and the elderly as well as in its pursuit, advancement and protection of human rights. A lot of this is dependent on a nation’s institutions of governance, its legislation, its processes and its policies. More significantly, however a lot depends on the implementation of these policies as well as the enforcement of legislation without prejudice. Numerous strategies have been advanced including, but not limited to, decentralisation, e-government, partnerships with international bodies and appropriate monitoring and evaluation of government programmes. In this issue of the African Journal of Governance and Development, authors from across the African continent reflect on a few of these significant systems and processes.

Oni and Faluyi examine the restructuring debate in contemporary Nigeria within the context of the legacies of military regimes on Nigeria’s federal system. The authors argue that good governance and development can only be attained when the present lopsided federal arrangement is redesigned to allow for power devolution in such a manner that makes both the national and sub-national governments ‘independent and coordinate’ in the true sense of it. **Oni and Faluyi** add that the accompanying financial revenues should be devolved to subnational governments thereby empowering them to provide development infrastructure in their respective jurisdictions since they are closer to the people than the government which is located aloof at the centre.

It is not only through restructuring of government, federalism or decentralisation that promote good governance and smoothens relationships between the government and the citizens that are governed. As governments endeavour to deliver effective and efficient services to the citizenry, new strategies have evolved particularly due to advances in information technology systems which have revolutionised the way things are performed. **Azelmad and Nfissi** describe a major eGovernment programme in Morocco - the *Maroc Numeric 2013*. The program aims to transfer the Moroccan public sector from an office-oriented space to citizen-oriented, by putting customers at the center of service delivery. An inter-ministerial committee (CIGOV) was appointed to benchmark and assess this project, which looks at increasing interoperability among ministries, national and local public agencies through the application of integrated systems. This automated



G2C application aims to reduce transaction costs and bribery which result from the direct contact between citizens and local officials. **Azelmad and Nfissi** assert that eGovernment Whole-of-Government Approach is trusted as a solution for bad governance and fragmentation and one that will no doubt accelerate Morocco's social and economic development in the modern information age. The pursuit of social and economic development by countries in the South is sometimes viewed as competition for the control over the resources of countries in the South by those in the North. Is a win-win situation possible? Must the South lose for the North to win? **Tijan** reflects on globalization, the international order and human rights. **Tijan** argues that the countries of the North have strengthened their institutions to absorb the defects of globalization such as polarization of wealth and poverty, increasing terrorism, increasing citizenship gap and inequalities. While countries of the South are at the receiving end of the spectrum. The consequence of this is that these facets of globalization have implications for international order as countries of the North that benefit from globalization would want to maintain the status quo while those in the South who are in a disadvantaged position seek change. **Tijan** concludes by pointing out that a recognition of human rights is a window of opportunity for development and that recognizing the right to development and enabling the realization of the right of all individuals in developing countries should be a policy-priority of all nations.

One area where human rights are often trampled upon is gender and development. Ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment is a desired goal at both national and international levels. The recent sustainable development goals emphasize social inclusion than ever before and highlight goals that are specific to gender equality. Other International treaties and specific National Gender policies and development plans require elimination of discrimination against women in development and removing the gender inequalities through empowering women. Evaluations of government interventions ought to be gender responsive so that gender inequalities and inequities can be unfolded and addressed decisively. As maintained by UN women, gender responsive evaluations enhance gender equality and the empowerment of women. In this regard, **Namara** analyses whether the 2016 process evaluation of Uganda's Universal Primary Education programme undertaken by Uganda's Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) was gender responsive. **Namara's** critical review of the evaluation report shows that OPM did not set out to undertake a gender responsive evaluation though the UPE programme by design was gender responsive. **Namara** suggests that to enhance gender responsive evaluations, the OPM needs to pay keen attention to gender and equity in its evaluation methodology. **Namara** posits that, among others, gender responsive evaluations require that the evaluation team conducts an inclusive stakeholder analysis during the process of determining the sampling frame.

