

*Review*

## **A critical review of Agenda 2063: Business as usual?**

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**This paper sets out to review and critically examine the Agenda 2063, a strategic long term planning instrument for the development of Africa in the next fifty years, prepared by the African Union Commission on the occasion of celebrating the OAU/AU golden jubilee in 2013. The objectives of this paper were to examine the viability of the agenda, to elucidate critical issues underpinning its successful implementation, to analyze its strengths and weaknesses, and to suggest ways of dealing with persisting challenges. Through perusal of the agenda 2063 and various other documents related to it, the authors build their argument around three thematic issues namely: Agenda 2063 and African Integration, socio-economic aspects of Agenda 2063 and the political ideological basis of the agenda. Limitations and challenges have been explored and recommendations formulated. It was noticed that Agenda 2063 provides an excellent vision for African countries and African people. It was prepared following a broad-based bottom-up participatory approach, and advocates for inclusion and empowerment of all groups of people. However, the point was made that the agenda 2063 is likely to be confronted by the same or similar setbacks which prevented previous African long term plans from achieving significant results. These include limited finances, lack of ownership, lack of political will, diverse and sometimes conflicting interests, and lack of ideological backup to sustain the vision. Thus, unless adequate measures are put in place to overcome these challenges, Agenda 2063 may be added to the pile of the many other planning documents which were never implemented.**

**Key words:** Agenda 2063, regional integration, development, Pan-Africanism.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The quest for African integration is not a contemporary issue. It began with the Pan African movement back in the 1960s. This movement championed the struggle of Africans and peoples of African descent for emancipation and the restoration of their dignity, against slavery, colonialism and all forms of racism and racial exploitation.

This force and passion for freedom led to the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963. The OAU had a mandate to pursue both political and socio-economic African independence. This was divided into five main areas; decolonization, advancement of peace and security, promotion of democracy, human rights and

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good governance, fostering international relations and cooperation and regional integration. Its political agenda was dominated by issues of decolonization, liberalization and the struggle against apartheid (African Union Commission AUC, 2015a: 43-44).

Although different member states at the time agreed that African integration was paramount, they however, had differing ideologies about how African unity should be achieved. They were hence divided into camps; the Casablanca group which pressed for immediate continental unity and the Monrovia group which argued for a gradual approach. They were however, able to put their differences aside and focus on African Unity, hence influenced the charter of the OAU. It is claimed that the OAU did not have a clear vision and strategy for realization of continental unity and this affected its structures, organs and performance in general. The policy organs and strategies consequently went undeveloped and not fully implemented. As a result of this and other challenges the African Economic Community (AEC) and OAU were transformed into the African Union (AU). The Constitutive Act of the AU incorporated the objectives of both the OAU and AECs. It nonetheless brought in new elements and principles and these included; more participation of the African citizens in the activities of the union, right to intervene in member states pursuant to a decision of the Assembly of grave circumstances such as war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity, an area that the OAU shied away from. This is in addition to the right of member states to request intervention from the union in order to restore peace and security all this enabled the AU perform better than its predecessors (AUC, 2015a: 44-45).

Given that the question of economic emancipation was one of the fundamental objectives of the Pan African movement, the AU adopted a strategy for political unity that involved building from the bottom through establishment of regional economic communities. These various strategies and frameworks for economic development were agreed on by the continent's leadership from the late 1970s onwards. But by the 1980s, the economic, social and political problems in Africa had reached crisis proportions, Africa largely putting the blame on external forces and factors (colonialism and unfair international relations) (AUC, 2015b: 47). This is yet another old blame song played by Africans and a trance we have to wake up from and take charge of our destiny. This is because Africa is to blame for some of the poor economic policies and deficit in governance systems.

In response to the 1970 crises, OAU collaborated with (United Nations Economic Commission for African) UNECA in 1979 and mobilized to forge a vision and plan to address the crisis. This led to the Monrovia declaration which was subsequently incorporated in the Lagos Plan of Action 1980 and the Final Act of Lagos 1980. They articulated African's future development trajectory,

provided a plan for action to foster the continent's development and were underpinned by political decision for attaining economic cooperation and integration. They too demonstrate several attempts made by Africa to define continental visions and action plans to address the economic, social and political challenges facing the continent. They too sought to carve out alternatives for the continent's future, address issues of poverty, industrialization, agriculture, science and technology, structural transformation, integration and cooperation remained at the core of all these initiatives. They however, remained partially implemented-a situation attributed to lack of capacity, lack of political will and lack of resources and external interference. The development of plans was mostly technocratic in approach, not sufficiently participatory and therefore failed to galvanize ordinary Africans (AUC, 2015b: 47-48), a situation that Agenda 2063 is hoping to rectify. It is also important to note that even though African countries at continental level endorsed the plans for transformation, at national level competing external agendas held the day. This experience provides lessons that are crucial for the success of Agenda 2063 (henceforth to be referred to as the Agenda). The Agenda, therefore, needs to be fully integrated into national and regional plans and the need for strong political leadership to ensure that continental commitments are followed through at national and regional levels (AUC, 2015b: 48). The AUC (2015b: 49) views the Agenda as the context of the durability of the quest for political unity and economic emancipation of the continent.

### **Why the Agenda 2063**

Agenda 2063 is rooted in Pan Africanism and African Renaissance. It attempts to provide a robust framework for addressing past injustices and realization of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as the African century. The Agenda 2063 (hence with to be referred to as the Agenda) echoes the Pan African call that Africa must unite to realize its renaissance. This Agenda evolves from the OAU to postulate that Africa is looking forward to the next 50 years. It therefore requires an account of lessons from the past to be able to have a clear picture of the future Africa is going towards. The success of the Agenda necessitates mobilization of the people and their ownership of continental programmes at the core; the principle of self reliance and African financing its own development, the importance of capable inclusive and accountable states and institutions at all levels and in all spheres, the critical role of regional economic communities as building blocks for continental unity; taking into consideration challenges faced by both island and landlocked states and holding ourselves and our governments and institutions accountable for results. The AU commission further believes that the Agenda requires

conscious and deliberate efforts to nurture a transformative leadership to drive the agenda and defend African interests. The Agenda too embraces the Pan African Vision of “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena” (African Union Commission, 2015: 3).

The agenda is also based on the Eight priorities of the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration that include: African identity and renaissance, continued struggle against colonization and the right to self determination, the integration Agenda, Agenda for social and economic development, peace and security Agenda, Democratic governance, determining Africa’s destiny and Africa’s place in the world. Agenda 2063: The future we want for Africa is an endogenous shared strategic framework for inclusive growth and sustainable development for African transformation and a continuation of the Pan African drive for self determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity. It aims to galvanize and unite in action all Africans and the Diaspora, harness African’s continental endowments embodied in its people’s history, cultures and natural resources, and geo-political position to effect equitable and people centered growth and development; eradicate poverty, develop Africa’s human capital, build social assets, infrastructure and public goods, consolidate enduring peace and security; put in place effective and strong development states, participatory and accountable institutions, and empower women and youth to bring about the African renaissance (AUC, 2015a: 17-19).

In addition to the Pan African vision, the Agenda lays down seven (7) crucial aspirations that are to propel Africa to the next level. These include; (i) a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development, (ii) an integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan Africanism and the vision of Africa’s Renaissance, (iii) an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and rule of law, (iv) a peaceful and secure Africa, (v) an Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics, (vi) an Africa whose development is people driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for the children and (vii) Africa as a strong, united and influential global player and partner (African Union Commission, 2015: 4). For purposes of the article, care will taken to discuss in detail the feasibility of some of these aspirations, to determine whether they mere platitudes or not.

Aspiration two; which is based on the 1963 quest for African unity inspired by the spirit of Pan Africanism, focuses on liberation, political and economic independence. It is motivated by development based on self reliance and self determination of African people with democratic and people-centered governance. It predicts that by 2063, Africa will be an integrated, united,

peaceful, sovereign, independent, confident and self-reliant continent. The AU envisions that by 2020 all remnants of colonialism and all African territories under occupation will be fully liberated. Additionally all kinds of oppression including gender, racial and other forms of discrimination will be ended. The Agenda assumes the political unity of Africa will be the culmination of the integration process, which includes free movement of people establishment of continental institutions leading to full economic integration, and that by 2030 African governments will have arrived at a consensus on the form of continental governments and institutions (African Union Commission, 2015: 6).

Aspiration three, postulates that by 2063, Africa will be a continent where democratic values, culture, practices, universal principles of human rights, gender equality, justice and rule of law are well-established; an Africa with capable institutions and transformative leadership in place at all levels. The Agenda also assumes that the continent’s population will enjoy affordable and timely access to independent courts and judiciary that deliver justice without fear or favor. It also assumes that corruption and impunity will be a thing of the past. African citizens will actively participate in social, economic and political development and management. The Agenda generally claims that African institutions at all levels of government will be developmental, democratic, and accountable and transformative leadership will prevail (AUC, 2015c:7)

Aspiration six of the Agenda envisions an Africa, where African women will be fully empowered in all spheres with equal social, political and economic rights including the right to own and inherit property, sign contracts, register and manage business. Rural women will have access to productive assets, land, credit, inputs and financial services. All forms of gender based violence and discrimination (social, economic and political) against women and girls will be eliminated and the latter will fully enjoy all their human rights. All harmful social practices (FGM-Female Genital Mutilation, child marriages will be prohibited, and barriers to quality health and education for women and girls eliminated (African Union Commission, 2015: 10-11). The Agenda too supposes that by 2063, full gender parity with women occupying at least 50% of elected public offices at all levels and half of managerial positions in the public and private sectors, the economic and political glass ceiling that restricts women’s progress will be shattered. The Agenda recognizes that ‘no society can reach its full potential unless it empowers women and youth and removes all obstacles to women’s full participation in all areas of human endeavors’ (African Union Commission, 2015:14). Aspiration seven notices that Africa shall continue to advocate for reform of other global institutions, including The World Bank, the IMF and the WTO to enhance international standards in a way that caters to the aspirations of developing countries and enables these countries face their challenges. The

Agenda is striving to ensure that by 2063, Africa takes full responsibility for financing its own growth and transformation (AUC, 2015a: 39-40).

The Agenda, however, recognizes the following as critical enablers for African transformation; it requires people's ownership and mobilization, Africa needs to finance its own development, it needs accountable leadership and responsive institutions, capable and democratic developmental states and institutions, the populace needs changed attitudes and mindsets, Pan African perspective and the ownership of African narrative and brand to ensure that it reflects continental realities, aspiration and priorities and the African position in the world (AUC, 2015a: 21).

It further identifies some factors that prove a great opportunity for consolidation and rapid progress of the continent; significant positive and sustained growth trajectory of many African countries, notable reduction in violent conflict, increased peace and stability, advances in democratic governance, prospects for the rise of the middle class, youth-bulge catalyst for further growth in consumer sectors and services, change in international finance, architectural rise of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and improved flow of FDI (Foreign Direct Investment (AUC, 2015a: 20) Some of these factors are quite questionable and some might think are the reason why Africa is still lagging behind, especially when it comes to the issue of financing. It is also important to note that over the last decade Africa has experienced sustained levels of growth, peace and stability and positive movements on several human development indicators. It must therefore sustain and consolidate this position and use it as a spring board to ensure it leads to transformation and renaissance (AUC, 2015a: 18).

In order to continue advancing the agenda for economic emancipation and drawing lessons from the global energy crisis of the 1970s, Africa has taken strategic decisions to pursue continental integration as a strategy for economic development for example; the Lagos Plan of Action and the Bretton Woods agenda on structural adjustments. The Agenda builds on and accelerates the implementation of a continental framework, most notably the Lagos Plan of Action, Abuja treaty, NEPAD, The Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the Minimum integration programme (MIP), the Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa (AIDA), the AU/NEPAD Science and Technology Consolidated Plan and Africa's Afro-Industry and Agribusiness Development Initiative, (AUC, 2015a: 19).

The Agenda also plans to develop an implementation mechanism underpinned by strong knowledge management systems that enhances the quality of delivery through cutting edge research, innovation and codification of ground breaking experience, promotes sharing of experiences and learning from each other, and

establishes communities of practice (AUC, 2015a: 20).

The Agenda further recognizes that the continent is more united and a global power to reckon with. Africa is now capable of rallying support around a common agenda and speaking with one voice with capacity to negotiate and withstand the influences that would like to see it divide (AUC, 2015a: 20) This is, however, questionable. Many a times, Africa has betrayed itself and failed to stand up and be heard in situations where it would have proved to be a formidable force. The question is: is this indeed true about Africa or just a fallacy? While colonialism may have played a role in Africa's lack of development, post colonial policies by leaders as well as their practices in power have consistently denied Africa any room for growth and development (Qobo, 2007: 2).

The Agenda also continues to call for unity, transparency, willingness and capability to assess performance, correct mistakes, build on successes, placing citizens first, and social governance and values. It is also important to note that the long term planning strategy has been adopted by member countries for Uganda's vision 2040, South Africa and Egypt's 2050, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Cameroon's 2035, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Lesotho, Cote d'Ivoire are readjusting their visions ending in 2020 to take them beyond 2050. The Agenda, therefore, seeks to build upon and consolidate these efforts (AUC, 2015a: 21). However, just as the AU and Africa has had a number of ambitious plans that have had limited success, this raises concern for the Agenda and its downward dissemination. If some countries are finding it difficult to fulfill their individual visions, then this in itself may create a dent in the Agenda 2063, since its success depends heavily on the efforts made by individual countries. Thus for regional integration to be successful in Africa, African leaders will have to move beyond grand gestures and abstract visions to more focused and gradual steps that are carefully executed at the domestic level (Qobo, 2007: 1).

Is the Agenda 2063 business as usual for Africa? The African Union (AU) tries to address this situation by claiming that it is not a business as usual scenario. If it were then, economic growth and investment rates of recent years would continue, Africa's labor force would continue to grow, commodity prices remain high and generally improved policies of the last two decades maintained. It would also assume that there is no sustained action on a new policy agenda, there is lack of inclusiveness, lack of job growth, substantial poverty, and unsustainable natural resource management, non-accelerated productivity growth, and Africa's economies would not be transformed.

The Agenda realizes that despite the fact that the latter are challenges that need to be dealt with, success will be assured if African countries build upon past achievements and capitalize on emerging opportunities and draw upon the continent's strong cultural and spiritual values (AUC, 2015c: 41-43).

### Scope of the Agenda 2063

Agenda 2063 has a wide and diversified scope of operation. Geographically it concerns the whole of Africa as a continent and all 54 African countries and members of the AU. It is also far-reaching in its socio-economic aspects such as the planned continental infrastructure development projects (Grand Inga Power Plant, high speed train network, the pan-African e-network, and Africa outer space strategy). It also aims to be owned by all Africans including African diaspora and to involve as many African institutions and create new ones for its implementation. It is a global strategic rolling plan with short- (10 years), medium- (10-25 years), and long-term (25-50 years) perspectives.

### Stakeholders and partnership considerations

During the preparation process of the Agenda broad based consultations were sought with as many stakeholders as possible. These include the private sector, African academics/think tanks, civil society organizations (CSOs), planning experts and development specialists, African diaspora, the youth, women, media, Faith Based Organizations, former heads of state and government web-based general public at continental level, sector ministries, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), etc. Their views were considered and their inputs were included in the drafting of the Agenda, which is a positive feature of the agenda. It is likely to be owned by all Africans from many walks of life, both on the continent and in the Diaspora.

Additionally, the AU is engaged in a number of strategic partnerships with both traditional and emerging partners. However, different levels of short comings have characterized the management of these partnerships. Most of the shortcomings in the management of high-potential strategic partnerships were as a result of AUC-level challenges, which were due to lack of an AU partnership policy and strategy, as well as AU-level deficits in terms of financial, technical and coordination capacity. It is stated in the Agenda that the envisioned United States of Africa Government will strengthen its Partnership Policies with its partner countries and regions, and its capacity and role in global negotiations-in the global economic, environment, security and social negotiations as well as on the reforms of the multilateral institutions including the UN Security Council, (AUC, 2014: 21). It also warns that some partnerships may constrain Africa's development and thus should be avoided., giving the example of the EPA with Europe which is likely to constrain African countries from accelerating industrialization in the next 15/20 years.

### Agenda 2063 and African Integration

The Establishment of: the Continental Free Trade Area

by 2017, Investment Bank and Pan African Stock Exchange (2016); the African Monetary Fund (2018); and the African Central Bank (2028/34), a single African air transport market, the African Passport and free movement of people, are practical projects planned for in the first ten-year implementation plan of the Agenda that will further African integration effort on top of the cross Africa major infrastructure development projects (AUC, 2015a: 16).

(i) Establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) by 2017: To significantly accelerate growth of Intra-Africa trade and use trade more effectively as an engine of growth and sustainable development, through doubling of Intra-Africa trade by 2022, strengthen Africa's common voice and policy space in global trade negotiations and establish the financial institutions within agreed upon timeframes. The CFTA is a determined attempt by African governments to unlock Africa's tremendous potential to deliver prosperity for all Africans. Studies by UNCTAD and other institutions indicate the major benefits expected to emerge from the CFTA, include boosting trade and welfare gains and fostering a vibrant and resilient African economic space. These, in turn, could serve as a springboard for more beneficial integration by Africa into the global economy (UNCTAD, 2015).

(ii) Establishment of the African financial institutions: Establishment of the Continental Financial Institutions: aims at accelerating integration and socio-economic development of the continent, as they are important institutions when it comes to the mobilisation of resources and management of the financial sector such as the African Investment Bank and Pan African Stock Exchange (2016); the African Monetary Fund (2018); and the African Central Bank (2028: 34) (AUC, 2015a: 16).

(iii) The African Passport and free movement of people: Transforming Africa's laws, which remain generally restrictive on the movement of people despite political commitments to bring down borders, with the view to promoting the issuance of visas by Member States and enhance free movement of all African citizens in all African countries by 2018.

(iv) Establishment of a single African air transport market: This flagship Programme aims at delivering the single African air transport market to facilitate air transportation in Africa.

These programmes, if adequately financed and well implemented, have the potential of taking African integration to the next level and raise the hope that the dream of a united Africa such as envisaged by pioneers of pan-Africanism can come true. However, if the Agenda is to achieve more successful regional integration in a

timely fashion, it will critically need a new level of political commitment by Africa's leadership. The willingness to incorporate the envisaged programmes in national long term strategy and the disbursement of required resources rests with African states and governments and their heads, in particular. Its successful implementation will also, in a great measure, depend on the efficiency with which the already identified impediments to integration are addressed. These include: African countries commitment to multiple regional blocs, fear of economic losses as a result of foregone customs revenue or competition with local industries, RECs themselves being weak institutions, lacking resources and strong political backing, states' internal weaknesses with inefficient bureaucracies that undermine the countries' abilities to manage their borders and economic regulations, Africa's infrastructure backlog, the security stresses that undermine normal life, and lack of citizens' awareness and involvement in integration efforts (Corrigan, 2015).

### **Agenda 2063: Not business as usual**

The agenda is not business as usual because it pledges to position Africa for growth over the next 50 years and incorporating lessons and experiences from the past. It aims at getting African states to do things differently, it is people centered, and envisions better governance, performance outcomes, and impact on African citizens. The Agenda recognizes that Africa needs a paradigm shift if current hopes for a better future are to be realized. It includes citizens' participation, speaking with one voice and international affairs and accountability for results. (AUC, 2015a: 50; DeGhetto et al., 2016: 94).

The agenda also appreciates that the pace of regional integration needs to be accelerated to allow Africans to take their destiny in their own hands. This it agrees can be achieved if the spirit of solidarity, determination and sacrifice that was once a strong feature in efforts of Africans and their political leadership is rekindled, especially among African's young people to enable the continent to face the challenges of the current times (AUC, 2015a: 49). Additionally, the importance of good governance and functional democracy in preventing and effectively managing conflicts is emphasized. As most conflict in Africa occurs due to deficiencies in ensuring accountable, transparent and inclusive governance systems, as well as inadequate efforts to address the challenges of poverty and inequality, The Agenda understands that addressing the above will go a long way towards strengthening peace, security of persons, communities and nations, and contribute significantly to the socio-economic transformation of the continent (AUC, 2015b: 89).

We cannot overemphasize the necessity to include women and other minority groups in the development process. The AUC (2015b: 92) notes that the progress in

the continent with regard to women's representation in parliament is low given that in many African countries, women generally constitute a minority in some critical parliamentary committees tasked with drafting bills, which later become law. With respect to MDGs (Millennium Development Goals and poverty reduction, African performance lags behind in one of the most important indicators, gender equality. The continued monopoly of power by the male political elite, lack of political will, socio-economic challenges, the non recognition of unpaid care and domestic work as well as patriarchal traditions and beliefs continue to limit the formal and meaningful involvement of women in governance, peace and security, and development processes. The Agenda plans to address this phenomenon because it acknowledges that the continent cannot meet its ambitious goals while limiting a dynamic segment of the population-women from realizing their full potential (AUC, 2015a: 93).

In order to mitigate the challenges that have so besieged African development, the Agenda proposes to build the capacities of RECs (Regional Economic Communities) to find regional solutions to address drivers of fragility. The Agenda also intends to plan for value addition in the agricultural and mining sectors, diversification of African economies away from dependence on agriculture based exports and also dependence on one or two primary commodities. It also aims to build human capital, a skill revolution promotion based on the notion that well educated citizens have the potential to transform the risks of demographic and disease burden into a demographic dividend and lead to economic transformation of the continent (AUC, 2015b:125). This legitimizes the need for regional integration schemes in Africa with an outward oriented approach aimed at integration into the global economy. Regional integration is likely to be more successful, if it is outwardly oriented and promotes global integration. Thus as Africa learns from the mistakes of the past (failed import-substitution industrialization of the past) it also needs to maintain close relations with countries in the north, but this relationship has to be mutually benefiting. Premiums too need to be placed more on infrastructure related/project based regional cooperation to manage regional public goods (Qobo, 2007: 7,11,13).

### **Socio-economic aspects of Agenda 2063**

The key question here is whether agenda 2063 presents enough potential to bring about socio-economic transformation that would result in African people's welfare enhancement. A review of the extent to which socio-economic factors are considered in the agenda and its five-year implementation plan is made under this subhead. Africa remains, in economic terms, one of the poorest parts of the world (Beegle et al., 2016). Food security is a cause for worry. Almost one-third of Africa's

population is undernourished (AUC, 2014: 85). And many have no access to clean water, electricity, good public roads; education; and healthcare systems. Sub-Saharan Africa particularly, remains the region where the world's poorest people are most heavily concentrated with an average per capita income of roughly US\$1 a day (Moyo, 2009: 5). Bad leadership, corruption, poor infrastructure, unemployment, lack of access to healthcare and conflicts remain a cause for worry in many African countries. Worst still, the very people, Africa's best and brightest, who could be leading an African Renaissance, are leaving Africa every year for richer countries in the West, where they stand a chance to prosper.

Socioeconomic factors are the social and economic experiences and realities that help mould one's personality, attitudes, and lifestyle. These factors can also define regions and neighborhoods. Education, income, place of residence and infrastructure are some of the key factors that determine the level of socio-economic development of an individual, household, country and region. The agenda caters for these and other national aspects of socio-economic development such as peace and security, eradication of poverty, hunger and disease (AUC, 2015a: 6). In *Aspiration1, A Prosperous Africa based on Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development*, it is envisioned that by the year 2063, Africa will be a continent of shared prosperity, which finances its own development, and where:

1. African people have a high standard of living and quality of life and well-being;
2. Well educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation for a knowledge society
3. Citizens are healthy, well-nourished and have long life spans
4. Cities and other settlements are modernized and people have access to all the basic necessities of life
5. Economies are structurally transformed to create shared growth and decent jobs for all
6. Modern agriculture for increased production, productivity and value addition contribute to farmer and national prosperity
7. The continent while attaining prosperity maintains healthy ecosystems and preserves the African and global environment.

Agenda 2063 makes good provisions for the following socioeconomic development aspects. If implemented they would really have welfare improvement effects on the lives of many Africans. However, as rightly suggested by Uduh (2015a: 7), while the Agenda offers a roadmap on how to achieve the desired future for the Africa we want, Africa's development challenges call for changes in attitudes, new level of consciousness, a greater degree of innovation and hard work. It demands

discipline and transparency, honesty about what works and what does not as far as development is concerned.

### **Education**

Education is one of the most important socioeconomic factors. One's level of education can shape how he or she views the world and can contribute to social growth. It can lead to increased earning capacity, which in turn can contribute to quality-of-life issues. Education can also contribute to decision-making processes that alter the paths people take in life (Mabasanyinje et al., 2016). Agenda 2063 recognizes that a key driver of Africa's prosperity will be its world class human capital developed through quality education and health services.

Agenda 2063 First Ten-year implementation plan provides for the establishment of an African Virtual and E-University, increasing access to tertiary and continuing education in Africa by reaching large numbers of students and professionals in multiple sites, simultaneously, and developing relevant and high quality Open, Distance and e-Learning (ODEL) resources to offer the prospective student a guaranteed access to the University from anywhere in the world and anytime (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) (AUC, 2015).

### **Income**

One's income and corresponding occupation are factors that can contribute to socioeconomic status. A career in medicine, for example, places a person in a higher income bracket, while also making that same person part of a social class of doctors, nurses and other medical-profession peers. In society, we often are judged by what we do and what we earn. Agenda 2063 states that Africa would by 2063 be a continent, which would have benefitted from accelerated and inclusive economic growth and macroeconomic stability. There would be annual GDP growth rates of not less than 7%, investment and savings of 25% and above, and macroeconomic policies that promote growth, employment creation, investments and industrialization. The local private sector would have grown to claim over 50% of the GDP (AUC, 2015).

### **Place of residence**

From the type of house we live in to the region and neighborhood in which we reside, place of residence is another leading socioeconomic factor. For better or worse, neighborhoods often group us socially among people with similar incomes and often similar backgrounds. For instance, at points in history, entire neighborhoods have been established around factories or

mills for purposes of housing employees. Agenda 2063 provides for the modernization of human settlement. Some priority actions for urbanization and human settlements listed on page 42 of the Agenda 2063 framework document include: Improving shelter/housing delivery and slum eradication, ensuring financing for urban development, facilitating spatial planning and service delivery, and strengthening the productive base of urban economies (AUC, 2015a).

### Infrastructure development

The AU summit approved the following infrastructural mega programmes/projects as part of the agenda 2063 flagship projects: all included in the first ten year implementation plan. Four of twelve flagship projects of the agenda aim to develop international Africa-wide infrastructure. These are: The Integrated High Speed Train Network, The Grand Inga Power Plant, The Pan-African E-Network, Africa Outer Space Strategy (AUC, 2015a).

1. Integrated High Speed Train Network: Connecting all African capitals and commercial centres through an African High Speed Train to facilitate movement of goods, factor services and people, reduce transport costs and relieve congestion of current and future systems.

2. Implementation of the Grand Inga Dam Project. The optimal development of the Inga Dam will generate 43,200 MW of power (PIDA) to support current regional power pools and their combined service to transform Africa from traditional to modern sources of energy and ensure access of all Africans to clean and affordable electricity.

3. The Pan-African E-Network. This involves a wide range of stakeholders and envisages putting in place policies and strategies that will lead to transformative e-applications and services in Africa; especially the intra-African broad band terrestrial infrastructure; and cyber security, making the information revolution the basis for service delivery in the bio and nanotechnology industries and ultimately transform Africa into an e-Society.

4. Africa Outer Space Strategy aims to strengthen Africa's use of outer space to bolster its development. Outer space is of critical importance to the development of Africa in all fields: agriculture, disaster management, remote sensing, climate forecast, banking and finance, as well as defense and security. Africa's access to space technology products is no longer a matter of luxury, and there is a need to speed up access to these technologies and products. New developments in satellite technologies make these very accessible to African countries. The Brazzaville meeting on aerial space technologies underlines the need for appropriate policies and strategies in order to develop the regional market for

space products in Africa.

### Limitations

Even though the above arguments show that the Agenda 2063 is not business as usual, there are a number of areas that have not been addressed which seem to show that Africa is creating a vicious cycle of ambitious projects and ideas which barely meet implementation requirements. Some scholars argue that African regional integration is marred by ambitious schemes with unrealistic time frames towards deeper integration and in some cases, political union. Essentially, African integration is following a stepwise goods, labour and capital markets – monetary and fiscal integration. Starting from a free trade area, customs union, common market-monetary and fiscal matters (economic union), and the political union is the ultimate achievement. The question is how feasible is this linear model of regional integration for the African environment? (Trudi, 2011: 4-5).

The agenda advocates for participation, inclusion and empowerment of all citizens (AUC, 2015a: 122) but does not seem to show how this would be achieved. How will inclusive growth and sustainable development be possible without inclusive institutions? DeGhetto et al. (2016: 98) argue that Africa must build effective institutions capable of balancing and protecting competing interests without conflict or open warfare, while also avoiding state capture and fragility. And one of the ways of achieving inclusive institutions at regional level is to foster economic and potential integration with Africa. One of the ways of ensuring this is the creation of the inclusive economic institutions, proposed by the Agenda, beginning with the formation of the TFTA (Tripartite Free Trade Area) which includes; COMESA, EAC and SADC. However, they also note that this brings in far less than half of the AU countries, hence the fear that some countries left out of this and other trade agreements may fall even further behind. Integration may also increase complexity, hurt small businesses, benefit developed over developing countries, and limit trade with other regions.

In addition, economic growth and prosperity are associated with inclusive economic and political institutions; but the reverse is true, extractive institutions enrich a few at the expense of many. They create a platform for extractive political institutions to persist. This shows why nations fail today. Because of extractive institutions that do not create an incentive needed for people to save, invest and innovate (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012: 106-413). This argument is further supported by Boldrin et al. (2012: 1) when they argue that political institutions determine economic institutions. To achieve economic success, political institutions must be sufficiently centralized to provide basic public services including justice, enforcement of contracts and education.

Inclusive institutions enable innovation energies to emerge and lead to continuing growth, as exemplified by the industrial revolution. The question is, Agenda 2063 does not lay the ground or explain the basis of how this is actually going to happen.

The Agenda also attempts to treat Africa as a single unit of analysis, and this may be a blunder, because Africa is so diverse that the issues discussed during the consultation and implementation mean different things for citizens of different regions. These differences are likely to complicate the design, implementation and even monitoring and evaluation of the Agenda's plan of action (DeGhetto et al., 2016: 98). For instance, weak states may be stumbling blocks to the development of robust rules-based regional integration agreements (RIAs), because they are unable to develop manage and implement a compressive regional integration agenda (Trudi, 2011: 19). Similarly Geda and Kibret, (2002: 12) contend that an integration scheme, where countries are at different levels of development will suffer disproportionate gains from integration and their commitment to implement agreed upon treaties could be adversely affected. This is an issue the Agenda action plan needs to address or the Agenda 2063 will not be any different from its predecessors. Without shared values and common interest, the regional integration process will be complicated (Qobo, 2007: 6). Although integration as proposed by Agenda 2063 is a perceived strategy for overcoming individual weaknesses and developmental obstacles, it may, to the contrary, generate conflicts and tensions within and between states, especially when opposing ideologies and political systems are involved or when economic benefits are perceived to be uneven (Chingono and Nakana, 2009: 397).

The challenge for Agenda 2063 is how to ensure that ordinary citizens can imagine a more positive future while reconciling with past misdeeds and atrocities and simultaneously coping with the hardships and realities of the present. These scholars argue that when people are poor and preoccupied with the challenges of meeting immediate and pressing basic daily needs, they are less likely to focus on and imagine a more positive future (DeGhetto et al., 2016: 98). Acemoglu and Robinson (2012: 64-83) note in their book "Why nations fail" that disease is largely a consequence of poverty and of governments being unable to undertake the public health measures necessary to eradicate them. They too articulate the fact that poor countries are poor because those who have power make choices that create poverty, they get it wrong not by mistake or ignorance but on purpose. Thus, the Agenda and the AUC have the uphill task of alleviating poverty and improving the living conditions of its citizens, because unless this is done, commitment towards the agenda is unlikely.

Furthermore, the Agenda tends by nature to exclude the majority of the population who may not have completed a high school level of education. This is

because it will be translated into the four AU official languages (English, French, Arabic and Portuguese) it runs the risk of the majority of the population not being able to comprehend it, hence the necessity for it to be translated into major African local languages. This exclusion undermines the consultative spirit of the Agenda (DeGhetto et al., 2016: 98-99). DeGhetto et al also observe that several struggling countries may be left behind, despite the fact that the Agenda's implementation requires country specific actions due to the different levels of country development, resource endowments and priorities. The proposed plan of action does not include steps for working with these member states that may need especial assistance.

For instance in the EAC (East African Community) though markets are well developed, the quality of infrastructure, macroeconomic stability and health and education indicators are poor. Some of the encumbrances include lack of access to financing, corruption, high tax rates, inadequate supply of infrastructure (World Economic Forum, 2010 as cited by Trudi (2011:16). The ECOWAS countries though strong in institutions and innovation, are weak in health, education and infrastructure development. And even though some African countries perform well on various GCI indicators, the whole of sub Saharan Africa lags behind other world regions in terms of competitiveness, and more generally, faces a constrained business environment. Thus the need to improve competitiveness: a challenge the Agenda 2063 plan of action needs to address (Trudi, 2011:16).

The question of ownership of the Agenda also needs to be considered. This is because it has significant implications for buy in, commitment, resourcing, monitoring, and effective and sustainable implementation. This is based on the premise that it is difficult for two or more parties to work toward a common goal, if they do not have their individual issues resolved. Leaders in the public and private sector therefore, need to focus on how these resources are organized and utilized within and across national borders (DeGhetto et al., 2016: 101). This brings this argument to the most crucial issues of leadership and growth. Growth moves forward only if not blocked by the economic losers who anticipate that their economic privileges will be lost (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012: 100). The challenge that the Agenda will face lies in the fact that political motivation for regional integration in Africa plays a big role and perhaps specifically, in the overlapping memberships of RIAs. Although political commitment is persuasive, it does not seem to translate into effective implementation (Trudi, 2011: 6).

Adogamhe (2008: 21) stresses that most African states suffer from a democracy deficit and weak allegiance from citizens and that this creates a crisis of legitimacy for most of the existing state institutions. Adogamhe also notes that integration in African tends to be an elitist movement rather than based on democratic politics, rule

of law and good governance. African leaders tend to refuse to surrender any sovereignty as it would mean a loss of political capital which would develop into a loss of political power (Duthie, 2011: 139). Draper (2010: 15) further argues that given the youth of African nations, it is not surprising to find that leaders in many of these countries are reluctant to really yield their prerogative to regional institutions. It also goes without saying that lack of regime continuity which is dominant in African politics and governance, manipulative and technocratic power of transnational corporations, all constitute impediments to the pursuit of serious integrative processes in Africa (Biswaro, 2011: 415).

The Agenda puts forward a financing strategy that is articulated into domestic resource mobilization, intermediation of resources into investment and access to finance. The Agenda also pledges to adapt more effective and inclusive means of channeling those funds to where they can be most effective, and where there is market failure in the allocation of the resources. Financing is needed in regional integration, especially where infrastructure, science, technology and innovation-based industrialization and processing of local resources, agriculture and food security, and environmental sustainability is required. But the AU has inadequate financial resources to execute these programs (Adogamhe, 2008: 19). In addition, in the past, the AU was unable to manage well its partnerships due to lack of AU partnerships policy and strategy as well as AU level deficits in terms of financial, technical and coordination capacity (AUC, 2015b: 134-135). Boldrin et al. (2012: 5) suggests that nations fail because they are destroyed by their neighbors. Thus member countries should pay fully the agreed financial contribution and punctually, if Africa is to rid itself of foreign domination (Maruping, 2005: 149). The continent needs to tap into its own vast wealth to finance its development agenda (Eyster, 2014: 1). Self-sustainability is paramount at this point.

The question of markets is also going to be a challenge for the AU; and Agenda 2063 does not seem to show how this will be solved. A case in point, most countries in Africa have low per capita income levels and small populations, hence small markets. Fifteen sub-Saharan countries have small economies, are poor, and landlocked. This contributes to high trade transaction costs and high costs of doing business in Africa. Another challenge related to markets is that transport costs in Africa are still among the world's highest throughout the continent and many road, air and rail networks remain unconnected. This makes the cost of doing business high and just in time production, impossible. Furthermore, the cost of starting a business remains difficult elsewhere except in EAC, calling for a need for African economies to improve the business negotiation to encourage more entrepreneurs to start business and enter the formal sector (Trudi, 2011: 5-17,18). It is therefore, important that countries take integration not only as a lingering Pan

African ideology but most importantly as an economic survival strategy aimed at combating marginalization from the global economy (Geda and Kibret, 2002: 2).

It is also more than likely that the implementation of the Agenda will face the problem of commitment. Given that the Agenda seeks to ultimately establish a political union and supra-national organs to act on behalf of African governments, it is unlikely that some African leaders will let go their sovereign power easily. One of the reasons cited for lack of progress in African regional integration is the unwillingness of governments to surrender sovereignty of their macroeconomic policy to a regional authority and face potential consumption costs that may rise by importing from a high cost member country, and accept unequal distribution of gains and losses that may follow an integration agreement, and discontinue existing economic ties with non members. This lack of strong and sustained political commitment and macroeconomic instability have hindered the progress of economic integration in Africa (Geda and Kibret, 2002: 3). Geda and Kibret further note that African countries are reluctant to create supra-national bodies and transfer power to them as the sanctioning authority. Countries are also more committed to other multilateral and bilateral commitments than to regional agreements, a situation specifically explained by aid dependence and the conditionality attached to the SAPs (structural adjustment programs) of member states (Geda and Kibret, 2002: 13).

Qobo (2007: 1-3) implies that regionalism as applied in Africa can be viewed as a form of escapism from real challenges at the domestic level as well as a strategy to consolidate an alliance that would reinforce political sovereignty of member states. The measure of progress in Africa should be the success of social and functional policies at domestic level. It is also important to note that Agenda 2063 is not the first ambitious, well thought out plan; the Lagos Action Plan and Final act of Lagos envisioned an integrated market by 2000, EAC was supposed to achieve a political federation by 2010. So while previous plans focused on intra-regional trade, agriculture technology and the environment, the new initiative emphasizes ownership, economic reforms and political modernization. Qobo concludes that African elites may be focusing on the wrong set of priorities with too little commitment towards the goal of African development.

The Agenda acknowledges the need to strengthen RECs to foster regional integration in Africa, but RECs still have a long way to go to achieve the objectives of the AECs. Various protocols of the communities including those to do with trade, customs, dispute settlement mechanism, and infrastructure and sector development have not yet been ratified by most member countries. Moreover, the levels of intra-regional trade are still too low to contribute to significant integration. Intra African trade amounts to 10% of Africa's trade with the rest of the world. This is no basis upon which to build the United

States of Africa. And given that most African countries are still struggling to build well- functioning and properly integrated internal economies, regional integration at this rate will still experience difficulties (Qobo, 2007: 5). It is therefore, hoped that the AUC did enough feasibility studies to that effect or the Agenda 2063 will join the pile of Africa's ever ambitious plans.

Maruping (2005: 132,143,149) argues against RECS that Africa instead needs to participate in multilateralism from a regionalized standpoint to negotiate more effectively for international markets and ward off marginalization and unfair competition in the global area. Additionally, the monetary harmonization process in African integration has been slow especially in line with ensuring that a single currency is run by 2025. If RECs are to be effective, Maruping suggests that African countries and sub-regional blocks create an enabling legal and institutional socio-economic and political environment that supports and attracts financing for integration.

The Agenda also commits to following a linear approach of regional integration beginning with a FTA, through to the monetary union and fiscal policy and finally, political union. Some scholars, however, caution against uncritically following the linear approach exemplified by the EU (European Union) which though attractive, may not necessarily be in line with regional development challenges in Africa. How will African leaders achieve success at the regional level if they fail to do so at the domestic level (Qobo, 2007: 13). Tsikata and Melo (2014: 1) too, assert that the linear model of integration has slowed down the process of regional integration in the world economy. Therefore, it remains to be seen whether the linear model of integration that was adopted at the advent of the OAU will take Africa further, given that it has not yielded significant results so far.

The majority of the Agenda 2063 flagship projects focus on transport and ICT, infrastructure and economic growth, indicating a drive for accelerated growth and economic structural transformation. However, ambitious mega infrastructure development projects such as those described above are not new in Africa. Harold Acemah, the then delegate at the Permanent Mission of Uganda to the United Nations in New York, reports that in the 1970s, 'the Trans-Africa Highways' was a project which the African Group at the United Nations in collaboration with the OAU and the Economic Commission for Africa, had championed. However, the ambitious Mombasa to Lagos highway via Uganda, DRC and many other African countries was stillborn and never took off despite all the hype and a pledging conference which was held to raise funds for the project'(Acemah, 2015).

The Trans-African Highway Bureau, established in the 1970s for the management of the Trans-African Highways ceased to exist in the 1980s, and the major efforts made in the early 1990s to re-establish it have failed. The main reason for this failure has been the lack of support among member states for such a

reestablishment of the Bureau. This lack of support is the result of different developments and considerations, (UNECA, 2003). The question to ask is: 'what went wrong?' and what can be done differently so as to avoid what made this kind of project fail in the past? Many analysts have concurred that Agenda 2063 is a good roadmap for Africa with commendable economic and social objectives, but it must follow the political goal of African unity, which is the *raison d'être* of both the OAU and its successor the AU.

The first ten-year implementation plan has eight priorities translated into concrete targets, which impact directly on the welfare, lives and livelihoods of Africans. One priority is to expand agricultural production, develop the agro-processing and business sectors; increase market access and achieve food self-sufficiency and nutrition through smallholder agriculture, sound environment and natural resource management. Analysts agree that agenda 2063 and its supporting documents constitute an excellent planning instrument and a great vision for Africa.

However, some questions remain, especially those concerning whether the planned vision will be implemented and will not be stillborn as has been the case for previous plans. Some wonder whether present African leaders still have the spirit that animated the founders of OAU/AU. The Great Pan-Africanist Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, paraphrasing the words of the bible had said "Seek ye first the political kingdom and all the rest shall be added unto you". He thought that political unity was better positioned to drive economic growth and independence. Fifty years later, Africa is still divided and is in fact, more divided; and its people still languishing in abject poverty. The Agenda 2063 relegates the question of Africa's political unity to 50 years to come, when none of them will obviously be alive to see it, which makes some people think that Africa's current leaders are not ready for the struggle for African unity, a concept to which they only pay lip service.

Therefore, as rightly put by Pheko (2014: 2) Africa's present leaders must do an introspection of themselves. Are they pursuing and protecting the interests of Africa's people with the passion, vigilance and wisdom that were shown by Africa's leaders of the independence movement such as Kwame Nkrumah, Ahmed Sekou Toure, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Patrice Lumumba, Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, Julius Nyerere, Haile Selassie and many others?

## Conclusion

At current rates of performance (that is a "business as usual" scenario), the continent would neither catch up nor be able to meet the rising expectations of her citizens, especially the youths and women as: only a tiny number of countries, which had consistently high growth for the last two decades, will converge with

the rest of the world, while the majority of the other countries will not converge, and the fragile countries will stay fragile. Per capita incomes continue to rise at 1.9 per cent annually but given the growth in the rest of the world, Africa's per capita incomes would actually diverge further from those of other countries. The middle-class will increase, but after decades would still be only about a third of the population. Nearly one in five Africans would, correspondingly, still be mired in poverty. Finally, given the growth elsewhere in the world, Africa's share of global GDP would stagnate at a low level. Such a scenario, or at worst, one of stagnation, does not correspond with the aspirations of Africans for their future, and is certainly unacceptable.

What African leaders do now and daily will determine the place of Africa in the next fifty years. Africa has already waited for fifty years for the present African leaders to implement the foundational principles that the pioneers of Africa's independence struggle laid down on 25th May 1963. If Africa has to wait for another 50 years to achieve her goal of economic development and technological advancement, and rescue her people from poverty, ignorance, enslaving "foreign aid" and its deepening debts, it is a sign that many present African leaders are subtly opposed to the Pan African vision and mission for which the African Union and its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity were formed. Why must it take 50 years to rescue Africa from economic powerlessness in the midst of so much technology?

It is therefore, recommended that for Agenda 2063 to be successful, some concerns be addressed which include: the notion of continued adherence to sovereignty by some countries needs to be dissolved, countries should be ready and committed to taking necessary steps to internal socio-economic restructuring and ratifying of the various RIAs. The AUC may also need to explore other model of integration, in some instances, certain elements of the EU many not be appropriate to Africa and going down the same path may lead us into damnation. For instance, Draper (2010: 21) advocates that in place of 'hard' sovereignty, 'soft' sovereignty which will lead to inter-governmentalism not supra national structures that demand major sovereignty concessions. It is also recommended that the Agenda be communicated downwards to ensure maximum grass roots support. In most cases, these projects tend to be known only by the elite in society, and ordinary citizens are left to bear the burden of the decisions made for them; for commitment, they need to be owned by the citizens.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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