

***The Challenges of Globalization in Africa
What Role for Civil Society and Other Stakeholders?"***

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Contents Table

1.	<i>Background</i>	3
2.	<i>Globalization and its Impact on Africa</i>	4
3.	<i>Development, Good Governance and Democracy</i>	6
4.	<i>Globalization and Democratic Governance</i>	7
5.	<i>Africa's Responses to the Challenges of Globalization on Democratic And Effective Governance</i>	9
6.	<i>Economic Development Paradigms, Models, Strategies and Policies</i>	11
7.	<i>Regional and International Cooperation</i>	12
8.	<i>Civil Society and Effective Democratic Governance</i>	13
9.	<i>The Role of Other Stakeholders in Safeguarding and Consolidating Democratic Governance</i>	15

1. Background

The term “ globalization “ has been in use since at least the early 1990’s to characterize the present period in which we live. Yet the concept is full of ambiguities and has generated a great deal of debate and controversy. There are divergent points of view as to whether the phenomena are new and exactly what features it refers to. Equally controversial are the specific forms taken by globalization, the forces driving it, and its consequences for the global system and for particular groups of countries. Reflection and debate on these questions have hardly commenced in the African continent, especially among policy makers representatives of civil society groups and other stakeholders. This puts Africa at a disadvantage vis-a-vis other regions in marshalling its energies and resources to deal effectively with the process of globalization .The Conference on The Challenges of Globalization to Democratic Governance in Africa: What Role for Civil Society and other Stakeholders was convened by the Development Policy Management Forum to fill this void and shed light on these issues, with special emphasis on the challenges of globalization to democratic governance in Africa and the role of society and other stake holders in meeting these challenges.

A total of 126 participants from eighteen countries met in Addis Ababa for three days to address these and other related questions. These participants consisted of African policy makers, senior officials from diplomatic embassies and international organizations based in Addis Ababa, well- known African intellectuals, and representatives of African civic organizations, private sector and other stakeholders.

To facilitate and stimulate discussions among participants, research papers analyzing the experiences of eighteen African Countries in meeting the challenges of globalization on democratic governance and the role of civil society and other stakeholders in meeting these challenges were specially prepared and distributed to participants. In addition, the opening statement to the Conference of His Excellency Ato Sufian Ahmed, Minister of Finance and Economic Development of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the messages delivered on behalf of the Interim Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union and the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, and the keynote addresses of Dr. Frene Ginwala, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of South Africa and Professor Ali Mazrui, Director of the Institute of Global Cultural Studies, State University of New York, Binghamton, New York took up various aspects of the issues before the Conference and provided valuable insights and analysis which facilitated the work of participants. Thereafter, detailed discussions took place in three working groups devoted to the following issues:

The Challenges of Globalization on Democratic Governance in Africa;

The Role of Civil Society in Consolidating Democratic Governance within the Framework of Globalization:

The Role of other Stakeholders (Political Parties, Unions, the Military, and the Government) in Safeguarding and Consolidating Democratic Governance in Africa in the Face of Challenges from Globalization.

In their discussions, participants made determined efforts to be as practical and concrete as possible, so as to ensure that their findings and recommendations would be useful to African policy makers and officials of civic organizations in effectively meeting the challenges of globalisation and building and strengthening democratic governance. These findings and recommendations are summarized below. They are addressed to African policy makers,

officials of civic and other organizations, African Intellectuals, the African public at large, and official and unofficial actors and stakeholders in the international community whose activities impact on Africa for better or worse, in the hope that they will better understand the enormous tasks facing African countries in dealing with the challenges of globalization and how they could play a positive role in this process.

2. *Globalization and its Impact on Africa*

Participants were in general agreement that even though the concept is new, the phenomena in one form or the other can be traced far back in history. Despite the ambiguities of the concept, the essential nature of globalization is the compression of space and time, so that people from distant areas are able and in fact obliged to interact with one another intensively and in a wide range of areas. As a result, the world becomes one, and interactions among diverse people begin to look like those within a village. Thus terms such as “ One World “ and “ Villagization “ are sometimes used as synonyms for globalization.

In its contemporary form, globalization is driven by a variety of forces. These are financial or the flow of financial resources, economic with particular reference to the flow of goods and services and, to a very limited extent, labor, technology, especially transport, communications and information technology, the spread of culture from one corner of the world to the other, and the global diffusion of religious ideas as well as ideologies. Other aspects that are unique to the present form of globalization are the Americanization of the world, the propagation of a universal paradigm for economic and political development, and the dominance of unilateralism as a way of conducting international relations. The Americanization of the World is the result of the huge and unprecedented gap between the United States and its nearest rival in each and every sphere, military, economic, technological and cultural, which is in turn transformed into the unequaled American influence on international issues and decision-making, including those within the purview of major international institutions such as the United Nations System, the Bretton-Woods institutions, and the World Trade Organization. Globalization has therefore increasingly taken the appearance of the transformation of the international system from a multipolar or bipolar system to an imperial system under American hegemony. Within this system, decisions and outcomes are largely the result of American unilateralism. A major consequence of this is the propagation of a universal paradigm for both economic and political development, in the form of the so-called Washington Consensus, whose main features are market forces and liberal democracy, without regard to the historical and cultural specificities of individual countries. In sum, globalization seems to be leading inexorably to the homogenization of the world, with the United States as the model and the standard by which all other countries are to be judged.

Participants were unanimously of the view that globalization is inevitable and its consequences pervasive. However, asymmetry in the distribution of power results in different perceptions and evaluation of the impact of globalization, especially with respect to the distribution of the benefits of globalization. In the case of Africa, its position in the international system has been considerably weakened by the fact that it has been losing the race for economic development in general, and human development in particular, to other regions. This poor performance by African countries accounts in part for the political and social instability and the rise of authoritarian regimes that have characterized much of post-colonial Africa, further weakening the ability of African countries to deal effectively with globalization.

The cold war has had significant consequences for Africa. During its height in the 1960's and 1970's, the cold war witnessed the emergence of authoritarian regimes in most African Countries in the form of one-party or military regimes. This was largely a result of the support of the two blocks to keep African countries in their respective camps. In any event, both one-party and military regimes inhibited the emergence of democratic governance and developmentally oriented regimes in Africa.

With the end of the cold war, support has been withdrawn by the major powers for many African countries considered no longer of strategic importance. This has entailed an increase in the number of so called " failed states " in Africa during the last two decades. This development has also been inimical to the emergence and consolidation of effective democratic and developmentally oriented regimes in Africa. In addition, the end of the cold war has witnessed an over-all decline in the strategic importance of Africa. This has, in turn, substantially reduced Africa's international negotiating power and its ability to maneuver in the international system with a view to gaining a modicum of freedom of choice, autonomy and leverage in its dealings with more powerful actors. In sum then, the cold war and its demise has worked against democracy and economic development in Africa. The problem therefore lies in Africa's position in the global system and not in the specific form taken by globalization.

Specific impact of globalization on Africa were identified. In the political sphere, the most important consequence is the erosion of sovereignty, especially on economic and financial matters, as a result of the imposition of models, strategies and policies of development on African countries by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization. On the other hand, globalization has promoted greater respect for human rights and contributed to the development of an African press. This has opened African countries to far greater scrutiny than in the past, making it somewhat more difficult for African governments to get away with blatant and excessive abuses of democratic governance and transparency. However, this positive development is negated by the fact that these principles of democratic governance and transparency tend to be applied selectively and subjectively. More important is the fact that globalization for the most part does not facilitate the establishment of the economic conditions necessary for genuine democracy and good governance to take solid roots and thrive.

Economically, globalization has, on the whole, reinforced the economic marginalization of African economies and their dependence on a few primary goods for which demand and prices are externally determined. This has, in turn, accentuated poverty and economic inequality as well as the ability of the vast number of Africans to participate meaningfully in the social and political life of their countries. Economic and social stagnation has also triggered a substantial brain- drain from Africa, further weakening the ability of African countries to manage their economies efficiently and effectively. As a result of the cultural domination from outside that goes with globalization, African countries are rapidly losing their cultural identity and therefore their ability to interact with other cultures on an equal and autonomous basis, borrowing from other cultures only those aspects that meet its requirements and needs. Finally, while the scientific and technological forces unleashed by globalization have facilitated to some extent access by Africans to advanced technology and information, this has been at the expense of stultifying the indigenous development of technology and distorting patterns of production in Africa, notably by utilizing capital as against labor intensive methods of production, which in turn increases unemployment and poverty.

Overall therefore, the negative consequences of globalization on Africa far out way their positive impact. To reverse this situation, Africa must meet two major challenges. The first is to introduce far- reaching changes in the assumptions, values and objectives of the existing states, so as to transform them into truly developmental states that are strong without being authoritarian. The second is to diversify African economies away from dependence on a few primary commodities, especially depleting natural resources which constitute enclaves in the overall economy, ensure a balance between agriculture and manufacturing, and increase the competitiveness of African goods in the world market. The achievement of these goals would require energetic and concerted action by governments, civil society, other stakeholders, and society at large, with active and sustained support from the international community.

3. *Development, Good Governance and Democracy*

Turning their attention to the link between economic development, good governance and democracy, participants noted that liberal democracy as we now know it is associated with and causally related to the emergence of capitalism and market economies. This process was facilitated and made possible by the earlier emergence of strong states, which actively encouraged the rise of capitalism. The strong states that arose from feudalism, and the capitalist and liberal economies which they promoted, were in turn powerful forces in the building of national cohesion and the emergence of nation-states. Up to the present, strong governments play an important role in stimulating economic growth, addressing the imperfections of purely market forces, and ensuring that the economic process promotes social and political stability and the achievement of non- economic goals highly desired by society. This is an important lesson from history that African countries should keep in mind.

It should be kept in mind however that the economic history of Africa followed a different pattern. The economic changes imposed by the colonial state were never designed or intended to promote genuine liberal national economies or the consolidation of nation-states. Instead, the colonial powers created economies that functioned as appendages of their economies, and heavily laden with preferences for their economic groups and interests. Thus at the time of independence, African Countries inherited economies that were fragmented and dominated by entrepreneurs that were often neither indigenous nor committed to the economic prosperity of the country concerned, and who therefore lacked interest and stake in building successful national economies and nation-states similar to those which had emerged in the developed countries

If the emergence of liberal democracy is somewhat clear, the same could not be said for the meaning of the term. This is because the underlying and fundamental principles of democracy have been lumped together with specific institutions, forms and processes that were conditioned by particular historical, social and cultural factors. African countries must resist this attempt to reduce and equate the basic principles of democracy to a single uniform arrangement so as to be able to develop their own methods of realizing the principles of democracy.

Participants agreed that a list of fundamental democratic principles risks being long and still not exhaustive. However, they agreed that most of these principles are already embodied in basic and generally accepted documents, such as the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. Central to these principles are the following:

The right of individuals to take control over and make decisions affecting their lives;
For this situation to prevail, there must be a generally accepted code of social justice, respect for the rights and freedoms of individuals balanced against the interests of society, and the rule of law;
Regular, institutionalized, and generally accepted methods of selecting and replacing the leaders of the country. This requires effective participation of the citizens in the political process, transparency and openness of society, and the accountability and responsiveness of leaders to the citizens.

In addition to focusing on the underlying principles of democracy, participants stressed the importance of judging countries labeled as democratic according to the degree to which they contribute to the realization of certain outcomes. Two outcomes in particular were stressed. These were the extent to which the population is being empowered by developing the talents and abilities of the people to effectively participate in all aspects of governance, including decision-making, implementation, and the management and peaceful resolution of various forms of diversity, such as ideological, ethnic, racial, gender and generational. A second outcome that was stressed is the promotion of the common good and sensitivity to the needs and interests of the people.

On the basis of the above principles and outcomes by which the existence of democracy is to be judged, participants concluded that Africa has, on the whole, failed in creating democratic political systems. In this regard, it was pointed out that effective governance and democratic governance are neither synonymous nor coterminous. As numerous examples attest, it is possible to have effective governance without democratic governance. However, democratic governance invariably, especially in the long-run, presupposes effective governance. In the historical evolution of the present developed democratic countries, effective governance preceded, sometimes by centuries, the consolidation of democratic governance.

However, Africa does not have this luxury. The debate in Africa is no longer on the need for democratic governance, but how to reconcile and simultaneously promote effective governance and democratic governance. In this debate, questions of sequencing, timing, and the institutions, mechanisms and processes of ensuring both effective governance and democratic governance are crucial and need to be vigorously pursued by and among political and government leaders, academics, representatives of civic organizations and other stakeholders, and Africa's developmental partners. Participants stressed that the conclusions of these debates must reflect the historical, political, social and cultural specificity of Africa, so as to ensure that these efforts develop solid and sustainable roots in Africa. The failure of these efforts up to now is due to the fact that this condition was not met.

4. *Globalization and Democratic Governance*

Participants pointed out that in many ways, globalization on the whole impacts negatively on the development and consolidation of democratic governance. One form of this is the reduction of the capacity of governments to determine and control events in their countries, and thus their accountability and responsiveness to their people, given the fact that the context, institutions and processes by which these decisions are taken are far from democratic. In addition, the fragmentation of national economies, polities, societies and cultures that are triggered by globalization weaken national consciousness and cohesion, leading to social divisiveness and instability, which in turn facilitate the emergence of authoritarian rule.

Strong countries are, however, in a better position to fend off these negative consequences and may even see their democracies strengthened.

One major positive impact of globalization on Africa is that it has made available information on how other countries are governed and the freedoms and rights their people enjoy. It has also opened African countries to intense external scrutiny and exercised pressure for greater transparency, openness and accountability in Africa. However, most of the forces unleashed by globalization have had a negative impact on the growth and consolidation of democratic governance in Africa. Among these are the following:

- While calling for greater accountability and responsiveness of leaders to their people, globalization has often pressured African leaders to adopt policies and measures that are diametrically opposite to the feelings and sentiments of the vast majority of their people. This has led to the rise or reinforcement of authoritarian regimes. A good recent example of this is the pressure on many African governments to take certain measures in the fight against terrorism at the behest of external powers;
- By defining basic and generally accepted principles of democratic governance, such as good governance, transparency and accountability, in narrow terms, conditioned by particular historical, political, social, and cultural factors, while leaving little or no room for adapting them to different societies and cultures, democracy takes on the image of something alien and imposed from the outside. Support for the fundamental principles of democracy is thus undermined, cynicism arises, and the effort itself fails to develop roots in the countries to which they are being artificially transplanted.
- Globalization leads to the development of anti-developmentalism by declaring the state irrelevant or marginal to the developmental effort. Development strategies and policies that focus on stabilization and privatization, rather than growth, development and poverty eradication, are pushed by external donors, leading to greater poverty and inequality and undermining the ability of the people to participate effectively in the political and social processes in their countries. Welfare and other programs intended to meet the basic needs of the majority of the population are transferred from governments to non-governmental organizations that begin to replace governments in the eyes of the people. As a result, governments lose what little authority and legitimacy they have. The consequent gap between government leaders and the public leads to alienation of the population from the political process and creates a favorable environment for the emergence of non-representative governments.
- By imposing economic specialization based on the needs and interests of external forces and transforming the economies of African countries into a series of enclave economies linked to the outside but with very little linkages among them, divisions within African countries are accentuated and the emergence of national consciousness and the sense of a common destiny is frustrated. Democracy, with its emphasis on tolerance and compromise, can hardly thrive in such an environment.
- Further, because the economic specialization imposed on African countries makes rapid and sustainable growth and development impossible, conflicts over the distribution of the limited gains realized from globalization become more acute and politicized. Vulnerable groups, such as women, the youth, and rural inhabitants, fare very badly in this contest and are discriminated against. This further erodes the national ethos of solidarity and reciprocity that are essential to successful democracies.
- Lastly, globalization, by insisting on African countries opening their economies to foreign goods and entrepreneurs, limits the ability of African governments to take proactive and conscious measures to facilitate the emergence of an indigenous

entrepreneurial class. Consequently, due to their weakness and incapacity to operate on a national basis, rather than being forces for national integration and consolidation as was and is the case of European and American entrepreneurs, African entrepreneurs reinforce social divisions based on ethnicity, religion, race, language, culture, and location.

In sum, rather than being an asset for the development and consolidation of effective and democratic governance in Africa, globalization is more of a liability. This does not however mean that Africans are helpless in the face of these obstacles. There are many things they can do to rectify the situation and enhance the prospects of creating and consolidating effective democratic governance in Africa. Some of these are described below.

5. Africa's Responses to the Challenges of Globalization on Democratic And Effective Governance

The challenges of globalization on economic development and effective and democratic governance in Africa are numerous, multifaceted, and severe. Africa's response must therefore be well thought-out, energetic and comprehensive. Participants identified a number of measures grouped under five levels that Africa should take in order to mitigate the negative, while enhancing the positive, effects of globalization on Africa.

Action at the level of Citizens and Civil Society

It is evident that the most important resource of any country is its citizens. African leaders should therefore concentrate their efforts on educating their people, sensitizing and educating them on their civic, social, economic and cultural rights and responsibilities, and empowering them so that they could defend their rights and interests, while contributing fully to the overall development of their countries.

To achieve this objective, African countries must invest heavily in building, developing and maintaining their social capital, especially health and educational facilities that cater to the broad masses of the people rather than to a tiny elite. For only by developing its human resources would African countries be in a position to take control over their destinies and be in a strong position to deal effectively with the outside world.

In developing its citizens, African countries should pay particular attention to strengthening their cultural identities. This does not mean that African countries should not learn and benefit from the cultures of other societies. All cultures are dynamic and undergo change, either through internal forces or by interaction with other cultures. Africa should do the same, but must make sure that it does not abandon its own culture in the process by mechanically aping and uncritically swallowing those of others. In this regard, African countries could learn from Japan and East Asian countries that have succeeded in strengthening their cultural identities by reinforcing their indigenous cultures while selectively adopting and adapting aspects of western culture that they find useful.

Culture should however be broadly defined and encompass not only attitudes, values, language, arts, music, dance, and other social mores and behavior, but should also include science and technology which play an important role in the development and spread of culture. This is one area in which Africa is perhaps weakest, and explains the apparent fragility of African cultures in their encounter with other cultures. Africa's backwardness in science

and technology also explains its economic, political and military weakness, all of which have a bearing on its position at the bottom of the global hierarchy. African countries must therefore invest heavily in developing the scientific and technological skills and capabilities of its people. In this respect, national, sub-regional and regional institutions engaged in research and development should be established and strengthened, and close and active cooperation developed among them. Cooperation with scientific and technological institutions in the South, as well as with those in the developed world, should also be encouraged. At the level of international institutions, African countries must work energetically to change the rules and regulations, which limit their access to advanced technology, at a reasonable price, while frustrating their efforts at developing indigenous technologies.

Civic and other forms of non-governmental organizations have been increasing in numbers of late, and this is a very welcome development as these organizations can play an important role in strengthening effective democratic governance in Africa. At present, however, these organizations are rather weak, and many of them are either subsidiaries of, or depend heavily on, financing from organizations based in developed countries. This dependence compromises their ability to pursue policies and programs that are grounded in the realities of their countries. It also undermines their legitimacy and support because of the perception that they are agents of foreign forces and interests. This is especially important and true of civic organizations, non-governmental organizations, religious organizations, trade unions and political parties. These organizations must therefore do everything in their power to reduce their external dependence. In particular, they should enhance their capacities for domestic resource mobilization. They should also try to compensate for their individual weakness by networking with and promoting alliances and coalitions with like-minded institutions in their countries.

Institution Building, Leadership and Development

One of the consequences and causes of economic underdevelopment is institutional underdevelopment, and this is particularly true in Africa. The extreme form of this is institutional decay, in the form of the failed states in Africa, which have received so much attention of late. In many ways, and for reasons addressed above, many of which are the consequences of globalization, many African states are weaker today than they were at the time of independence. This trend should be arrested and reversed. All organs of the state should be strengthened, especially the executive, legislative and judicial organs.

It must be kept in mind that institutions are made up of individuals who endow them with norms, values, functions and behavioral rules and regulations. Thus in the final analysis, the effectiveness of these institutions depends on those who man them, especially on those who lead them. Accordingly, the question of dedicated and competent leadership in ensuring effective democratic governance cannot be overstressed. The example of East Asia clearly demonstrates the crucial importance of this factor in the process of economic and political development. Unfortunately, too often in Africa, leaders have placed their retention of power and personal enrichment ahead of the interests of the countries they lead. As a result, their ties with the people they rule have been weakened, while their dependence on external support to stay in power has increased. It is thus not astonishing that in international negotiations, these leaders lack both the interest and the domestic support needed to effectively defend the interests of their people. Africa must therefore do everything possible to ensure that it is lead by competent leaders, dedicated to the welfare of their people, and whose strength emanates from the support of the people they lead.

Another area of particular importance is instilling in the government, the army and other forces of coercion, and society at large values, attitudes and behavior regarding the appropriate role and functions of the police, army and paramilitary forces in a democratic society, especially their relations with the government and with the citizens. In light of the pervasiveness of internal conflicts in Africa, determined efforts should be made to develop and strengthen institutions for conflict prevention, management and resolution. This should involve all organs of state as well as the public, civic society and the press.

The goal should not however be only to strengthen the state. Equal attention should also be given to making it more accountable and responsible. In this regard, the principle and values of accountability and transparency must be inculcated in all organs of the state, and internal mechanisms for ensuring these values as well as impartiality in the conduct of public affairs, such as ombudsmen, established and strengthened.

One institution that plays a crucial role in ensuring effective democratic governance is the bureaucracy. They play an important role in policy making and implementation, serve as the interface between the public and the organs of state, and have regular and direct contact with the public. Bureaucrats therefore need training not only on how to do their jobs efficiently and effectively, but also on their responsibilities and obligations to citizens in a democracy. All too often, African bureaucrats act more like the masters, rather than the servants, of the public. For effective democratic governance to be consolidated, this attitude needs to be reversed.

Lastly, networking among African bureaucracies should be encouraged to facilitate the exchange and transfer of knowledge, experience and skills. This should lay emphasis not only on the role of African bureaucracies at the level of each country, but, perhaps more importantly, their responsibilities and tasks in strengthening African economic and political cooperation and integration. In this way, African bureaucrats would be transformed from being obstacles to African cooperation and integration to becoming one of the vanguard for this process. This exchange should also deal with the role of bureaucracies in democratic governance. A network of African experts should also be created so as to supplement and assist in the work of African bureaucrats at the national, s-regional and regional levels.

6. *Economic Development Paradigms, Models, Strategies and Policies*

As has already been made clear, development strategies and policies followed by African countries are increasingly those formulated by outsiders, which are then uncritically imposed on African countries as a condition for aid, investments, trade access, and political and military support. Not surprisingly, these strategies and policies serve more the interests of external forces rather than those of the African people they claim to be assisting. Efforts by African countries to formulate economic development models, strategies and policies which, in their view, reflect better their situation, interests, goals and objectives, embodied in documents such as the Lagos Plan of Action, Africa's Priority Program for Economic Recovery and Development, and the Abuja Treaty creating the African Economic Community, have been all but abandoned.

It is now time for African policy makers, academics, and representatives of civil society and other stakeholders to revisit these initiatives to determine what went wrong and why they were abandoned. Lessons drawn from this exercise should inform and guide new initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Unless this exercise is

undertaken in a serious and comprehensive manner, with the full participation of all political and economic organs and institutions, civic organizations and other stakeholders, academics and the public at large, it is very doubtful that these new initiatives would yield better results.

In articulating a new approach to the economic development of Africa, stress should be given to the question of the nature, ownership, management, allocation, utilization and distribution of resources. These issues are at the heart of any political economy and condition the nature and type of economic and political development, the pace of these developments, the sustainability of the processes, and who gains or loses from them in society. In light of what was said earlier about the interdependence between capitalism and liberal democracy and the role of national entrepreneurs in this development, it is essential that special attention be given to the emergence of an indigenous entrepreneurial class that has an interest in, and the ability to contribute to, the development of truly integrated national economies.

7. *Regional and International Cooperation*

Given the fragility and weakness of most African polities, economies and societies, it is evident that few if any of them can succeed in successfully implementing the series of reforms advocated above. Cooperation with others should therefore be a central objective of African countries. This cooperation should start at the sub-regional level and extend to the regional level, as was advocated in the Lagos Plan of Action and the Abuja Treaty. In this respect, the multiplicity, capabilities, functions, objectives, and accomplishments of the plethora of sub-regional intergovernmental organizations in the continent must be analyzed with a view to their rationalization, so as to ensure that they make effective contributions to sub-regional economic cooperation and integration, a sine qua non for regional economic cooperation and integration.

Because of the colonial legacy, economic cooperation and integration among African countries was hindered in the past by the absence of links among them since ties were essentially with the colonial power. In light of the new possibilities opened up by recent advances in technology, especially the revolution in transport and communications, this should no longer be an obstacle. African countries should energetically and proactively exploit modern forms of transport and communications, especially information technology, so as to strengthen the interdependence among them and thus provide the material base for economic, political, social and cultural cooperation and integration among them.

A very important initiative recently launched by African leaders is the Peer Review Mechanism enshrined in NEPAD. This provision, which provides African countries with the instruments to monitor their own behavior, can play an effective role in reducing external intervention in the affairs of African countries. Care should however be taken that it does not end up becoming a mechanism for doing what outside forces are unable or reluctant to do through direct intervention. Rather, the stress should be on African economic cooperation and integration, in keeping with the spirit of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Abuja Treaty, both of which emphasized the primacy of these goals. In this regard, it is vital that NEPAD should not evolve as an initiative that concerns only African Heads of State and top bureaucrats as such a development would doom the whole effort to failure. Instead, civil society, intellectuals and the broad masses of the people, most of whom are far more committed to African economic and political cooperation and integration than their leaders, should be closely associated with and play an active role in this effort. Only in this way would NEPAD be provided with the solid base of broad social support it needs for it to succeed.

In addition to sub-regional and regional cooperation and integration, African countries should energetically strive for South-South cooperation. This form of cooperation made a positive contribution to Africa's independence and was a vital and influential force in international political and economic relations in the Sixties and Seventies, under the aegis of the Group of Seventy Seven and the Non-Aligned Movement. Unfortunately, South-South cooperation has been considerably weakened, again partly as a result of globalization and the emergence of an imperial system under the hegemony of the United States. South-South cooperation is however needed more now than in the past, as no region of developing countries, acting alone, has the capacity to transform the existing international system and ensure that it promotes the interests of developing countries as a whole, rather than a few of them at best, and even then often for only limited periods of time.

Given the transformations brought about by science and technology, Africa has no choice but to interact and cultivate relations with the developed world. Not only is this unavoidable, but it need not always be at the expense of African interests. There are individuals and groups in developed countries motivated by considerations of justice, equity and fair play who support or could be persuaded and encouraged to support African interests. African countries should therefore cultivate and consolidate ties with these individuals and groups and strengthen them whenever they can. Such individual and groups can become powerful lobbies for Africa within the body politic of developed countries.

Participants are conscious that what is being advocated is a huge and very ambitious program of reform. It cannot be realized overnight, nor can it be implemented in the same manner and pace by all African countries. Each African country would therefore have to adapt it to its needs and make the appropriate decisions about how these measures are to be prioritized and sequenced, taking into account their capabilities and the stage they are in ushering and consolidating effective democratic governance. In addition, African countries would have to supplement these broad measures with specific ones targeting civil society and other stakeholders

8. *Civil Society and Effective Democratic Governance*

Participants felt very strongly that civil society organizations have a very important role to play in promoting effective democratic governance in Africa. However, this fact is not yet fully appreciated in Africa, due to the weakness of civil society and the dominant role of African governments in comparison in the development process, especially during the Sixties and Seventies.

Two key roles were identified for civil society organizations in the democratic process. The first relates to their role in propagating democratic values, socializing their members in these values, and defending democratic principles and social justice in the society as a whole. These organizations also serve as mechanisms of social and national integration by recruiting members from a wide background, mobilizing their members for active participation in the political process, and helping individuals to meet their basic needs. Civic society organizations that perform these roles are social movements, political parties, trade unions, professional groups, and community and youth organizations. Another role performed by civil society organizations in promoting democratic governance is more direct and entails serving as a buffer between the state and society, and advocating, monitoring and seeking to consolidate and strengthen good governance and transparency. The prime actors in this regard

are non-governmental organizations. The views of participants on the role of non-governmental organizations in consolidating and safeguarding democratic governance are described below, while the next section is devoted to the role of other stakeholders in this process.

In the African context, the ability of civil society organizations to play these roles effectively is aided by their access to information and the recognition and support they enjoy as a result of international norms and values, both of which are a result in part of globalization. However, this advantage is negated by three major obstacles, which limit their ability to promote effective democratic governance. The first is that these organizations often lack internal democracy due either to ignorance or for other reasons related to their leadership and membership. They are therefore not well placed to socialize their members in democratic principles. In addition, they suffer from a lack of credibility when they advocate and try to hold political leaders accountable to principles and values they themselves violate. A second handicap faced by these organizations is that many, though by no means all, of them, especially the well-known ones which are often also the most effective ones, are heavily dependent on external forces for financial, organizational, and other forms of support. Because of this dependence, they are easily labeled agents of foreign interests, thus undermining their legitimacy. In addition, dependence on external sources limits their ability to be responsive to and therefore relevant to the environment in which they operate. Instead, they seem to ape civil society organizations in more developed countries, ignoring the differences between the two groups of countries and therefore the differences in the roles and functions incumbent on them. Lastly, these organizations have thus far failed to articulate national frameworks within which to operate, create coalitions with other groups with identical or converging interests, and promote cooperation with civil society organizations at the sub-regional and regional levels.

Civil society organizations in Africa must therefore address these weaknesses as a matter of urgency if they are to become relevant to the challenge of establishing and consolidating effective democratic governance in Africa. At the outset, they should endeavor to put their own houses in order by promoting internal democracy, accountability and transparency, and ensuring that their membership is as inclusive as possible so as to act as genuine instruments of national integration. In this regard, they should emulate African leaders by creating and strengthening mechanisms for peer group review. In this way, they will be able to monitor and police themselves, rather than waiting for others to do so for them.

Once they have addressed their internal weaknesses, they should focus on formulating comprehensive and permanent frameworks of engagement defining their role, functions, responsibilities, areas and types of intervention, and the modalities of their operation. These frameworks should be coordinated and harmonized at the national, sub-regional and regional levels. Cooperation among civil society organizations should extend beyond elaborating similar or compatible and mutually reinforcing frameworks of intervention into the exchange of information, experience and expertise, mutual support and, whenever feasible and desirable, joint action. In this way, civil society organizations would not only compensate for their individual weaknesses at the national level, but also transform themselves into powerful agents of sub-regional and regional cooperation and integration.

Frameworks for intervention in and of themselves are not of much use if the capacity to implement them is lacking. Building their capacities to act effectively and efficiently is another task that African civil society organizations must take up conscientiously and in a

determined manner. Particular emphasis should be given to reducing their dependence on external forces and enhancing their internal legitimacy, support and relevance.

Several specific actions to be taken by civil society organizations were proposed by participants so as to augment their contribution to the development and consolidation of effective democratic governance in Africa. These are as follows:

- Ensure ownership of their ideas and projects and thus make them relevant to the interests and needs of their members and not necessarily to those of donors;
- To achieve the above, enhance their ability to mobilize funds from internal sources and thus lessen the perception of dependence and subservience on western non-governmental organizations and donors;
- Strengthen their capacity for advocacy and lobbying around policies and programs they want to see adopted and implemented;
- Develop the capacity to engage in networking, coalition building and cooperation with similar groups at the national, sub-regional, regional and international levels;
- Cultivate close ties with dedicated and committed intellectuals in various fields so as to increase their abilities to develop autochthonous models of development and not commit the error of uncritically accepting those that emanate from the developed countries. These ties would also help civil society organizations in implementing their programs and plans;
- Make use of local and international instruments and resources to expand the democratic space in Africa by creating an environment that is favorable to democratic governance and popular participation in the developmental effort and in the political process;
- Promote democracy, accountability and transparency at the local level by working with, and not merely on behalf of, local communities and the people they represent;
- Struggle energetically, and through all means available to them, against the adoption of unjust laws and discriminatory application and enforcement of laws, rules and regulations;
- Fight to ensure that the state continues to play the key role in providing social services and meeting the basic needs of the people.

This is again another ambitious and challenging assignment that is being advocated for civil society organizations. Similar to the caution that was made with respect to the agenda advocated for governments, the present series of measures must be prioritized, sequenced, and adapted to the situation of each country and the capacity of each civil society organization.

Besides civil society organizations, other stakeholders have an important role to play in achieving effective democratic governance in Africa. This subject is addressed below.

9. The Role of Other Stakeholders in Safeguarding and Consolidating Democratic Governance

Participants identified two broad groups of stakeholders that play an important role in the process of safeguarding and consolidating democratic governance in Africa. The first group are the organs of state, notably the executive, legislative and judiciary branches of government and the army. The second are organizations that serve as the interface between the state and the public, namely political parties and trade unions.

Several key roles were underlined for the executive.. The first is to strengthen the constitutional and legal basis for democracy by ensuring that the constitutions that are written to guide the affairs of state embody basic and democratic principles, similar to those described in section C. These constitutions must enjoy widespread support among crucial groups and the society at large. A very important duty of the executive branch is to ensure that these constitutions are more than words on paper and become a living reality which influence and guide the behavior of all concerned, especially the executive which must be seen to respect and abide by the provisions of the constitution, notably those provisions which limit what the executive can and cannot do.

The executive has the responsibility of upholding the fundamental principles of good governance, namely those of accountability and transparency. In this regard, the executive should put in place effective financial and public management systems so that the resources of the county would be used for the welfare of the people. Specific legislation and organs should be created for this purpose, such as anti-corruption laws and rules and independent regulatory and financial supervisory bodies. The spirit of public trust must be inculcated in all individuals who occupy positions of public trust and responsibility.

The executive should also endeavor to create the material and economic foundations required for democratic governance to flourish. This means that it should ensure that the economic development strategies and programs that it formulates are the result of broad consultations with all concerned, and that all stakeholders participate effectively in the preparation and implementation of the investment programs and other activities that affect their lives. Trade and other relations with other countries should be carefully scrutinized to ensure that the country derives maximum gains from these relations and energetic efforts should be made to mobilize from both internal and external sources the resources required for the economic and social development of the country. In addition, modalities should be put in place to monitor and evaluate the implementation of development strategies and programs in order to make sure that the resources are effectively utilized. In sum, the executive should strive to create a truly developmental state.

In the cultural sphere, it is vital for the executive to identify and endeavor to strengthen traditional cultural norms, practices and arrangements that are conducive to good governance and economic development. This could be done through the educational system and support for the development of arts and culture.

In its relations with the public, the executive should sustain frank and constant dialogue with civic society and the public at large. It must at all cost refrain from manipulation and deception and keep in mind the fact that only through honest and open communication with the public could effective and democratic governance be consolidated.

The legislative branch should become the custodian of the public interest and serve as a check on other organs of the state, notably the executive. It should, however, go far beyond these tasks and not limit itself to conducting postmortems or holding the executive to account, important as these functions might be. Rather, the legislative branch should be the custodian of democratic values and, in this regard, should make sure it represents and reflects the full diversity of society. As an interface between the executive and civil society, it should be involved in the process of nation-building and take an active part in the debate on all aspects of policy, including issues that deal with economic relations with other countries. In performing its legislative functions, it must make sure that the laws it adopts expand, rather

than constrict, the rights and freedoms of individuals and groups. Lastly, it must pay particular attention to its role of monitoring and evaluating the development programs and economic policies of the executive to ensure their efficient, effective, transparent and equitable implementation.

Participants stressed the importance of the judiciary as the interpreter of the constitution and the enforcer of the laws of the country. In performing these crucial tasks, the judiciary must make sure that it is not only independent and impartial, but is seen to be so. The judiciary must create a legal environment that ensures respect for the rule of law and equality before the law for all concerned, and see to it that the political, civil and property rights of all concerned are fully respected. This is essential for the flowering of democracy as well as for the confidence of both internal and external investors in the country, an indispensable ingredient for the prosperity of the country.

The armed forces in Africa have a serious image problem, and are seen more often than not as agents of oppression. For them to play an important and positive role in the building and consolidation of democratic governance, they must radically alter this image. The new image they should try to cultivate and embody is that of an institution that emanates from society, rather than one that is apart from society, and which is created and maintained by society for its protection. It should therefore be responsible to and responsive ultimately to society. In this regard, their role is to defend the people against internal and external threats, protect the country, ensure respect for the constitution, and safeguard democracy and good governance. The armed forces should also be ready, willing and able to play an effective role in nation-building and economic development when called upon to do so by society. All this requires educating all members of the armed forces, both officers and non officers, on the principles and functioning of democracy and the role of the armed forces in such a political system. One principle that should be stressed is that of the subordination of the armed forces to civilian control and the exclusion of army or army/civilian rule in a democracy.

As far as political parties are concerned, they are the interface between the electorate and the executive and legislative branches of government and play a crucial role in how these two organs of government conduct their affairs. Their role in promoting and consolidating democratic governance cannot therefore be overemphasized. Participants underlined three functions for these organizations.

In the first place, political parties have a role to play in promoting democratic governance directly by themselves practicing democracy, accountability and transparency in their own internal affairs. In addition, they should strive to be as representative of the diversity in society as possible so as to become a microcosm of society and a framework for nation-building and promoting the values of tolerance and compromise. Only in this way could they become effective and credible advocates of democracy and good governance in society at large.

Political parties have another important role to play, that of ensuring accelerated, sustainable and equitable economic and social development. The starting point for this is for them to be fully conversant with the process of socio-economic developments in their countries and the international forces that impact on this process so as to sensitize and educate their followers. On the basis of this knowledge and insight, they could then be able to formulate political manifestoes and economic strategies and policies that are realistic and that would promote the long-term interest of the country, especially those of vulnerable groups. These strategies must

address and include guidance on how to deal with the forces of globalization and on which aspects of foreign ideas and technologies should be adopted, adapted or rejected. Political parties should go beyond formulating broad strategies and programs and must develop the capacity and organize themselves to play a meaningful role in preparing and implementing economic development programs and in the budgetary process.

In addition, there are the monitoring and supervisory roles of political parties. These include acting as a watchdog of the government to ensure accountability and transparency in the implementation of economic and social programs and the management of public resources, and ensuring that the public at large, especially minorities and vulnerable groups, are actively and effectively involved in the formulation and implementation of economic policies and programs that affect their lives.

In order for political parties to be able to perform these functions, they need to pay particular attention to the quality and character of the people they select to represent them in the legislative body. These individuals should be committed to good, effective and developmentally oriented governance that serves the interests of the society at large, and not their own interests or those of individuals or narrowly based groups. Thus in addition to technical competence, the integrity and political courage of these individuals must be taken into account. The parties themselves should avoid putting their legislative members in a position where they might be tempted by seeking to collect rent from them to finance their activities.

Political parties also have a key role to play in socializing their members on the principles, rules and practices of the democratic process, especially those related to the rights and duties of a loyal opposition and the vital necessity of free, fair, open and transparent elections.

Most African political parties have a great deal of capacity building to do before they can effectively undertake the above tasks. In particular, they would need to enhance their abilities to engage in strategic planning, research, budget making and monitoring, and follow-up on policy and project implementation.

Workers in Africa are, with the possible exception of farmers, the group most severely affected negatively by globalization. Trade union organizations therefore have responsibilities first and foremost to their members. In this regard, they have a responsibility to safeguard the interests and welfare of workers. This means that they must pay particular attention to how the programs and policies of the government affect workers and endeavor to encourage and safeguard humane labor laws.

The forces of technology unleashed by globalization have enormous impact on workers, and trade unions must therefore pay particular attention to this problem. In this regard, they must try to protect the physical and economic safety and interests of workers and enhance their capacity to cope positively and effectively with technology transfers. In particular, they should insist on conducting social impact assessments before new technology is transferred, so as to ensure that the technology to be imported are for the most part labor intensive and appropriate to the local resource endowment. The technology to be imported should also be environmentally friendly and in conformity with the government's policies and procedures for the importation of technology. Particular emphasis should be given to encouraging the use of locally developed technology or to those from other African and Third World Countries as

a way of reducing Africa's technological dependence on the developed world, while at the same time promoting African cooperation and integration and South-South solidarity.

More broadly, trade unions should strive for good corporate governance in the context of globalization as this has tremendous implications for the working conditions of workers, the health of the economy as a whole, and its ability to cope effectively with the challenges of globalization. Trade unions should also work for strong and positive linkages with the government so as to create a united front against the negative effects of globalization. To do this, they must encourage and ensure peaceful and amicable settlement of industrial disputes and eschew violence and the destruction of property and infrastructure. In this way, trade unions could become effective and credible fighters against the negative effects of globalization. This would then enhance the ability of trade unions to go beyond the economic and social welfare of workers and become major advocates of good, effective and democratic governance in their countries.

Participants in the Conference on The Challenges of Globalization to Democratic Governance in Africa: What Role for Civil Society and Other Stakeholders were acutely aware of the fact that most African Countries are a long way from ensuring sustainable, effective and democratic governance in their countries. While some aspects of globalization tend to facilitate this process, globalization as a whole, because of its negative effects on state-building, nation-building and economic development tends to make this task more difficult. Purely internal forces also affect this process both positively and negatively. The political will necessary to introduce and sustain the radical reform processes necessary to achieve these goals is still not sufficiently strong among powerful groups both within and outside Africa. Equally important is the fact that the capacity necessary, both in terms of variety and magnitude, to launch and sustain these processes are still for the most part far short of what is required. This is particularly true of the capacity needed by civil society and other stakeholders who have a crucial role to play in ensuring the success of this enterprise.

The challenge to civil society and other stakeholders in building and consolidating effective democratic governance is therefore enormous. The recommendations of the conference on how they could meet this challenge are therefore, of necessity, ambitious and multifaceted. They could not be implemented overnight, and they would have to be adapted to the specificity of each country. Participants were however confident that if civil society and other stakeholders commit themselves to these recommendations and make a conscientious and energetic start in implementing them, Africa would at last embark on the road towards effective democratic governance and a better and brighter future for its people.