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Innovations for
increased Popular
Participation in the
Design and
Implementation of
National Development
Programme

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PREFACE

Persistent economic difficulties and related development disappointments in most African countries have focused attention on the role of the state in fostering development, enhancing entrepreneurship and managing the development process. This has coincided with the emergence of public sector reorganization and reform as a leading priority on national political agendas around the world. Allied or, in addition to this, renewed concerns over democratic governance and for public bureaucratic structures to overcome the rigidities hindering flexibility, responsiveness, accountability and transparency have intensified. As financial constraints have narrowed the room for manoeuvre, governments are increasingly demanding higher productivity, better performance, value for money, and more from less from their public sectors.

To the extent that these are world-wide trends, they further reflect a more general shift towards a fundamental rethinking of the role of the state - as a complex organization - in relation to markets, economies and societies. In the African region, in particular, it has been recognized that the prospects of sustained economic recovery and development are contingent on more effective public sector interventions and a dynamic or results-oriented approach to development management. In the context of the changing role of the state, this has not only far-reaching implications but also poses compelling challenges for development management in the 1990s and beyond.

Against this background, the Public Administration, Human Resources and Social Development Division (PHSD) of the UN Economic Commission for Africa has recognized the

need for a forum where these implications and challenges can be addressed. In this regard, the broad purpose of the Development Management Series is to help those who are involved in policy-making, public sector management and training in Africa by making available studies anticipating and discussing emerging challenges, topical issues and future trends. Illustrated by practical insights from African and comparative experience, each study contains a discussion of feasible responses, policy measures and a range of options to challenge public sector managers and policy-makers.

To ensure that the studies remain useful, relevant and timely, suggestions of appropriate subjects for inclusion in the series as well as angles from which they can be approached are invited from our readers. Comments and feed-back on any of the studies published under the series will also be highly appreciated. Please address correspondence on these and related matters to:

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I INTRODUCTION

This publication takes off from the point of issue of the **African Charter for Popular Participation in Development** which was promulgated by the International Conference on Popular Participation in the Recovery and Development Process in Africa, held at Arusha, Tanzania, from 12 to 16 February 1990 and the issue of the **Khartoum Declaration** (1988) on the Human Dimension of Africa's Persistent Economic Crisis. It attempts to elaborate the centrality of man in the concept of popular participation as the ultimate architect of development programmes for sustainable growth and that, as actor in the implementation of the projects consultatively formulated from such programmes, man should benefit from the resultant fruits of development and growth. The publication then makes policy recommendations on innovative ways of enhancing popular participation in the design and implementation of national development programmes.

The **African Charter for Popular Participation in Development** is, *per nomen*, intended to address the African situation. It is, however, a culmination of a wide and intense debate on the subject of popular participation in development spanning well over thirty years and preoccupying the minds and resources of many serious scholars and institutions of development administration. The popular participatory approach to development has received the endorsement of the Conference of Ministers of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the OAU Council of Ministers and the OAU Summit of African Heads of State and Government. It also received the appreciation of the United Nations General Assembly as noted in its resolution 45/187(c).

On the practical side, popular participatory approach to development has been applied in different variations throughout the world and the results of most of these country applications have demonstrated that democratization poises

societies for faster, relevant and sustainable growth since it empowers them to act without fear, permits the decentralization of power and authority and enables them to choose from among available alternative courses of action in the solution of their developmental problems. Instead of being inactive waiters for development hand-outs from what may be in insensitive central administration, people become the conceivers, designers and actuators of development programmes with relevance to their needs. Participation, therefore, removes dependency on the central government, creates a pool of local expertise and fosters learning-through-experience. Indeed, as participants in the changing of their own environment, the people themselves must develop with the changes.

While economic growth has traditionally been seen as synonymous with economic development, it is not necessarily so. For Africa, "development" has entailed the accumulation of wealth by a privileged few while the majority of society remain abjectly poor. Popular participation in the conception, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development programmes is seen here as a strategy for the real development of the people and the canalization of their energy, creativity and endeavour - in an enabling atmosphere - for improving themselves as individuals and as communities for the benefit of each nation at large. *People must be put first!*

The worsening of Africa's economic performance, particularly since the early nineteen-eighties, and the continent's failure to design remedial programmes for its economic recovery and sustainable growth, lead to the belief that an innovative approach to development, such as the participatory approach to development administration and management be adopted for therein, lies the hope that given

the necessary enabling atmosphere - legal, political, administrative, structural, financial, educational and technical support, etc. - people can do things for themselves to remedy their socio-economic hardships as existing evidence from the experiences of various countries over the last three decades attests. Accordingly, this paper discusses and proposes public administration and management innovations that foster increased popular participation in the design and implementation of national development programmes for faster growth.

Colonial administrations, particularly those that had been set up in Africa, have unceasingly been the targets for blame for the many political, social and economic ills that have beset the continent since independence. The blames for the continent's persistent economic underdevelopment include a list ranging from the lack of trained personnel, deficiencies in Africa's inherited administrative structures, the marginalization of African traditions and disregard for its cultures, to the insufficiency of technical support for the alleviation of poverty in its multifarious dimensions and accusations of interference in the internal political affairs of African sovereign states. While there is certainly much truth in most of these accusations, it is inexcusable for African countries to accept and continue to believe that on their own they cannot initiate change for the alleviation of poverty, the promotion of internal political stability, and bring about conditions for fast economic recovery and sustainable growth.

Ironically, the African cry for political independence in the 1950s and 1960s and the attainment of such independence was intended, primarily, to reverse the then prevailing colonial philosophy. With the acquisition of the tools of government, together with the power of decision-making that goes with them, Africans could certainly and legitimately

address the issues of socio-economic development for the betterment of their societies.

Nearly thirty years (in some cases more and less in others) of experience in self- government have passed since independence. Matters have not been easy, however. Although indicators showed that the immediate post-independence era experienced some economic growth, particularly in agriculture, African governments still did not clearly grasp the intricate nature of their development problems in order to devise rational means of resolving them. These problems ranged from the adoption of political ideologies consonant with the sentiments of the people to the establishment of appropriate administrative and institutional machineries which would translate those ideologies, developmentally, into reality.

Nonetheless, African governments undertook to speed up the process of social and economic integration and development. Accordingly, and for the sake of facility, they placed, under their administrative control, the functions of the planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all development programmes in a centralist manner. However, all these activities were carried out, almost invariably, without consulting the beneficiaries or giving due regard to their real needs, in preference for visible projects like dams, roads and bridges, factories, power stations, etc. It is not that such visible projects were not necessary infrastructures, but that they lacked direct alleviatory relevance to prevalent hardships and immediacy in their impact on the improvement of the condition of the people, particularly the poor.

The predominance of the one party system which was initially necessitated by the need for unity in the fight against colonialism continued to persist. As time went on, however, its continuation proved to be more of a developmental liability

than an asset. The state became alarmingly indifferent to the people and the political process which originally grew around popular participation in the anti-colonial struggle was stifled. Party branches that were instrumental in mobilizing the people became harsh instruments of *demobilization*; and, as conditions of life worsened, the people were required to refrain from expressed protest under the false pretext that the maintenance of peace and order was the prerequisite for development and growth. Thus, the bulk of the population remained, and still remains, locked up into subsistence farming and women, who form the majority of the African population and of those working the land, continue to be marginalized. Diseases, malnutrition, mass illiteracy and, above all, general abject poverty, remain the condition of the lot.¹

Experience in Africa and elsewhere now shows that development can be speeded up when democratic principles hold sway since this entails the decentralization of decision-making to lower echelons of government, to non-governmental organizations and to the people at large. Democratization and decentralization also facilitate the instillation, public monitoring and reinforcement of political and public service discipline and relates development directly to the people through the open expression of views in debates on the choice and design of projects in a mutually consultative atmosphere.

Development is about people and should be designed with them in mind as its intention is to improve their life in general - through the provision of services in education and training, health, nutrition, economic wellbeing, cultural enhancement, the creation of opportunities for self-improvement, etc. and the provision of an atmosphere that is conducive to the smooth execution of all legitimate transactions.

The present cry for multi-partyism sweeping over Africa attests to the fact that African governments have not, so far, been successful in resolving the many problems that afflict the countries concerned. In essence, the cry is an attestation of the people's perceived illegitimacy of the governments of these countries in the face of ineffective development programmes and for democratization of their societies so that people can participate in the selection of who should lead and provide the necessary atmosphere for direct popular involvement in decisions over issues of interest and benefit to the citizenry at large. Of direct and urgent relevance are decisions for the fast reversal of their suffering and the design and implementation of development programmes that emanate from such decisions on a government/people consultative basis. The cry is also for the empowerment of the people in the decision-making process. The continuing economic decline (the Crisis), makes it even more urgent that African governments rethink and redesign their political and administrative strategies in order to regain their legitimacy, facilitate initiation of development strategies for sustainable growth. Indeed the Africa-specific **African Charter for Popular Participation in Development** and the **Khartoum Declaration** on the human dimension of Africa's persistent economic crisis focus on the requisite conditions that will enable "the people of Africa" to play their rightful pivotal role in reversing the economic crisis now engulfing their continent. These two documents are to be seen as supplements to other human rights conventions and charters, notably the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the ILO Convention No. 87 concerning Freedom of Association and the Protection of the Right to Organize and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, to name only a few conventions and charters which the majority of African governments have already ratified.

This publication discusses the concepts of democratic governance and the empowerment of the people, public service and political leadership accountability, responsiveness to popular demand for participation in matters affecting the wellbeing of the governed, decentralization of the decision-making process, administrative and institutional arrangements for fostering popular participation in the design and implementation of development programmes, and the significance of people/government consultations on matters of national interest. It also attempts to analyze these issues on the basis of the experiences of some selected countries in and outside Africa, what these experiences suggest for Africa and what, by way of policy recommendations, can be done to foster change for fast and sustainable growth and development.

The publication is presented in the following order: **Part II** discusses the concept of popular participation as a development strategy, its costs and benefits and what is required for its institution for social and economic development and growth. **Part III** then reviews historical and current African administrative and institutional arrangements as they impact upon attempts at introducing popular participation programmes; **Part IV** explores the behavioural and institutional changes necessary for the introduction and support of the popular participatory approach to development while **Part V** is the conclusion summarising the essence of the publication in the light of the discussions covered. **Part VI** makes recommendations for the establishment of innovative public administration and management structures, processes and practices for the enhancement of popular participation in the design and implementation of national development programmes.

II POPULAR PARTICIPATION AS A DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

Popular participation in the design and implementation of development programmes, as a concept, is not new. There is sufficient literature to attest to the fact that it has been tried in various forms and in different countries, from several decades back, and with varying results. The lessons learned from those experiences, however, reveal that popular participation as a development strategy is a very potent tool. It makes development programmes and projects relevant to the societies affected, facilitates project acceptability and promotes speedy programme implementation at low cost levels.² These dimensions of relevance, speed, acceptability and cost are of crucial importance to Africa now, as the continent strives to avert the economic crisis it is currently going through. A review of 57 World Bank-assisted projects came to the conclusion that projects that ignored people-related factors registered disappointing results while those (37) that incorporated such factors were more successful.³

As a concept, popular participation may be considered as the active (as opposed to the passive) and meaningful involvement of the masses in the decision-making process for the determination of societal goals and the allocation of resources to achieve those goals. It may be direct as when views are expressed openly to those empowered to hear them, indirect as through mass demonstrations against particular policies, or expressed through boycotts of goods or services that are not acceptable, or in elections. Effective popular participation must, of necessity, relate to those sections of the masses who are directly affected, such as communities or groups, e.g. co-operatives, employees of a particular industry, councils, artisan or professional societies, associations, villages, etc.

Popular participation in decision-making is effective when it is exercised through established institutional arrangements. It is part of the rules, behaviours, structures and processes, formal and informal, that the external environment of the administrative system assigns to its internal environment instrumentally so as to enhance the likelihood of the system performing and achieving the policy goals.

"It is a creation of the internal environment of the society; its nature and chances of success depend on consideration of policy in the external environment of the administrative system. To the extent that a commitment to popular participation emerges, it is the result of force that the administrative system does not control, but, rather, by which it is shaped. The structures, processes and behaviour of a country's administrative system are derived from, and dependent on, basic causal factors which include ideology, social class mobilization, economic forces, political imperatives and commitments, and the society's technological level (including availability of trained manpower)."¹⁴

The colonial public service was not tuned to responsiveness to the needs of the masses and the administrative institutions in place could not adequately cater for the development requirements of the new governments. Due to the urgent need to develop their countries in the face

of these constraints, African governments took upon themselves the centralization of all development initiatives from conception and planning, through designing, programming, implementation, monitoring to evaluation. From this point on, the initial legitimacy which they earned during the struggle for independence was soon being misused and any expressed misgivings about the advisability of some development programmes, their nature and project location, were construed as "anti-development" and, thus, worthy of stifling.

One may surmise from the above that popular participation in decision-making on developmental issues has yet to be "pushed". It is, however, evident that the "push" has already started as seen from the current wave of demands for multi-partyism sweeping over the continent. The *second* "wind of change" is blowing over Africa and, like MacMillan's *first* "wind of change" it is unstoppable until the demands are met. African governments, therefore, stand to gain from these movements if they, as a matter of prudence, re-establish their legitimacy by heeding these demands for freedom and democracy and by canalizing the manifest cries against popular "disparticipation" into directed, committed, active and positive participation for the social and economic development of the continent.

"We strongly believe that popular participation is dependent on the nature of the State itself and the ability of Government to respond to popular demand. Since African Governments have a critical role to play in the promotion of popular participation, they have to yield space to the people, without which, popular participation will be difficult

to achieve....We believe that for people to participate meaningfully in their self-development, their freedom to express themselves and their freedom from fear must be guaranteed. This can only be assured through the extension and protection of people's basic human rights and we urge all Governments to vigorously implement the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the ILO Convention No. 87 concerning Freedom of Association and the Protection of the Right to Organize and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women."
(The African Charter)⁵

Popular participation as a development strategy entails the empowerment, by the government, of the people to take part in decision-making on societal issues of importance and acceptance of those decisions for the promotion of change. It thrives in an atmosphere that is legally, politically and financially supportive and does not stifle the expression of new ideas, however controversial or unreasonable - "even the fool has his story to tell!" It facilitates voluntary expenditure of personal resources, time and even physical effort. It, however, requires behavioural and operational changes in people, whatever their station in life and function in society may be. Furthermore, for popular participation to be effective, it requires that the active participation of the poor at the

grassroots level be protected by the government against the intimidation of the local rich and politically powerful.⁶ Since popular participation involves weaving development around people, it has, thus, to be perceived as a mechanism for the *development of the people, by the people, for the people*.

Development of the People

Governments must invest in education, health and social well-being. With guaranteed political freedom, people can play a constructive role in the positive development of their economic, social and political conditions (Japan, Singapore and the Republic of Korea did this).

Development by the People

Through the creation of appropriate structures of decision-making, people must participate fully in the design and implementation of development strategies for the betterment of their lives. With sufficient opportunities for income and employment growth, human capabilities can properly be used and people's creativity given its full expression.

Development for the People

Development must satisfy everyone's needs without discrimination; it should provide opportunity choices for all and should not be done in a manner that mortgages the choices of future generations - i.e. it must be sustainable.⁷

For African countries, most of which are operating on a highly centralised basis, the adoption of popular participation as a development strategy must acknowledge the fact that there are tremendous adjustment costs involved - attitudinal, financial, additional personnel, training, and changes in

operational procedures. These costs, notwithstanding, the benefits far outweigh the costs and are of a sustaining nature. Furthermore, the strategy requires that decision be arrived at on a constant people/government consultative relationship, that power and authority be decentralised from the central government and that operations and personnel acting at all levels of the programme institutions set in place for the purpose be subject to a high level of ethical standards.

This **Part** reviews the elements of costs and benefits of the popular participatory approach to development and decentralization of power and authority while the other elements, for the sake of avoiding repetition, are covered extensively in **Part IV: Enhancement of Popular Participation in Project Design and Implementation: An Innovative Approach**.

Costs and Benefits of Popular Participation as a Development Strategy

Change, any fundamental change, has its accompanying costs. The longer the expected results of the change, the higher may be the costs in the short-term. A change for the development of popular participation for meaningful social and economic development of a society also has its costs considering that what is required of African Governments, their administrations and the people in this adjustment is fundamental.

Centralized as most African Government decision-making institutions are, these costs include loss, on the part of political leaders, of some of their decision-making power and influence; conflict between the decisions of the government and the people; implementation rates that are slower than those planned by the government; high financial and human resources costs; possible interference by self-motivated local

community leaders and absence of a blueprint to follow with a high possibility of failure.

The benefits, however, far outweigh the costs for the reasons which include the fact that popular participation in the design and implementation of national development programmes fosters validation of the premises upon which programmes and projects are designed; it facilitates speed in arriving at decisions on project issues; increases local expertise through training and experience; increases local participation; increases motivation of local participants; increases the accuracy of information and project relevance; reduces social and economic dependency; reduces rural/urban flight of young talent; and increases people's understanding, acceptance and support of projects.

As already stated, indications are that Africa cannot extricate herself from its present growing underdevelopment without "putting the people first". As Arigbede notes,

"Popular participation is the very essence of human communities. Without doubt, one of the main advantages of aggregation into communities is the creation of the most appropriate conditions for 'progress' or development for human beings....Development is not merely a transformation of structures and material attributes of society. More profoundly, in order for development to be authentic and sustainable, the human beings who transform their physical environment must also transform themselves in the

process...it is based on the acknowledgement of the vitality of micro-organizations formed by the people in their daily efforts at survival and the importance of building the nation up from these popular organizations...In a nutshell, therefore, popular participation (in development) is not a luxury which a state may or may not indulge in. It is the very pre-condition for real development for all peoples..¹⁸

Colombia - Participating in Success

"The Carvajal Foundation, a Colombian NGO, is active in what was the largest slum of Cali, a settlement of 300,000 inhabitants called Aguablanca.

The foundation emphasises the value of learning for advancing the poor. Learning is applied to the daily needs of the poor-health, housing, credit, education and simple skills of running a small business-and it is participatory.

Its method is dialogue between teachers, technicians and beneficiaries. Based on this dialogue, manuals are written and illustrated in ways that have 'practical

meaning to the poor and grow out of their experience and needs.

When the foundation began its work 13 years ago, Aguablanca was the most crime-ridden area in Cali. Today, it is reported to be the least crime-ridden. The results of its teaching programme, built on interaction between teachers and the taught, has transformed hopeless and helpless migrants to the city into self-confident and alert micro-entrepreneurs. They get credit only after they have attended courses in bookkeeping and simple cost-accounting, but what they learn often contributes to the success of the businesses so that borrowing is unnecessary.

The foundation shows that participatory forms of practical education can be very successful and that credit does not always have to precede education.¹⁸

West Africa - The Six-S movement

"In Burkina Faso, there has been a long tradition of mutual cooperation and community work among the youth groups of the Mossi people. Building on this community spirit and with the assistance of some European organizers, some of

these groups formed a movement in 1976 called *Se servir de la saison seche en savane et au Sahel (Six-S)*. Their main concern was to address the problem of high unemployment during the long dry season.

These community groups have now developed into the largest people's self-development movement in Africa - having more than 2,000 groups, with an average of 50 participants in each group. The movement has now spread to Senegal, Mali and Mauritania and similar initiatives are being taken in Niger and Chad.

Six-S promotes a range of efforts - income generating activities, such as vegetable gardening, and activities of communal benefit, such as constructing dams, afforestation, and primary health care and education. It provides credit to partially support these activities and is in turn funded by members and from external sources."¹⁰

Malawi - Rural pipe water scheme

"In Malawi, there is a very successful community self-help rural water scheme, based on

*strong government/community cooperation. Started in 1979 in two villages with 3,000 participants, the programme now benefits more than one million villagers. District development committees, composed of local traditional leaders and technical personnel, serve as the channel for requests for piped water and they assist in the design. The Government, on its part, provides equipment and assistance in training. The community provides voluntary labour and maintenance."*¹¹

The responsibility for the provision of potable water for all in Malawi by the year 2000 rests in the Central Government. The enormity of the problem, however, was such that it would be impossible to meet the target if the Government went it alone than if the people themselves provided the most costly part of the project - labour, on a self-help basis which they did as the ultimate beneficiaries of the project. The people participated fully in the design of the pipelines, and provided labour by digging the trenches and transportation of materials (pipes and taps) from locally situated warehouses to the work sites. They are also eventually responsible for the maintenance of the system. So far, all parts of the water system as had been put into operation are still working well.

Unless there is extensive damage to the piping system, requiring correction by the central government water authority, all repairs are carried out by the community. Supplies of spare taps and washers are, upon completion of an extension of the project into a locality, issued to the traditional village headmen

of that area who issue them to trained local technicians for repairs as may be necessary and after the village headmen's personal inspection and satisfaction that repairs are indeed required. Such repairs are carried out as a voluntary contribution to the community.

The problem as identified by the local people in consultation with Government through their District and Local Development Committees was the scarcity of potable water in the areas surrounding, but distant from, the mountains with perennial spring water. However, during the dry season, the water disappeared below river beds as soon as it left the mountains. Consequently, women had to walk long distances to fetch water from widely-spaced wells.

The strategy adopted for the resolution of this problem was that the Central Government, again in consultation with District and Local Development Committees, would dam the water heads in the mountains and provide pipes, taps and training for the laying and maintenance of the distribution network. The people were to provide the necessary labour. Densely populated as most of Malawi is, and in view of the problems experienced by the women folk, it was not difficult to get the people's support for the project and labour requirements for it. The project created tremendous enthusiasm, consultation with local leaders and residents determined the areas to be served and participation was spontaneous.

In this project, the Government of Malawi devolved to the Local Development Committees in the areas covered by the project - through their District Development Committees - all aspects of planning, designing and implementing the project except the supply of piping materials, their transportation to the main warehouse in the area, training of technical staff and the eventual evaluation of the success achieved.

These representative examples clearly demonstrate that most community development programmes are successful if they contribute to local level initiatives, or if they are at least consultatively planned and run with the participation of the beneficiaries from the outset. The level of decision-making, the kinds of organization and the forms of finance may, however, vary from case to case. Nevertheless, when people are involved in decision-making, policies and projects tend to be more realistic; and, if they have a sense of ownership, they are more willing to volunteer a contribution. Furthermore, the social distance inherent in local people/government representative relations creates a communication block so that government officials are more likely to be ignored by local people in matters relating to development. However, when development initiatives are seen as coming from local leaders whom they traditionally respect and endear and are members of their suffering group, there is a great likelihood that poor people will listen to them and the ideas they promulgate.

Decentralization

"Decentralization" is now a popular term in both academic and administrative circles. The African economic decline of the 1980s ushered in, so to say, a rebirth of the debate regarding the practical importance of this term. *Decentralization* may be defined as the dispersal, by the central government, of power, authority and responsibility of functions for political and economic decision-making in planning, implementation and management (together with the accountability that goes with these) to the lower echelons of the central government, local government, public enterprises, NGOs and other local community groupings in the country. The dispersal may take the form of deconcentration, devolution, delegation or transfer or a permutation of these. (see Table 1).

Table 1
Central Government Decentralization Mechanism and Processes

| Deconcentration | Transfer | Delegation | Devolution |
|---|--|---|---|
| Establishment of field offices of the central government ministries and departments with or without powers, authority and duties identical with those of headquarters of the central government | Transfer of some central government functions on an <u>ad hoc</u> basis to local NGOs or local community organizations | Of specific responsibilities of the central government institutions to locally-based state enterprises or private sector agencies | Effective delegation of power, authority and accountability for decision-making on local development issues to local development groups |

Source: This Table is adapted from a Table in ECA document, ECA/PHSD/PAM/91/INF.2.

The pervasive existence of centralised government power and authority for development is for several reasons, among which are:

- A narrow perception of government's role in society as being limited to the maintenance of law and order and the collection of revenues. This colonial legacy has been a significant impediment to decentralisation efforts in many African countries;
- The necessity to build nation-states out of sometimes fragmented land areas and the colonial disorientation of the local people's concept of development;

- The daunting challenges of rehabilitating the populations and providing a hitherto deprived population with the social infrastructure required as a minimum for socio-economic development. The colonial deprivation of the indigenous populations made it incumbent upon the central governments of independent African countries to provide social facilities, right from the start, from national resources that had all but been ruthlessly exploited without regard to the future development needs of the countries;
- The distorted view of development and the consequential transplantation of less-understood development growth models from former colonial countries, without regard to available resources and existing cultural realities, compelled central governments to be the only agents of planning and negotiations with foreign planners in all sectoral development activities. In essence, there was no participation of the local level populations who should have been development planning partners with the central government.
- The narrow financial resources base at both the national and local levels makes it difficult for local community units to raise enough funds for local development and also difficult for the central government to provide supplementary funds to these units. Under these circumstances, central governments have become reluctant to decentralise.¹²

The concern with decentralization in this publication is founded on the search for alternative strategies for the faster development of a continent in economic turmoil. Its increasing advocacy by governments world-wide and students of development administration is based on the fact that its application has been found to improve planning and implementation of development

programmes and projects. It contributes to fostering participation, not only by making for the democratization of society, but also because it makes programmes relevant to local needs and engenders project recipients' commitment and acceptance. It fosters administrative efficiency since decisions are made and acted upon, as needs and problems arise, without reference to headquarters and encourages inter-sectoral co-ordination at the regional and local levels - thereby rendering project planning more integrated.

Most of the reasons cited above for centralization have been responsible for the slow rate of implementation of the decentralization process. Nevertheless, decentralization of power and authority can be an effective strategy for local- and national-level development on the following grounds:

- With the expansion of the populations and their rising demands on the economies for more goods and services, relatively independent local groupings can undertake specific functions at their level with greater flexibility and speed in the interest of development;
- The decentralization of both spending and revenue mobilization processes can improve the allocation of resources in the public sector since local unit officials and the population at large would link the problem of costs with the benefits of public services and, thus, lend more realism into the development aspirations and demands of the people.
- Local values, resources and cultural dimensions of decision-making are rarely, if at all, uniformly structured in any country. While national public policies and development plans deal essentially with quantitative aggregates, the decentralization of power and authority entails the translation of these aggregates and their adaptation to local cultural realities which may bring about the design of development activities based on the value system and resource limitations of each local area. The

traditional practices of self-help and voluntary service can be reactivated and redirected into this endemic grassroots development culture.

- Decentralization leads to administrative simplicity and efficiency at the central government level and also stimulates the evolution of managerial and technical capabilities at the local level, for the planning and implementation of relevant local development projects.
- Projects intended to reach the rural poor or to alleviate mass poverty can be more effective if they are handled at the local level. Experience indicates that relief funds intended for the poor in a particular area, for instance, will reach the target groups more effectively through local institutions and groupings than through the central government Ministries or Departments.¹³

The implementation and management of decentralization is a complex matter and there is no blueprint that can readily be followed for this purpose. Careful planning and assiduous implementation can, however, reduce problems, some of which are:

Insufficient Decentralization

The most obvious example in this category is when decentralization is restricted to operational functions only at the exclusion of the control over the personnel and financial aspects of the decentralization process. This problem usually has design and conceptual origins and the symptoms include ambiguity and uncertainty as to which functions and types of authority have actually been decentralized.

Failure to Achieve Decentralization and Undesirable Side-effects

Decentralization programmes sometimes do not achieve their intended objectives or give rise to side-effects which were not anticipated. These are difficult to quantify and impossible to evaluate. It will, however, be useful to take note of the following sample of the most recurrent side-effects experienced upon introduction of decentralization programmes.

Side-effects that are really not genuine are those that were, by design, intended to occur but were not explicitly stated at the design stage. The Zambian example in which decisions made at the local level have to be confirmed at headquarters before further action is taken falls in this category.

Side-effects caused by disruption during organizational changes are related to the confusion that arises during the organizational and procedural adjustment period. They should normally be temporary in duration but may, nevertheless, create organizational inefficiencies. It was for this reason that Botswana and Kenya advocated and adopted slow and well organized implementation schemes of decentralization.

Real side-effects are those that are genuinely not intended or whose extent could not be foreseen. They emanate from the decentralization system of administration itself rather than during the process of introducing it. These include the additional expenses required for personnel recruitment, transfers, equipment procurement, training, etc. especially for locations away from headquarters.

When all these aspects are taken into consideration at the outset, the way to decentralization can be smoother than would otherwise be the case. The following examples demonstrate this dimension:

Papua New Guinea: Decentralization of the health workforce
"Papua New Guinea decentralized a wide range of health functions to provincial governments between 1977

and 1983. The national Department of Health (DOH) was given no role in provincial budget and staffing decisions, and the national health budget was fragmented into the health components of provincial budgets. The impact of decentralization on health workforce development was particularly severe and largely unforeseen. Many difficulties were inherent in the manner in which decentralized regulations structured power relationships. Others arose as a result of the administrative and inflamed relationships that accompanied the forceful transfer of power from a very reluctant national DOH to the provinces. Even though policy formulation and planning were retained as national functions, decentralization hampered their effective execution. Human resource data bases deteriorated, responsibility for planning decisions was compromised. In reality, health work planning was carried out by the Departments of Finance and Planning and Personnel Management through the annual budgetary process of provincial financial limits and staff ceilings without any attempt to assess health service needs, either in the country as a whole or between the provinces. Decentralization brought a need for new management skills, and it complicated administrative relationships between training institutions and the provinces."¹⁴

The problems that arose in the decentralization of the health workforce in Papua New Guinea are of an unforeseen nature and clearly emanate from planning defects. These include the absence of administrative and consultative linkages between the provincial and national health administrations and between relevant departments and DOH at the national level. They also highlight the lack of national co-ordination of the health services requirements. Since the medical training institutions of the country are located in the provinces, arrangements should have been put in place for DOH to be the planning institution for meeting both national and provincial staffing requirements.

Moreover, the problems inherent in the absence of a clear definition of the roles of DOH and the provincial medical authorities surfaced in the deteriorating inter-level relationships.

Rural Banks in Ghana

"Ghana's rural banks, supervised by the central bank, serve areas that other financial institutions ignore. There are 106 such banks - independent and run by the community - providing places to save and to make loans, principally to small farmers and owners of cottage industries. Growth has been rapid - from 148,000 cedis in 1977 to 863 million cedis in June 1985, and from 802 savings account holders in 1977 to 221,000 at the end of 1984.

This growth shows that rural peasants and village dwellers will save if they have confidence in the bank, find it convenient and have ready access to their savings.

Since their start, the banks have lent 554 million cedis, almost all from local savings, with loans averaging 12,000 to 18,000 cedis (US \$200 - 300 at the

1985 exchange rate). By the end of 1984, there were 32,000 borrowers.

The potential for savings in rural Ghana is considerable. Local savings represent well over 90% of the loan fund from the first year of operation.¹⁵

What accounts for this success?

The success of the Ghana experiment in the decentralization of the banking system in so far as rural banks are concerned is based on the following factors:

- mobilizing local initiative is vital. The directors of the banks are local leaders committed to their community's development. In each community, a broad base of community members are shareholders.
- funds mobilized locally are utilized locally, in sharp contrast to many banks that funnel rural savings to the cities.
- loan approvals are based on the producer's reputation in the community, not on abstract guidelines and collateral requirements that eliminate most potential borrowers. The owners of the smallest farms and smallest businesses are the best candidates for loans.
- administrative costs are kept low by using simple and standard procedures and recruiting staff from the community.¹⁶

By establishing rural banks and allowing them to operate on principles that are significantly divergent from traditional commercial banking practice, the Government of Ghana, through its Ministry of

Finance and the Central Bank, effectively devolved decision-making power and authority (as well as the accountability aspects of it), including the mobilization and application of financial and human resources, to the local communities which had, themselves, shown their need for access to banking services under conditions they could understand and afford. The waiver of traditional collateral requirements for loans exemplifies decentralisation of policy-making to the level of the rural banks themselves. It also provides an example of the bank's appreciation of the significance of local peer group pressure (to pay) on defaulters - a cultural trait which city banks would not even consider.

In spite of this devolutionary decentralization, however, the Central Bank remains linked to the rural banks through its advisory role, mainly to ensure that funds, held in trust for depositors continued to be secure and that they were properly managed. The high rate of growth of these rural banks provides a measure of acceptability of the banks in their localities as does the extent of participation by the host communities.

In the Ghana example, monitoring is done through the Central Bank of Ghana through its supervisory role. This connection is important for strategic reviews in the event that the approaches were short in certain aspects. The Papua New Guinea example, however, demonstrates the necessity to provide for the avoidance of as many conceivable problems as possible at the time of planning and designing decentralization programmes - which was not done in this case.

The District Focus Approach to rural development (Kenya) ¹⁷

The District Focus Approach (DFA) to development was launched by the Kenya Government in 1983 and was organised along the following lines:

There was created a District Development Committee (DDC) in each district charged with the

responsibility of implementing DFA. The DDC plans and co-ordinates all district development work , approves projects and establishes priorities. The District Commissioner, a central government representative for district administrative functions, is the chairman of the committee.

The membership of each DDC is made up of district representatives of ministries and department heads, Members of Parliament, District party (KANU) chairman, Chairman and Clerk of local authority, Chairmen of Divisional Committees (district officers from the provincial administration), representatives of parastatal bodies, NGOs and self-help groups - the last only attending on invitation.

The DDC executive committee is made up of the District Commissioner, District Development Officer, Departmental Heads of all Ministries represented in the district, Clerks of local authorities, and representatives of development-oriented parastatals.

There is a Divisional and Locational Development Committee at the lower end of the arrangement and a District Planning Committee in place headed by the District Development Officer.

The responsibilities for development projects are shared between national headquarters and the district staff in the sense that district staff handle

district-specific projects while those affecting more than one district, e.g. provincial hospitals are handled by the headquarters.

Funding of district-specific projects is from three sources, namely, sectoral ministries, Rural Development Fund and fixed grants from the Treasury. No authority has been given to District Commissioners or local authorities to impose taxes for the financing of district projects.

In their analysis of Kenya's DFA, Chitere and Monya find DFA defective in several ways. Some of the defects cited include the fact that in spite of the intentions of the Approach to decentralize rural development administration to the districts, Provincial Commissioners have assumed a decisive role of the planning, implementation and co-ordination of district projects. As principally law and order officers, their approach tends to be authoritarian and their operating style centralized. Moreover, other members of DDCs - are mostly generalists and not development-oriented; the allocation of resources is centrally controlled, which allocative controls entail control of other related aspects of project implementation.

Apart from taking development to the people themselves, DFA was also intended to increase the participatory role of the project communities who were expected to highlight their needs for project relevance. As it has turned out, the membership of committees that include personalities in the form of Members of Parliament and Chairmen of the Party has led to decisions being made to foster patron/client and civil servant/politician relationships at the expense of people's meaningful participation. The social distance between the ordinary people and the politicians and civil servants does not augur well for the full involvement of the people in the decision-making process. Thus the management and processes in place were not planned, albeit unintentionally, in

consonance with the principles of effective decentralization of the devolutionary order.

The formulation of DFA structures did not give any role to the local authorities in the project implementation process although they were represented on DDCs and, as the authorities closest to the project beneficiaries, should have featured highly at the implementation level. Moreover, the absence of power and authority to raise financial resources at the district level did not make matters any easier for the work of DDCs.

The implications of the current design of the approach are that DFA may not achieve its original intentions unless decentralization takes the form of substantially more devolution in its structures and procedures and involves local institutions and, through the people themselves at the initial stage of project identification and formulation, rather than only bring them in at the implementation stage.

III A REVIEW OF AFRICAN ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

In reviewing African administrative and institutional arrangements as they impact on attempts to introduce popular participation as a development strategy, it becomes necessary to outline briefly how African administrative institutions and practices got where they are now and how their establishments have posed hurdles that appear difficult to surmount.

To start with, colonial administration, particularly in British Africa, was one in which popular participation in decision-making had, by design, no place; unquestioning compliance with governmental policies or punishment was the lot of the administered.¹⁸ The absence of democratic principles in development relations between the government and the people contributed significantly to the psychological problems encountered by new African governments in this regard. Moreover, the colonial officers that were sent to manage African colonies were of very low calibre; they were junior, amateur, of mediocre ability who were favourably disposed to "muddling through"¹⁹ and were mostly appointed through political patronage to Downing Street. This was in contrast to those that joined the Indian Civil Service who could only do so after passing stringent competitive examinations.²⁰ As Chamberlain lamented:

*"We take inferior men for West Africa
and they are not good enough for
other Colonies."*²¹

The administrative structures that these inferior officers created in Africa could, therefore, not be expected to be anything but inadequate for the fostering of all-round development of the colonies they were intrusted to administer. If anything at all, they sowed the seeds of incompetence and unresourcefulness in public administration and management which African states subsequently took over on independence.

Much as the attainment of political independence was expected to re-direct the anti-colonial fervour so generated into productive activities for the social and economic development and transformation of the masses, this turned out not to be. To start with, political independence was won through negotiation and African leaders were accordingly manipulated into accommodating positions: they backtracked on their original positions and were immediately calling for peace and calm, law and order - not to mention reconciliation. They then entrenched their political power and privileges, became more parasitic and ensured the polarization of society at large under the pretext that the task of social cohesion and control must, of necessity, be exercised by the state. The one-party system, adopted by many African countries, was particularly successful in this regard.

The apparent unreadiness of African governments to adopt innovative development formulae in the direction of involving the masses is, therefore, a clear manifestation of inherited colonial legacies of centralized control and marginalisation of the people. The uncertainty as to how a society used to strong central leadership could be expected to assume undirected responsibilities in the very important tasks of forging national cohesion and socio-economic development, and the absence of clear-cut guidelines to follow in any attempt to introduce and implement development programmes involving the popular participation of the people and their organizations compounded these problems even more.

In spite of these constraints, however, African Governments rightly recognised that the administrative machinery was the only available vehicle, at the time, for the serious conceptualization, planning, administration, management and implementation of significant development strategies of a new order. Without sufficient numbers of qualified indigenous administrators (except for West Africa, notably Nigeria and Ghana, which, at independence, had over 50% of the senior posts occupied by nationals as opposed to Southern African countries with less than 15%), African governments attacked the manpower problem on two fronts: the indigenization of the public service with those that were already in the service, including the retention of some colonial officers in identified key

"advisory" positions, and through the mass education and training of young men and women under scholarship programmes like the African Scholarship Programme to American Universities (ASPAU) and the British Council scholarship arrangements, to name only two.

The process of "indigenization" entailed the promotion of nationals into senior decision-making positions vacated by the departing colonial officers based mostly on seniority or political patronage rather than on merit, competence, intellectual brilliance and resourcefulness. Those that followed were promoted so rapidly that they could also only continue with "muddling through". This has had, and continues to have, serious adverse consequences in terms of the quality of performance of African public services.

Having established what they (African governments) conceived then as appropriate institutions from which to start, economic planning was set in place. Haphazard though it was, there were indications that such planning was taking effect: agricultural production went up, schools, hospitals and roads were built, and programmes of industrialization were introduced. Traditional indicators for economic development were registering positive figures until about 1980 when the trend shifted downwards, mainly due to the recession followed by the slow recovery of the economies of the industrial north. Africa's real earnings from its primary exports to those countries dropped significantly. Drought, famine, wars and the debt burden then set in to exacerbate Africa's economic problems.²²

The present state of African public administration and management, riddled as it is, with incompetence, unethical behaviour (including open corruption), "organizational arteriosclerosis", self-aggrandizement, insensitivity to popular demands and unquestioning loyalty to political dictates can hardly be considered the type that should be entrusted, unchanged, with the affairs of government of the fast-approaching twenty-first century. In 1986, the Economic Commission for Africa projected that by the year 2008, the continent would have more than double its population size, the rate of urbanisation, school and college enrolment²³ By the date of the forecast, Africa was already

experiencing drastic falls in its share of world GDP, and its foreign debt was rising - all this in the face of existent mass starvation, illiteracy, malnutrition and political strife among its many social, economic and political maladies.²⁴

In order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of African public administration to redress, successfully, the issues that continue to afflict the continent, there are now strong arguments for the professionalization of public administration on grounds that are discussed later, and to inculcate new attitudes and ways of doing things in development administration. Those that argue against it, notably Spann and Curnow²⁵, contend that public administration does not clearly satisfy the criteria that must be met for any discipline to be a profession, namely: specificity of expertise, higher qualifications, self-education, ethical self-sustenance, fiduciary relation, colleague control and recognition. Waldo further argues that the claim of public administration to science is "with respect to substance, premature, and with respect to method, immature or erroneous; that the 'principles' which were the issue of the science were at best summary statements of commonsense; that economy and efficiency as goals or criteria were either too narrowly conceived or were misconceived; and that the separation between politics and administration is arbitrary or false and must be abandoned or thought through on new terms."²⁶ It is, however, now recognised that, public administration is a multi-disciplinary study covering all conceivable aspects of government business.²⁷

These objections notwithstanding, it is evident from the above that a professional is one who has deep fundamental knowledge of, and practice in, the subject matter of his discipline, has acquired higher qualifications and persistently plays a role in the advancement of the body of knowledge and techniques of its application through self-education and research. He subscribes to a code of conduct prescribed by his professional body as a condition of membership of that body, wields absolute confidence from those he serves through his integrity and ability, is subject to censure by his professional body in the event of misconduct, and the professional body itself is recognised as such by its members and by outsiders.²⁸

The idea of professionalizing the African public service conjures up some fears among decision-makers that specialists in administration would tend to be insular, narrow-minded and problem-oriented and would not, therefore, see the full breadth of problems at hand; that their required long periods of training and exercise would factor in their unsuitability for mobility from one occupation to another; and that the emphasis on depth, rather than on breadth, in their training would weaken the cohesive function of the generalist -thereby exacerbating socio-economic disintegrative tendencies in the public service. On closer consideration, however, there would appear to be no basis for long-term fears in this respect. The generalist has already proved incapable of rational and independent decision-making. By encouraging specialization, rationality and objectivity, by being people- and problem-oriented and adherent to professional behavioural codes of conduct, the professionalization of African public administration can go a long way towards strengthening forces that foster cohesion.²⁹

IV ENHANCEMENT OF POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION: AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH

Popular participation as a development strategy can only operate with success in an enabling environment where, in practice, opinions are openly expressed, controversial views are tolerated, decisions are honoured, criticisms are an assured right and trusted and supportive legal, political and administrative structures are in place for the conception and implementation of programmes, channelling of information and sharing of experiences with other sections of society. Existing laws, administrative structures, political thinking, financial allocation policies, recruitment policies, personnel regulations and incentive systems, training priorities, and the roles of women and the youth must, therefore, be adjusted to align them with the requirements of popular participatory approach to development; if necessary, new ones should be established to meet this challenge.

Political and Legal Freedom

It is the commitment by, and the willingness of, political leaders in the promotion of popular participation, through the creation of an enabling political atmosphere, that makes popular participation as a development strategy possible. Political leaders should, therefore, be prepared to accept the consequences of popular participation in view of inevitable conflicts of views between the government on the one hand, and the various societal groups on the other. Any attempt to silence, by whatever means, the voice of a once-aroused citizenry may have disastrous consequences including direct confrontation between the government and the people.

Human development in all its aspects is intended to increase the range of free choices available to people and political freedom is, thus, a vital component of human development since it guarantees participation in planning and decision-making. In such a free atmosphere, people can organize society through consensus and consultation rather than be dictated to by some autocratic elites.

The components that constitute full political freedom within which people can operate for social and economic development include:

Personal Security

This involves freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention, freedom from torture or cruel treatment or punishment, arbitrary killings and disappearances;

Rule of Law

There must be fair and public hearings in the determination of criminal charges; competent, independent and impartial tribunals; access to competent and independent legal defense counsel; the right of appeal against judgement perceived as inequitable; and prosecution - without fear or favour - even of those in power or in sympathy with the political establishment when they offend the law. In so doing, the legal system is not undermined and there is respect of the law by all - irrespective of their status or station in life.

Freedom of Expression

The freedom of expression should be constitutionally based and be seen to operate without undue restriction in matters spoken, written, and broadcast.

Political Participation

People should have freedom of association, be able to vote freely and fairly in a society of openly competing choices, and decentralized decision-making.

Equality of Opportunity

People should be guaranteed equality under the law and not in reference to their gender, age, race, colour, descent, tribe,

religion, national or ethnic origin in all their political, social and economic transactions.³⁰

Need for Ethical Behaviour

Unethical behaviour in conduct of any description and in any societal circumstance has a deleterious effect on the administrative performance and economic and political development of society in that it numbs the sense of judgement and makes services more expensive than the economy should pay for them. Political and administrative personnel must, therefore, be held responsible, accountable and liable for their official decisions, actions or lack of either.

For being *responsible*, public officers have the authority to act, power to control, freedom to decide, the ability to distinguish (between what is right and what is wrong) and to behave rationally and reliably with consistency and reliability in their exercise of internal judgements. As *accountable* persons, they answer for their responsibilities, report, explain, give reasons, respond to, assume obligations, render a reckoning and submit to external judgement. Finally, they become *liable* for their actions (including lack of it) in that they assume the duty of making good, restore, compensate, and recompense for wrong doing or poor judgement. As actors in the name of the public, political and administrative personnel must answer for their actions to external bodies and be held morally and legally liable. Anything less than this will not be satisfactory to the public for whom they work.³¹

Unethical conduct includes, but is not necessarily limited to, bribery and corruption, patronage, nepotism, conflict of interest, influence peddling, seeking pleasure by using one's official position, favours to relatives and friends, moonlighting, divided loyalty, deliberate slowness, partiality, partisanship, absenteeism, insubordination, improper handling of public property, leaking or misuse of official information and engaging in unauthorized activities.³²

Unethical behaviour is seen, noted and publicly talked about by observers, but never by the actors or recipients of the act. Observers do not want to expose it for fear of possible retaliatory consequences since those that indulge in it are usually individuals with substantial power or influence in society. It is thus a silent and venomous culture of the underground.

In Africa, unethical behaviour is caused by several factors among which are:

"the high incidence of poverty which has lured many public office holders to seek bribes;

- *the emergence of the economic crisis which has intensified... efforts for personal survival at the expense of upholding official norms and the decline in real wages arising mostly from certain economic reform measures;*
- *high incidence of unemployment;*
- *lack of exemplary political leadership;*
- *pervasive and enlarged bureaucratic power (excessive bureaucratization);*
- *overcentralization and politicization of the public service and other forms of interference;*
- *the abolition, suspension or undermining of democratic institutions such as the legislature and the judiciary;*
- *lack of training in ethical behaviour and practice - external influences and*

interferences in public service management; and

- *lack of strategies to manage, change and incorporate desirable consequences of change."*³³

Attempts to curb unethical practices have to be designed to handle cases in a manner that undermines the culture itself and commensurately rewards those that expose it. "Experience with anti-corruption campaigns suggests that a severe penalty to a "big fish" is one way to subvert that culture. The big fish must be an important and publicly prominent figure, as well as one whose punishment cannot be interpreted as a political vendetta. For this last reason, it is best that the first big fish should come from the political party in power" (Klitgaard, 1991).³⁴

Responsiveness to popular needs and the significance of consultation

Development is about people and its conception and planning must see people as the central point of concern. This principle may not work, however, unless administrative reform permeates all levels from policy-making at the centre to implementation at the periphery (project location community). The concretization of concern for the people requires changes in the existing thinking of administrators. People should no longer be regarded as "the problem" or merely as the targets of benefits from benevolent planners in the capital city; rather, they should be seen as having a capacity to contribute to their own development. Thus, the forester, for example, should not see his duty as that of protecting a forest from the people that live around it, but that of working closely with such people in the preservation and management of the forest. This factor of consultation should be acknowledged and the participation of the people sought from project identification through its formulation, implementation and monitoring to its evaluation. After all, it is the ordinary people that have greater stakes in development than those outside agencies. This is one of the elements of popular participation in the design

and implementation of development programmes - the introduction of attitudinal changes in public servants so that they get project beneficiaries' full and committed acceptance and support of the projects.

If, indeed, development is to feature prominently among the responsibilities of the public bureaucracy, administrators should develop a "public service orientation" to the subject rather than continue to be burdened with the colonial legacies of paternalistic, technocratic, or even authoritarian, relations with the public.³⁵

Government plans tend to fail to fully serve the people because most of such plans are conceived and finally implemented without consultation with the beneficiaries or giving full consideration to the real needs of the people. This is particularly so when such plans are designed by urban dwellers for rural populations whose cultures and understanding of things are totally different from those of the former. As Salmen (1987) says,

"It is becoming clear that people-oriented development projects - whether in rural, urban, population, health, education or other sectors - can fail to realize their potential, or to sustain their achievements for lack of knowledge or understanding of the beneficiaries' concerns and the choices these people believe to be open to them."³⁶

Poor people spend most of their lives devising means of survival against hunger, disease, lack of water and fuel, children's education, clothing, etc. What they need are not periodic hand-outs; rather, what they need is to be told how they can, on their own, surmount these problems on a long-term basis. Through consultation, people will identify their most pressing needs that require immediate attention, after satisfying which, they can move on to the next and the next. Thus, consultation helps in the identification of pressing needs and the adoption of culturally-acceptable ways of project implementation; participation develops

the viewing of the success of projects as dependent on the community itself and the training gained through experience in the implementation process contributes significantly to confidence-building in the community, develops local expertise, establishes self-sustenance and eliminates the dependency syndrome in that people come to realize that they have the capability to do things for themselves when the atmosphere is supportive or non-inhibitive.

Administration and management

Except in a few countries, African administration has not significantly changed in terms of tradition but for the fact that it has tended to be more politicised than it was intended to be. Moreover, it has assumed more functions in its quest to address all emerging issues. Even where certain services are delivered to ultimate users, as in power generation and water supply, for example, through public enterprises, these institutions still have strong administrative ties with the central government in that the central government has to approve operating and other budgets, the recruitment of staff, investment proposals and other matters of an administrative and management nature. Far less changes have occurred in the attitudes of central government development administrators to the public which they are mandated to serve. In this regard, the sense of superiority still persists and attempts to break the habit have met resistance.

It, thus, becomes clear that attempts to improve public administration and management in readiness for the introduction of a programme of popular participatory approach to development must, of necessity, consider the reformation of the public administration and management system jointly with all other aspects of the programme.

When considering administrative reform measures, it should be borne in mind that unlike administrative reforms undertaken under the special commission approach, eg. the Mills-Udoji Commission (Ghana) and the Ndegwa Commission (Kenya) and the management services approach, both of which take administrative reform as dealing with static situations and are, thus, one-shot

exercises, the development plan alternative appears to be ideal for the present argument. Under the development plan approach, administrative reform proposals are included in the national overall development plan and, by their very inclusion, become subject to all aspects of periodic review including the extent to which they have been implemented over specified review time periods. In this regard, care should be taken to ensure that procedures in place are easily understood and give due consideration to cultural environments in which the systems would operate.

"...the administrative reform programme must be consistent with a country's overall development programme. Just as a country's administrative system must not lag behind its socio-economic development so also it is important that it must not be too sophisticated for the economy. African governments must beware of reformists who are so obsessed with some of the modern technologies that they are determined to push them down the throat of poor countries." ³⁷

In his article, "Normal Professionalism, New Paradigms and Development", Robert Chambers argues that in the area of development administration, traditional professionalism is doing rather poorly in its design of policies intended for the betterment of society. This is so because its doctrinaire tools and methodologies for determining development needs do not give due regard to the special social and cultural dimensions that are characteristic of intended project beneficiaries, particularly the poor. He argues that what is required is a reversal of attitudes and approaches for tackling development issues by being people-oriented. **Table 2** illustrates the preferred approach of "normal" professionalism while **Table 3** shows the rationale for involving people in development to ensure that economic "growth" and "development" go hand in hand.³⁸

Table 2 ³⁹

(1) **General tendencies of preference by normal professionals**

| | |
|---|--|
| Preference areas Power, comfort, wealth, urban, industrial, things, clean, odourless, standardised, tidy, controlled, certainty. | Rejection areas weakness, discomfort, poverty, rural, agricultural, people, dirty, s m e l l y , d i v e r s e , untidy, uncontrolled, doubt. |
|---|--|

(ii) **Normal and New Professionals:
Preferred Contacts, Perceptions and Roles**

| | |
|--|--|
| Normal Professionals | New Professionals |
| Contacts preferred with people who are: | |
| "first" powerful, high status, educated, male, adult, light-skinned. | "last" weak, low status, illiterate, female, child, dark-skinned. |
| "Last" clients seen by as: obstinate, conservative, conservative, ignorant, to blame, beneficiaries, inferiors, dependent, adopters. | r a t i o n a l l y - r i s k y , averse, a v e r s e , knowledgeable, victims, collaborators, colleague autonomous, innovators. |
| Roles of professional: teacher, expert. | learner, consultant. |

It is further argued that the new professional should be one that is, apart from satisfying the traditional requirements of his profession, also well versed in what Chambers refers to as

Table 2 ³⁹

(i) **General tendencies of preference by normal professionals**

| Preference areas | Rejection areas |
|---|---|
| Power, comfort, wealth urban, industrial, things, clean, odourless, standardised, tidy controlled, certainty | weakness, discomfort, poverty rural, agricultural people, dirty, smelly diverse, untidy uncontrolled, doubt. |

(ii) **Normal and New Professionals:
Preferred Contacts, Perceptions and Roles**

| Normal Professionals | New Professionals |
|----------------------|-------------------|
|----------------------|-------------------|

Contacts preferred with people who are:

| "first" | "last" |
|---|--|
| powerful, high status, educated male, adult, light-skinned | weak, low status, illiterate female dark-skinned |

| | |
|---|---|
| "Last" clients seen by as: obstinate, conservative, ignorant, to blame, beneficiaries, inferiors, dependent, adopters. | rationaly-risky, averse, knowledgeable, victims, collaborators, colleague autonomous, innovators. |
|---|---|

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| Roles of professional: teacher, expert. | learner, consultant. |
|--|----------------------|

It is further argued that the new professional should be one that is, apart from satisfying the traditional requirements of his profession, also well versed in what Chambers refers to as

Normative Aspects

Effective development ideas and plans are those that are people-oriented and place the disadvantaged before the advantaged - poor people before the less poor, women before men, children before adults, etc. The professional development administrator should be able to lower himself to the status of a student of the poor and not pose as their expert. He must know that development is not as measured by "normal professionalism", but as seen and articulated by the poor who should set the priorities for their perceived well-being.

Conceptual Aspect

Development is not uni-directional to a set goal, but a continuing process of adaptation, problem-solving and opportunity with a view to maximizing the well-being of a community in changing conditions.

Practical Aspect

Effective rural development strategies require that there be devolution of resources and discretion to the people who should also be empowered to enable them take control of their lives.

Empirical Aspect

Development programming for the poor involves operations in an area of diverse and complex conditions that are fast-changing and with local technologies, albeit archaic sometimes, that have stood the test of time. The professional may improve upon these technologies but should not destroy them unless he can offer acceptable and affordable alternatives. He should also appreciate that rural people can organize themselves better locally than outsiders can. **Table 3** tabulates what Chambers calls the "**Blueprint**" and "**Learning Process**" approaches.⁴¹

The issues raised by Chambers cannot be ignored. There is sufficient evidence to confirm that development programmes imposed on people without taking account of their real needs have not been as successful as had originally been expected (Kottak, 1985).⁴² These issues, therefore, pose a serious challenge to African development administrators. Agreeing as all experts in this field and governments do, development is about people and it should be designed around them. There is, thus, need for planners to redesign their approach in all aspects to include not only the elements of consultation with beneficiaries and their own changes in attitude towards the people, but also to be seen to be doing so through their increased physical presence in the areas involved to ensure accuracy of project premises and project relevance and acceptance and in a manner that restores public confidence in the government bureaucracy.

Table 3
The Blueprint and Learning Process Approach to Rural Development

| | Blue Print | Learning Process |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Idea originates in | capital city | village |
| First step | data collection | awareness and action |
| Design | static, by experts | evolving, people involved |
| Supporting Organization | existing, or built top-down | build bottom up, with lateral spread |
| Main Resources | central funds and technicians | local people and their assets |
| Staff development | classroom and didactic | field-based, action learning |
| Implementation | rapid, widespread | gradual, local, at people's pace |
| Management forms | spending budgets, completing project on time | sustained improvement and performance |
| Content of action | standardised | varied |
| Communication | vertical: orders down, reports up | lateral: mutual learning and sharing experience |
| Leadership | positional, changing | personal, sustained |
| Evaluation | external, intermittent | internal, continuous |
| Error | buried | embraced |
| Effects | dependency creating | empowering |
| Associated with | normal professionalism | new professionalism |

Source: R. Chambers, "Normal Professionalism, New Paradigms and Development" (DP 227), Department of Administrative Studies, University of Manchester, 1986, p.23. ⁴³

If the performance capability of the African public service continues at its present level into the next century, the consequences for Africa are too ghastly to contemplate as the growth of the continent's social and economic problems would entail, for the public service:

Table 3
The Blueprint and Learning Process Approach to Rural Development

| | Blue Print | Learning Process |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Idea originates in | capital city | village |
| First step | data collection | awareness and action |
| Design | static, by experts | evolving, people involved |
| Supporting Organization | existing, or built top-down | build bottom up, with lateral spread |
| Main Resources | | local people and their assets |
| Staff development | central funds and technicians | field-based, action learning |
| Implementation | classroom and didactic | gradual, local, at people's pace |
| Management forms | | |
| Content of action | rapid, widespread | sustained improvement and performance |
| Communication | | varied |
| Leadership | spending budgets, completing project on time | lateral: mutual learning and sharing experience |
| Evaluation | standardised | personal, sustained |
| Error | vertical: orders down, reports up | internal, continuous |
| Effects | positional, changing external, intermittent | embraced |
| Associated with | buried dependency creating normal professionalism | empowering new professionalism |

Source: R. Chambers, "Normal Professionalism, New Paradigms and Development" (DP 227), Department of Administrative Studies, University of Manchester, 1986, p.23. ⁴³

If the performance capability of the African public service continues at its present level into the next century, the consequences for Africa are too ghastly to contemplate as the growth of the continent's social and economic problems would entail, for the public service:

- fast growing bureaucracies as governments try to grapple with responsibilities far more than their public services were designed to handle and the tendency of the system to regenerate itself through the expansion of, or creation of new ministries and departments;
- reduced productivity and increased inefficiency;
- increased internalization through parrotic adherence to rules and regulations of their own creation at the expense of initiative and creativity;
- increasing distance between the civil service and the public;
- rampant nepotism and corruption in an atmosphere of self-aggrandizement; and
- wasteful utilization of public funds and the disrepair of public assets.⁴⁴

Future African administrations must, therefore, adopt a new outlook, institutionally restructured with deliberate reductions in bureaucracy and red tape. Administrators should be dedicated and committed to the socio-economic transformation of their countries, motivated and achievement-oriented, highly talented and innovative and public-spirited to reduce the incidence of corruption and nepotism. They should also be accountable for public property of whatever description. To achieve these aims, it is necessary that the calibre of African public services be raised, and raised substantially, firstly through trimming and streamlining. Their morale should then be boosted, their social prestige in the eyes of the public be restored vis-a-vis the other economic

actors in the country. They should be protected from unwarranted public attack, and wield respect, in terms of competence and expertise, from their political leaders. The training aspect of these changes require attention and support at the highest level of government possible since their legitimacy before the people hinges on those people's perception of government concern for their well-being.

On their part, political and other government leaders should recognize demonstrated ability by allowing public servants to perform their work objectively, to the best of their ability and without undue pressure. Political leaders should listen to constructive criticisms rather than consider criticisms as entailing disloyalty or acts of treason. The possession of skills, ability, competence and integrity should be the criteria for appointment and advancement. Finally, there must be conditions for "mutual accommodation and tolerance" - an environment of mutual respect and co-operation, tolerance, trust and confidence among senior public servants on the one hand and political leaders on the other.⁴⁵

Can a case, therefore, be made for the professionalization of (African) public administration and is it really fair to blame Africa's present socio-economic malaise on her public service? The fact that mediocrity has been the average performance grade of African public administration and that the present and future decades demand better performance, would suggest affirmative answers to a significant extent, to both forks of the question. As policy advisers to the political leadership, the incapacity of Africa's public administration has, over the last thirty years, resulted in its failure to accurately read changing trends in society and thus devise, in good time, appropriate policy shifts to avert disaster.

Many African governments have acceded to a series of World Bank/IMF Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), and continue to do so with the harsh conditionalities of such SAPs intact. In spite of the adverse effects of these SAPs on African economies over the years of their application, it took individuals and institutions instead of African public service to appreciate, and come out openly on, the debilitating effects which SAPs inflict on African economies. As Hassan Sunmonu, Secretary General of the Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) points out:

"..the public service is the backbone of any government, be it in developed or developing, capitalist or socialist countries. Because of the low level of industrialization in Africa, the public sector will continue for a long time to come to play a key role in the development of Africa. In our economic and social context in Africa, to destroy the public sector is to destroy the continent. May God forbid that. The supervision and approval by the IMF and the World Bank officials of all fiscal, budgetary and development plans and policies is the greatest manifestation of loss of sovereignty by African countries implementing Structural Adjustment Programmes...From all the above and from data compiled by other UN agencies like ECA, UNICEF, ILO and so on, and from OATUU's own analysis, there is no iota of doubt that the SAPs have woefully failed...because they have led to vast poverty, high unemployment and underemployment, malnutrition, hunger, increasing illiteracy, widening societal inequity and inequality,"¹⁴⁶

Similarly, Bade Onimode cites the case of Mr. Budhoo, formerly with the IMF that:

"In his letter of resignation, Mr. Budhoo of the IMF accused the organization of systematically manipulating figures in the Third World countries in order to produce bogus results. The allegation was probed by an international group of experts and was found to be correct." ⁴⁷

The point being made here is that it was *not* the African Governments themselves - except countries like Tanzania and Zambia - which, individually or collectively initiated the open or public articulation of objections to World Bank/IMF SAPs; it had to be triggered by outsiders and then unanimously endorsed by all African countries. While inaction could be attributable to internal pressures for silence, it is inconceivable that all public services in Africa were under identical pressures on the same matter and over the same period. Simply put, African public services could not appreciate the magnitude of the problems introduced into African economies by these SAPs.

Empowerment of the people

People-empowerment is a mechanism for the promotion of people's participation under effective democratization. It goes beyond mere decentralization and local level development in that its anchorage to political and economic permutations is based on the requirement that it be based on legal and other institutional framework for the effective transfer of power for decision-making and resource allocation to

geographical and institutional communities. This empowerment facilitates self-development through the local control over resources at the local level for the creation of a mass base for national planning and development. The empowerment of the people requires that it be supported by effective community organizations controlled by the local people and to whose management positions are local people elected from among and by themselves. They should also be permitted to establish development bodies with statutory development responsibilities at the local level.

People's development committees at the local, district and regional levels would require shares of national resources in land, credit, foreign exchange, machinery, tools and implements, development funds, etc. the last three being replaceable as the projects begin to generate their own financial resource savings.

Further, co-operatives for production, distribution and marketing of scarce commodities should receive government support and encouragement since they are vehicles for the pooling of scattered and limited resources, they organize the people, teach them basic development skills and can, therefore, be used as a link between the people and the government. Autonomy, however, is crucial in that this permits the tapping of local initiative and benefiting from local knowledge.⁴⁸

V CONCLUSIONS

In continuing the search for alternative strategies, this publication has explored, in an innovative manner, ideas for the solution of the problems of a continent in economic trouble. Its starting premise is that traditional tools and institutions that worked well for African countries in their immediate post-independence era have, with changed circumstances, outlived their usefulness and have, thus, not been as effective as expected. The publication has also taken advantage of the involvement of students of development, and African governments themselves, in their quest for solutions to the economic stagnation and decline of their economies. It has further drawn from the lessons of experience of other countries both in Africa and outside the continent. The **African Charter for Popular Participation in Development** and the **Khartoum Declaration**, which documents address the African situation on the requisite social, political and economic conditions and the dimensions in want for the economic recovery and sustainable growth, set the stage for initiation of change.

The down-turn in the performance of African economies from the early 1980s, the adverse effects which recessions in the economies of the North invariably impose on African economies, the devastating effects of the short-term measures of World Bank/IMF Structural Adjustment Programmes, the need for increased and improved social services in the face of ever-increasing populations and dwindling resource bases, the recurrence of national calamities of drought and famine, and the onset of internal strife, have all convinced scholars and institutions of development administration that efforts to arrest Africa's present and persistent economic downward slip must be based on strategies alternative to the traditional formulae advocated by such institutions as the World Bank and IMF through their SAPs. The doctrinaire approaches to economic

recovery and growth, tailored as they are for the cultures of the North with their relative social homogeneity and socio-economic cultures that are principally responsive to market forces, have been totally ineffective when applied, unmodified, to the vastly heterogeneous societies of Africa whose population majority is below the poverty line and dependent on central governments for its needs.

Africa's own inward gaze, lensed with the lessons of experience of other countries -developed and undeveloped, least developed and developing - has revealed that the retention of the colonial legacy of economic policy conception and formulation on a centralised, non-consultative and non-participatory basis has had a retarding effect on the continent's development efforts in that it has straight-jacketed African development administrators' conceptual horizons within these inherited colonial confinements. The lessons thus learned point to the fact that the mammoth task of transforming African economies can no longer be the guarded responsibility of the central government bureaucracies which, already, are overwhelmed by numerous over-centralized functions. Instead, the entire citizenry must take responsibility and share in the development effort as individuals, members of local geographical or institutional groupings or as nations.

Development, in economics parlance, relates to the level of the transformation of a people and its environment in the facilitation of its daily and ordinary life. It is positive in measure and takes place in a milieu of full cognisance of **what is** now, **what should be** and how to get from the former to the latter. The current state of African economies is, clearly, not where it should have been, vis-a-vis immediately prior to the start of the economic crisis as the known tools for stimulating recovery and growth, as applied to the African situation, ignored, as before, African human, political and cultural dimensions of development. Diverse as Africa's cultures and

resource endowments are, the development of any section of society or each community boils down to the satisfaction of local needs some of which, such as irrigation schemes, construction of rural bridges, etc. assume only a local character, while the satisfaction of other local needs may benefit more than the project community - e.g. education and health services. In this regard, most problems and their solutions are best identified and designed by immediate project beneficiaries since they have the best and most relevant information on the various aspects of the area and the satisfaction impact of completed projects become self-reinforcing.

In attempting to develop alternative strategies for the economic recovery and sustained growth of the continent, scholars and institutions of development administration, and now African governments, agree that certain reforms must be made to a wide spectrum of instruments governing human activity, endeavour and relationships. The **African Charter** and the **Khartoum Declaration** referred to above, attest to this assertion. The areas requiring such reforms include the enactment and practice of universal freedoms of expression and press to cater for unhampered exchange of ideas, both critical and supportive; decentralization of power and authority to give legitimacy to legal structures and the actions of their members - including the mobilization and utilization of financial and other resources - local and non-local; establishment of closer government/people consultative mechanisms on matters relating to local, regional/provincial and national development; reformation of administrative, and other structural institutions in a manner that renders them responsive and supportive to local sentiments; sharpening, through professionalization, of governments' bureaucratic tools for the actualization of development; the inculcation of the principles of ethics, discipline and accountability in all public servants (including political leaders), as well as establishing mechanisms for

monitoring and censuring deviance; and encouraging the ordinary people to take an interest in actively participating in the design and implementation of national development programmes. In a nutshell, the reforms call for the democratization of society and its institutions.

The introduction of a popular participatory approach to development is rife with problems which may account for the slow pace of its adoption. Some of the problems are elaborated as follows:

- the loss, on the part of national leaders, of their scope of decision-making (sometimes unilaterally made even for non-emergency cases);
- a conflict between the decisions of leaders and those of the grass-roots since the views of each party on the issues at stake may be divergent and the considered solutions of one side may not be identical with those of the other side;
- absence of full or correct information in the hands of popular participants or their inability to conceptualize the nature and possible impact of the problem at hand which may require much time on the part of leaders to explain to participants the issues at stake and the information available to justify alternative solutions;
- delays in the implementation of projects, especially where disagreement centres around technical issues rather than values and social preferences;

- high costs in time and financial resources in the act of establishing new institutional frameworks, or the reorientation of existing ones, including the staff therein, for the promotion of popular participation;
- the possibility that the views holding in a popular participation exercise may not be representative of the majority position, but those of a select few who wield influence in the community and may use their higher status to manipulate the less influential members and do so for their personal motives;
- upon the introduction of popular participation as a community involvement in decision-making, some potential participants, particularly the poor, may not show interest as they see no immediate benefit accruing to them and may not understand how the proposed change can be beneficial without the direct involvement of the government;
- being a new development approach, much orientation time has to be spent and well in advance in informing target groups of the sacrifices that might be called for in terms of their contribution in time, labour and other forms, as well as what eventual benefits are likely to accrue to them as individuals, as families and as communities;
- a proliferation of successful projects implemented under the participatory approach may trigger off need for changes in the structures of government and its administrative

machinery, which changes may not have been originally anticipated

- success may hurt the interests of local leaders including political representatives who may be influential enough to force government to introduce restrictions on the way the local popular participatory projects operate;
- most important, however, is the fact that no blueprint can be provided for the establishment of a successful popular participatory approach and each country has to proceed with designing its own measures in the full knowledge that it is a highly complex matter requiring patience, proper planning and continuous review.⁴⁹

The social and economic benefits of popular participation as a development approach, indeed, are, however, greater than the costs and the effects of these benefits are self-sustaining. To that extent, popular participation in development decision-making must not only be encouraged, but also be vigorously induced. The benefits include the fact that popular participation:

- helps programme managers in validating the premises on which programmes rest and thus contributes to programme effectiveness;
- makes development plans relevant to local needs;
- increases the speed and relevance of decision-making;

- generates additional resources and encourages more effective use of existing resources;⁵⁰
- promotes integration in that whole communities work together for common goals in an atmosphere of open discussion, mutual respect and trust for the benefit of all as individuals and as groups;
- enhances performance and stimulates acceptance of performance criteria; participants are emotionally committed and acquire a sense of pride and satisfaction with their accomplishments from the project;
- leads participants to self-confidence and stronger perception of shared characteristics with project managers, which, in turn, generates further commitment to the objectives of the project;
- is persuasive to donors that the probability is high that change will be accepted with the overall effectiveness of that change;
- increases the motivation of participants to implement the decisions of project managers since their collective voice has been heard before the decision was made;
- helps to address the problem of lack of sensitivity and effective response to local community feelings, needs, problems and views, which problem is crucial in the way donors and beneficiaries view each other;

- establishes and acts as a self-sustaining and growing reservoir of a variety of skills in the community, which skills can usefully be brought to bear on the increased productivity of the community;
- facilitates the timely satisfaction of local needs as identified by the community itself;
- facilitates commitment to required individual contributions of material or other kind when a common decision on the matter has been taken;
- improves the quality of product outputs as the community endeavours to meet the quality standards of internal, or even external markets;
- increases the amount, and raises the accuracy, of information that project managers have of existing work practices and the environmental contingencies associated with them;
- facilitates more economical operations through increased use of local human resources as against the use of external services whose charges are usually very high;
- reduces social, economic and political dependency between individuals or regions on recognition that people can do things for themselves;
- is advocated as a management technique by donors and recipients on ideological grounds as well as a means of increasing project effectiveness;⁵¹ and

- helps in reducing the flight to the urban centres of trained youth in search of employment.

Moreover, since the institution of popular participation as a development strategy involves, of necessity, a good measure of the decision-making to be at the local geographical or institutional level, decentralization of authority for decision-making becomes necessary because:

- political leaders and the civil service who run and control the government are increasingly out of touch with the wishes and aspirations of the people;
- the party system and the use of party whips make government ineffective in presenting the wishes of the people;
- there is already a growing desire for participation at all levels and that local initiative has an important role to play in fostering rapid economic growth;
- (decentralization) decongests government at the centre and thereby frees national leaders from onerous details;
- (decentralization) brings management closer to the site of operations; and
- (decentralization) increases the people's understanding of, and support for, social and economic activities and thereby facilitates personal and group adjustments to needed changes.⁵²

Development is not about the creation of structures which have an impact on the lives of a select few; rather, development entails the transformation of the people themselves so that they are directly responsible for the improvement of the quality of their own lives. Government policies designed to enable people to act in a self-sufficient manner should, therefore be put in place as has been tried and proved effective in various countries both within and outside Africa. The examples cited support the adoption of this new strategy. They also illustrate some of the pitfalls that must be avoided in the process. In this regard, continuing research studies on dimensions that foster successful popular participation in the design and implementation of national development programmes should be encouraged.

To the extent that they are free to act without undue institutional impediments, people are a very potent tool for the transformation of African economies and the elimination of the prevalent dependency syndrome. The decade of the 1990s is the period to start as otherwise, there is very little hope of real economic recovery and real development for the people of Africa. Africa cannot afford to postpone action any further. But people must be put first!

VI POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The issues that have been broadly discussed in previous parts point to deliberate policy proposals for the innovation of African public administration and management for the promotion of popular participation in the design and implementation of national development programmes. It should be noted that the listing of policy recommendations is by no means exhaustive; if anything, it is only indicative and should act as a basis for the formulation of national policies on popular participation in the light of local circumstances.

Legal and political dimensions

Each national legal system must be examined, and amended if necessary, to guarantee legal and political freedom through:

- democratization of society through the establishment of the rule of law to rule out rule by decree or the usurpation of power by despotic political elites. An absence of rule by law prohibits free expression during discussions for fear of possible consequences; otherwise the groups formed may turn into groups for popular dissent;
- guarantees for the freedom of expression in words, in print, on the radio and television, by organized demonstration or protest in clarification or defence of their interests against injustice and oppression: openness to criticism stimulates creativity, initiative and enterprise in the acceleration of social and economic advance;⁵³

- subscription to all African, United Nations and other Charters and Conventions on human and civil rights, freedom of association, etc.
- support for existing non-governmental grassroots organizations, such as co-operative societies and encourages the formation of similar people's associations for development purposes.
- decentralization of power and authority by devolution to the various levels of government and the citizenry at large. Issues like land tenure systems, access to credit- especially for women - should be provided for without discrimination; the status of women in society under the law should be on equal footing with men;
- labour laws should facilitate, not hamper, worker/employer negotiations; and trade and professional associations should always be consulted in the event of any fundamental legal changes touching upon their trades or professions or areas of competence.

Professionalization of the African public service

That the African public service needs to be professionalised has already been argued and, hopefully, successfully. The institutional specifics include the following:

- there should be specific organizational arrangements for career development;
- specific pay scales should be determined together with conditions of increment and

promotion including mechanisms for negotiation of pay and terms of service;

- there should be established professional associations of public administrators;
- there should be established research arms for study and analyses of organizations, operations and problems of public administration with a view to proposing solutions; as a result of which
- manuals should be prepared and issued about the organization and operations of the public administration as a whole: its ministries, departments, boards and parastatals;
- "organizational arteriosclerosis" - the progressive infestation of key post appointments of the service with unqualified political appointees - should be eliminated;⁵⁴
- appointments into administrative positions should be based on the possession of specific skills and advancement in service should be based on achievement and merit - not on seniority alone;
- aspiring professional public administrators should have a basic degree in one of the social sciences, with a good pass in Public Ethics and comprehensive grounding in *new development professionalism* (Chambers), should have done an internship in a government office or the private sector or in a parastatal organization followed by an advanced degree specializing in one or more areas of personnel management,

planning, financial management and budgeting, etc.;

- the candidate should then be registered to fellowship with the professional body which should be legally recognised by the state.⁵⁵

Decentralization

The rationale for the introduction of a decentralised form of administration and management should be the achievement of clearly established development goals among which may be organizational efficiency, making public administration more responsive to the citizenry and for promoting national development.⁵⁶ When considering decentralization of power and authority to development groupings below the central government, it is necessary to be clear as to the nature and extent of the intended decentralization in order to avoid later operational confusion. Special attention needs to be given, at the planning stage of the decentralization process, to measures that avoid or minimise, if not eliminate, the emergence of as many consequential side-effects as possible.

Experience so far shows that the devolutionary method of decentralization is far better than the other forms since it actually puts the onus on the group concerned to make decentralization work and be clearly accountable for the consequences. In this regard, there should be a serious intent to devolve power and authority to the various peripheral units with clear and legally recognised operational boundaries over which they have authority and within which they perform their functions.

Devolutionary decentralization should not be seen as a federation, but that local units should remain linked to the

central government and sister units in the political system through mutually supportive and reciprocal arrangements. These linkages are essential because the effectiveness of devolutionary decentralisation is based not necessarily on the legal status of each unit; rather, it emanates from the each unit's strength - the number and nature of functions being performed, the skill and professionalism of its local staff, the available sources of funding and the effectiveness with which they carry out their responsibilities.

Decentralization of power and authority as a development alternative is a very complex matter and the absence of a blueprint that may guide all countries desirous of introducing it attests to this character. Considering the multiplicity of country-specific variables that have a bearing on the outcome of any decentralization exercise, it becomes an absolute necessity that its implementation should be based on extensively planned research. The research work itself should be of continuing nature, involving local universities and other development research institutions. If - as has been the case with the many attempts made so far - there is no time or there are no human resources dedicated to comprehensive analytical follow-up action within the government development administrator cadres, these institutions of higher learning and research would be too glad to fill the gap provided that such studies are adequately funded and governments accord the research findings the due respect and attention which they deserve.

Administrative and Structural Reform Measures

Institutional and structural arrangements required to be in place for the promotion of popular participation in programme design and implementation are those that facilitate, and not hamper, functions like the collection of information on local needs, the crystallisation of such needs

into workable projects and flow of directives and explanations so that project proposals are acceptable to those they are intended to benefit. The institutions may be at the village, district, and regional levels and should include mechanisms for determining what qualifications are required for membership of the decision-making participants at each level. The participants may

be individuals, whole villages, representatives of religious organizations, the central government, local councils, local businessmen, tradesmen, craftsmen, co-operatives, etc.

The enhancement of popular participation in the design and implementation of development programmes is a very important governmental activity to the extent that if it is properly institutionalized, administered and seen through, it has a very good chance of success in the transformation of Africa's economic performance. To that extent, it becomes necessary that existing administrative structures be re-examined and, if necessary, reformed, so that they are, in form, in procedures and practice supportive of the policy of popular participation and are capable of developing strategies that are designed to foster meeting the essential needs of the people.

The popular participatory approach should focus on the local level with linkages to intermediate and national institutional arrangements as this facilitates a balanced national development effort. The exact nature of such institutional linkages is difficult to determine as countries differ in their administrative structures. However, intermediate institutions at the district and regional levels may act as bridges between the local and the national levels. In this way, the district and regional institutions can crystallise the development sentiments of the local institutions in their geographical areas and present these to the central government. They may also assist in the spatial allocation of

development projects on priority considerations and on the basis of resources available locally and/or from the central government.

The structures themselves should have institutional bases. There may be a special ministry or department attached to the office of the chief executive to see to it that the popular participation approach to development is closely monitored and seen to be carried out. Better, perhaps, is that the ministry or department responsible for the national economic development plan is the one that is also responsible for the administrative reform plan as this ensures simultaneous review.

The structure at the centre should then fan down to regional, district and local level institutions created for the same purpose. While the central unit is entirely, and the regional and district units partly, manned by administrative specialists, the lower level groupings may be manned mostly by elected officials in order to cater for the participatory dimension of the reform process. There should, however, be a core of sectoral specialists, stationed at the district level and detailed to carry out high-level extension work in complement to the District and Local Development Committees. Their status and conditions of service should be no less favourable than those enjoyed by their counterparts at headquarters - if not better in order to lure them into field service for long periods of time.

(i) Regional/Provincial Development Committees (RDCs)

Regional/Provincial Development Committees (RDCs) membership should be by election and the members should, in turn, elect their own office bearers with the Regional Administrator or any other central government officer acting as

the designated contact person and link with the central government and the District Development Committees in the region or province. RDCs may consist of officials from District Development Committees (DDCs), representatives of District Councils, City and Town Councils, regional party leaders (ruling party and those in opposition), regional sectoral and administrative officials, and certainly women and the youth.

The functions of RDCs may include, but should not be limited to, harmonizing DDC development proposals, ensuring that these proposals have been thoroughly discussed at the grassroots level and that they represent the sentiments of the communities concerned; that implementation standards are elaborated but not necessarily be in accordance with national requirements and that no omissions or deletions of proposals are made without prior consultations with DDCs.

The approved proposals may then be submitted to the central planning ministry with copies to the sectoral ministries for any comments as may be necessary. At this level, only enrichments may be made to the submissions: deletions being done only after consultations with the RDCs and all the way down to the local communities. Cases submitted are either for inclusion in the national development plan for internal - or external - funding, or for information purposes only where projects can be implemented fully using local (community) resources.

(ii) District Development Committees (DDCs)

District Development Committees should be elective and appoint their own office bearers from among themselves except that the District Administrator or any other officer appointed by the central government may be designated as the contact and link point with the regional and Local

(grassroots) Development Committees. The membership may include District Council

Wardens, district sectoral officers, representatives of grassroots committees and local level non-governmental development entities in the district, local party leaders (ruling party and those in opposition), women, the youth, religious leaders, etc.

The roles of DDCs should include ensuring that all submissions have been fully discussed at the grassroots levels (Local Development Committees) and that they have been accepted by the grassroots groupings concerned; that implementation mechanisms have been agreed including self-help measures; and that the list includes not only those projects which require government financial assistance, but also those that can be carried out without any financial inputs from the government - the latter being submitted to RDCs for information only.

All projects as are not agreed at the DDC level should be referred back to the local community for redesigning or reconsideration with reasons for the referral.

(iii) Local Development Committees (LDCs) at grassroots levels

Local Development Committees are the most important committees in the participatory process for it is at this level that the nature of needs is identified, their solutions fully discussed and agreed and the projects following therefrom conceived. At this level, all members of the community are actively involved both in the discussion and implementation aspects of the projects. They may elect a core group from among themselves to guide discussions, formulate decisions and prepare submissions to their DDCs. It is important that the core groups should include women, the

youth and some local traditional leaders who wield respect since such community leaders can, as need would certainly arise, mobilize their people behind agreed projects.

(iv) City, Town and District Councils

By their very incorporation requirements, City and Town Councils are responsible for providing prescribed services like fire protection, education and health services, sewage and garbage collection and disposal, and some housing etc. within their geographical boundaries. While they may have legal authority to raise funds through property rates and parking fees, among other measures, they may also receive financial assistance from the central government in the form of grants and/or subventions.

On the other hand, District Councils cater for the rural populations of their districts, have no significant revenue bases by the very poverty of their residents, except for some hire charges for market stalls, traditional beer levies, etc. Nearly all their financial requirements come from government subventions which are usually insignificant in size.

Housing for low-income residents of cities and towns is one of the biggest problems which urban councils face. Thus, the peripheries of cities and towns are cluttered for miles with shanties built of materials that render them absolute fire and health hazards. The houses leak during rains and are unsafe in heavy winds. The encouragement of the use of low-cost technologies in house construction, establishment of low-cost housing financial institutions, and the provision of safe water and access roads in city and town areas designated for such housing would encourage local residents to build their own homes at costs they can afford. It is not inconceivable that local entrepreneurs could take up the opportunity of producing such low-cost materials for use in both urban and rural areas.

Finance

Once people accept the fact that they can do things for themselves with little or no help from the central government, they will be ready to mobilize funds in support of their projects provided there are mechanisms in place to facilitate this and at their level. Traditional financial institutions are always unwilling to finance rural people due to the lack of collateral. However, there is evidence that these problems can be surmounted through the establishment of community banks that can provide loans to small farmers and owners of small cottage industries at the community level as in the Ghana case cited in **Part II**. It is, further, important that statutory arrangements be made to enable City, Town and District Councils/Authorities raise funds through local taxes or loans, albeit with ceiling levels, for the execution of development projects conceived and designed by them as they strive to provide much needed social services in their areas. Furthermore, for farmer-planning purposes, agricultural producer prices should be guaranteed and announced before the planting season to enable farmers plan what cash crops to grow for the next harvest. Similarly, the cost of farm inputs like pesticides and fertilizers should be announced periodically for the information of farmers. In the area of farming, and considering the high cost of chemical fertilizers, farmers can make substantial savings through the use of biological fertilizers like animal and compost manure.

Training

All parties to popular participation - government officials, local leaders, grassroots associations, etc. should be prepared to a degree commensurate with each level. To that extent, training is a very crucial component of that preparation and should encompass orientation to the

nature of popular participation in decision-making and imparting those skills - eg. management methods and local development planning techniques as are appropriate for the particular institutional arrangements established for this purpose.

Bearing in mind that one of the factors that contribute to continuing poverty is widespread illiteracy mainly in the rural areas, it becomes imperative that for people to participate meaningfully in development discussions, they should, at least, be functionally literate. To that extent, maximum effort should be exerted in the improvement of the literacy levels and rates of all communities - urban as well as rural. Furthermore, in an attempt to reduce the exodus from rural areas, women and the youth should feature prominently among those being trained. In the area of nutrition, attention should be given to techniques of using local food mixes that achieve balanced diets. The inclusion of briefings on how the popular participatory approach to development should be tackled would be a worthwhile investment. Commensurate training should also be given to the elected members of development Committees at the district and regional levels.

Information

There should be a free and well developed information system for the coverage of development projects under the popular participatory arrangement - not only those within the country, but also those outside. The use of the radio medium would appear to be the most effective in this regard. Furthermore, the government should encourage the exchange of written information and actual visits between representatives of self-help programmes within their own countries and with other parts of the world. These exchanges of information and visits would not only help to improve performance and acquisition or adaptation of appropriate technologies for

achieving efficiency in the implementation and management of projects, but would foster appreciation for the fact that people can, and actually do things for themselves instead of depending on the government for all their needs.

There is also need to involve national universities and other institutions of research for the generation of innovative ideas on popular participation and decentralized forms of government in order to provide for objective analyses of experiences and to keep pace with developments in these areas at the national and international levels. Such information would assist in the formulation of subsequent programmes and projects on sound premises *ab-initio*.

Public service accountability measures

Corruption and other forms of unethical behaviour constitute a subculture that can be debilitating to a society. Indeed, it exists everywhere in the world and is the cause of social, political and economic concern. While it has been found impossible to eliminate it completely, it can, however, be controlled by making the cost of indulgence much greater than the benefits derived from it. In this regard, any attempt to curb it should aim at subverting the culture of unethical behaviour itself. African governments may, therefore, consider the following policy proposals for the elimination of such behaviour from the public service.

- a. There should be established a national public service code of conduct jointly applicable to civil servants (including those in statutory bodies) and political leaders giving the expected norms of behaviour and the sanctions that apply on violation of those

norms. Where such codes of conduct already exist, periodic reviews should be made to ensure their relevance to current times. The rationale for a universal code of conduct is that some public servants move from the civil service into political positions or vice-versa. Unity of the public ethics code ensures that the public service is treated as one and that punishment for infringements against the code be equally applicable as long as one remains in the public service -even when those found guilty change from being civil servants to being politicians or *vice versa*.

- b. There should be established, by statute, an independent monitoring body (say Panel) made up of individuals who are members of professions with strict codes of conduct and expertise in sifting chaff from substance, truth from smear, and an impeccable sense of integrity. Ideally, these may be accountants, lawyers and members of religious organizations. In order for them to function with the minimum of hindrance, they should have, by law and upon presentation of a warrant or letter of request from their Chairman, access to tax,

customs, bank, etc. information (which is usually protected by law) on persons under investigation and should be able to interview anyone they deem necessary. Cases found by the Panel as being substantive should be reported to the Attorney-General who should, within a short specified period, say 30 days, appoint a firm of lawyers to institute legal proceedings. The Panel should receive a subvention for the first two years and, thereafter, should be financed by the retention of 10 to 20 percent of the financial penalties as may be imposed on the guilty. The work of the Panel should be strictly confidential, until court proceedings begin from which point hearing should be public to facilitate publicity.

- c. There should also be established public ethics committees in rural areas, work places to hear and deal with local complaints of unethical practices, or to write in to the main panel for action. Furthermore, the public should be encouraged to bring cases to the Panel for investigation.
- d. The public service should be trimmed and streamlined for the promotion of increased efficiency

and effectiveness. For those that remain, there should be increases in remuneration in order to reduce the temptation for resorting to corrupt actions, in supplementation of their incomes during economically hard times.

- e. Ethics should be socialised in the family, at work, in associations and co-operatives, on the radio and in national papers and magazines. Additionally, ethical values may be taught through drama.
- f. Ethics and ethical values should be a required course for all students from primary school to university level with emphasis on their relevance to their societies and the world in general.
- g. With the professionalization of the African public service, *Ethics* should feature prominently in the courses covered by prospective employees with the condition that there would be no entry into the civil service for those who fail in the subject.
- h. Every person (individual or corporate) found guilty should be appropriately punished - summary dismissal with a ban from holding public office for life for employees,

forfeiture of ill-gotten wealth or taxation along back duty lines, extensive media coverage, etc.

- i. There should be created an African ethics equivalent of "Amnesty International" or "Africa Watch" to exchange, with national Panels, information on matters of international corruption, especially in business matters and other information and research findings on the subject.⁵⁷
- j. If members of the general public (civil servants, politicians and those outside the public service) are to co-operate in the exposure of corrupt and other unethical practices, it is necessary that those that expose substantive cases be rewarded commensurately. Rewards may take the form of promotion on the job, cash awards, scholarships, guarantees for worthy loans like housing and educational loans, recognition medals or certificates, etc.

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