THE DEMOCRACY WE WANT

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Africa and its
Democratic Progress

Africa is at a turning point. After decades of colonialism and neo-co-lonialism, corrupt one-party states, tribal conflict and war, there is increasing pressure from younger citizens and urban middle classes for accountable and transparent governance and an alternative politics.

This clamour from the youth and urbanites is a cry for real democracy — a participatory and equitable dispensation with a strong human rights ethos — and should provide the foundation for the consolidation of democracy on the continent. However, democratic gains are fragile and can get quickly reversed, as was seen in Egypt following the youth-led "Arab Spring." The lesson is that effective democracy must be constitutionally consolidated and underpinned by a practice in which democratic culture takes root.

The Commission of the African Union sets out the collective aspirations of the continent for a peaceful, secure and prosperous Africa in Agenda 2063, which calls for the eradication of poverty in one generation through inclusive growth and sustainable development.[1] Agenda 2063 sets out a "people-driven" development path for the continent that would help to unleash the economic potential of women and youth. It also sets out the kind of inclusive democracy African countries should pursue in order to build an integrated continent with a common identity, values and ethics that can underpin an Africa of good governance, democracy, and respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law."

1.1   Africa's longest, continuous growth spurt

After a decade of continuous growth fuelled by soaring prices of and demand for oil, minerals and other commodities within new emerging markets such as China, India, Brazil, Russia and the Middle East, the potential for growth is slowing.[2] In January 2015, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) downgraded its outlook for real GDP growth in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) from 5.8% to 4.9%, due to factors including "lower oil and commodity prices."

Today, slowing growth notwithstanding, more than 70% of Africa's population live in countries that have growth rates of more than 4%. Africa's middle class is expanding. There are more indigenous entrepreneurs who are not dependent on the state. African economies, although in many cases still reliant on the export of raw materials, are increasingly becoming more diverse. Nigeria, Kenya and Ethiopia have built new economic sectors, such as film, telecommunications and manufacturing industries. African countries are increasingly diversifying their trade partners away from reliance on former colonial powers to emerging powers and their neighbours. More Africans are now in school and more have access to healthcare. Some African countries, such as Ghana, have introduced social protection for the most vulnerable. Others, like Nigeria, are contemplating doing so. Technology is increasingly being used to solve developmental and democratic problems. Despite slowing growth forecasts, Africa is a globally positive investment story that continues to rewrite the continent's narrative as one of new opportunities. These are largely opportunities which correlate with the evolution of democratic governance on the continent.

As the 2016 Afrobarometer survey, *Do Africans Still want Democracy?* concludes, the majority of Africans support democracy and reject authoritarian regimes. However, it also found that the support for democracy is slipping, which appears to be part of a current global trend. Believing that countries become fit *through* democracy, as famously noted by Amartya Sen, the challenge to facilitate a positive evolution in practice and commitment to democracy, using innovative approaches, remains the more important.

1.2   Some democratic progress

More elections are taking place on the continent than ever before. Holding elections every few years is a minimalist approach to democracy. And yet not so long ago, it was almost unimaginable that Nigeria would have a peaceful transfer of power following relatively peaceful democratic elections. The fact that African autocrats are increasingly being forced to legitimise their control through elections, suggests that what citizens want is no longer unimportant to all who claim to lead. This is not to deny that there are African leaders who rig elections—now in increasingly sophisticated ways with help from questionable foreign companies, or that opposition parties and their supporters are often harassed and intimidated on a sustained basis. But there are fewer one-party states and many opposition parties are increasingly able to dislodge dominant sitting governments – even if just at a local or provincial level.

This progress in 'enacting' democracy is underpinned by the adoption, in many countries, of democratic constitutions and institutions, as well as signing on to continental and international human rights instruments. Increasingly, larger numbers of Africans in democratic institutions — whether parliaments or judiciaries — are conscientiously protecting citizens' democratic rights, often against significant pressure from powerful economic, political or military elites. New media and the free press – while under pressure either from the erosion of the traditional media market or from attempts to curtail freedoms - have played an increasing role in exposing anti-democratic practices. A recent report in *Africa Renewal Online* states that, "To remain accessible, conventional media practitioners in Africa are adapting to a new media world that is time-sensitive and more interactive. Advocacy journalism, in particular, is growing exponentially—bloggers and citizen journalists are mobilising for various causes, including good governance. These institutions matter but, at the same time, remain vulnerable without the consolidation of a democratic culture."[3]

The nature of violent conflicts on the continent has also changed. Wars between African countries are fewer. Conflicts are now more confined to specific countries, for example in Nigeria, Kenya and Somalia, where terrorist organisations Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab, respectively, are attacking government forces and citizens. Violence by African states against their own people appears to be on the decline, although countries such as Zimbabwe, Sudan and Swaziland go against this positive trend. Burundi is a stark reminder of how quickly the anti-democratic behaviour of political leadership can have disastrous consequences.

In societies that are deeply patriarchal we have seen women presidents in Malawi, Liberia and Mauritius and briefly in the Central African Republic. Many more are leaders of opposition parties. Women are also increasingly rising in leadership positions in politics, business and civil society. Rwanda has the world's highest representation of women in parliament (63%) and there are other countries such as the Seychelles, Senegal and South Africa where women encouragingly make up more than 40% of MPs in parliament.[4] However, countries such as Nigeria, where women only account for 5.6% of parliamentary representatives, still have a long way to go with respect to representative gender equality.

This progress at an institutional level does not change the fact that in many African countries, citizens still do not have much choice between the parties or leaders on offer. Political parties are poorly distinguishable from each other in terms of policies and rarely offer well-defined alternatives or sensible development strategies. They are also often criticised because they do not practice democracy within their own organisations.

The independent media across the continent works to safeguard the interests of citizens and remains at the forefront of democratic change reporting on corruption, human rights abuses and official hypocrisy. From Senegal to Kenya the media doggedly hold governments to account, but there is much to be done before the media in all African countries can be said to be truly free. Too many governments still use a wide range of laws and threats to restrict the media's ability to perform as professional watchdogs of the system.

Indigenous African intellectuals are increasingly providing concrete analyses of the continent's myriad problems and solutions. As much as democracy is unlikely to be successful if imposed from outside the continent, so also are home-grown African analyses, ideas and solutions crucial to foster sustainable democracies.

1.3   New, higher expectations for democracy

Ordinary citizens on the continent are increasingly demanding that their countries practise democracy and they are articulating the values of democracy as instrumental within politics, economics and the social realm. They are demanding that social and cultural institutions become more accountable, too. The result is that few African leaders would risk openly saying that they are against democracy, and even the most brutal dictators pretend to stand for this form of governance.

Increasingly, ordinary citizens have, through peoples' power, dislodged autocrats who appeared entrenched— whether the overthrow of Egypt's Hosni Mubarak in 2011 during the "Arab Spring" uprisings, or the removal of Burkina Faso's Blaise Compaore in 2014, following the mass mobilisation of citizens. This threat of popular overthrow appears to have forced many African leaders to, at least, give the appearance of providing some level of public services to their people as part of a nominal social contract, even if of the most limited kind.

1.4   Africa's youth pressing for an alternative politics

About 70% of Africa's population is under 30 years of age, constituting a youth "bulge" which means young people make up the majority of the population. The youth are a ticking time-bomb if they continue to be excluded from both politics and the economy. Africa's youth have pushed for inclusion and demanded change in ways that have shaken up old, staid post-colonial political formations, institutions and leaders, and brought new life to politics on the continent. However, their participation – particularly in elections – is in decline and what they are seeking is an alternative politics that articulates their interests.[5]

Across the continent young people, tired of being marginalised by old-style "big men" rule, are increasingly directly shaping the direction of politics. From South Africa to Namibia and Kenya to Cameroon, young people, tired of the old-style politics, are forming their own political parties or pressure groups.

In 2011, journalist Fadel Barro and two rappers launched a campaign in Senegal called the "Y'en a marre" (Enough is Enough) movement, to get the youth to vote and to oppose a third term for the then-president Abdoulaye Wade. Youth groups rallied behind Macky Sall to oppose Wade in what they called the June 23 Movement (M23). Now other youth groups in countries in Francophone Africa, such as Burkina Faso, are following this example, to bring the youth voice into African politics. Similar youth groups are mobilising to prevent Democratic Republic of Congo President, Joseph Kabila from standing for a third term.

South Africa's university youth have shaken up the political establishment by mobilising thousands of students to campaign for fees to be eased, and for curricula, teaching and staff to be more relevant to our

changing times. They are doing so outside the established post-apartheid political and social formations, institutions and leaders. They are rejecting authority based on past "struggle" credentials and dismissing expectations that they should patiently petition established but unresponsive channels, institutions and leaders. By doing this they may have brought the youth back into politics in the country, which could not only re-energise, but remake South Africa's post-apartheid politics.

1.5   Growing Urban Populations

Post-independence Africa has seen large numbers of citizens flock to urban areas. Cities with industry have seen their populace grow exponentially over the past several decades. People come to cities in hope of creating a better life for themselves through education and work. Rural populations grow but often do not have sufficient economic development to offer jobs to new generations.

The youngest population globally resides in Africa. A 2014 UNFPA State of the World Population report, *The Power of 1.8 Billion: Adolescents, Youth and the Transformation of the Future* states[6] that half the population of 15 Sub-Saharan countries, being under 18 years old, with countries in a democratic dispensation or democratic transition, (where there are low fertility and mortality rates) allows for the opportunity for rapid, increased economic gains and development thus improving the economic dividends of a country.

The economic growth spurt which many countries in the region have experienced has mostly benefited the cities and a growing middle class in these urban environments. Rural areas have benefited from 'remittances' of these middle classes, building houses in their place of birth for the extended family members that have stayed behind.

In the cities a new African 'modernity' is emerging as a result of growing wealth, exposure to other cultures, education, access to a variety of media and communication infrastructure and participation in democratic culture. Traditional culture has eroded faster in urban areas whereas traditional practices remain alive and well in rural communities.

In fact, traditional forms of governance continue to be practiced in rural communities and may, and in fact do, cause tension with the provisions and rights guaranteed as enshrined in constitutions. The alignment of traditional rural governance within a democratic constitutional governance dispensation remains a challenge to be addressed as to avoid an increasing divide between urban and rural citizens' perceptions and expectations of democracy. The divide creates a regressive opportunity for political manipulation to consolidate authoritarian rather than democratic styles of governance.

Democracy development in the past has often been undermined or compromised by cultural practices used by traditional leaders and political leaders to impede, avoid or slow the pace of democracy development by claiming democracy as a Western construct, having no place within African norms, customary laws and traditions. "It is crucial for Africans to determinedly push the aspects of African culture and traditions which will enhance democracy and development."[7]

1.6   Technology helping democracy

New technology has allowed for the democratic use of new media platforms, especially where the old media is firmly controlled by governments. The rise of the mobile phone has opened up channels for the production and distribution of independent information, and in some instances local content, to larger audiences. Online platforms, mobile phones and social media, increasingly connect Africa's youth to a global youth allowing for the sharing of experiences of discontent and alternative thinking.

The "Arab Spring" protests of 2011 and 2012 by young people against corrupt ruling parties and leaders are cases in point. During the North African "revolutions", young people used social media, the internet and blogs to gather and organise protests, or to support movements to make their voices heard in ways that were not possible before. The challenge remains how to link online and offline mobilisation, but it is a challenge that is taken up daily by young people across the continent. The increasing access to new information sources will change Africa's politics. Technology has altered the extent to which autocratic ruling parties and leaders can manipulate and control the flow of information, either through propaganda by state-owned media or by limiting access to independent information. New sources of alternative information, which are becoming available to Africans across the continent, break the stronghold on information flow by undemocratic African governments and leaders, and will be a powerful force for better governance on the continent in the future.

1.7   Civil society is key

Remittances from Africans abroad continue to shape the economies of home countries and in cases such as Cape Verde, citizens living abroad are increasingly funding democratic initiatives at home. This interest in home countries is in part driven by shifts in Europe and the United States that have seen a growing tide of intolerance for immigrants and a rise in the return of skilled Africans to Africa.

Ghana's Civil Society Platform in Oil and Gas for example, an indigenous coalition of civil society groups which promotes accountable, transparent and efficient public management of the country's oil and mineral resources, has transformed the democratic and development debate in that country.

In 2013, a coalition of civil society organisations known as the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet formed, when democratisation following the "Arab Spring" revolution was in danger of collapsing as a result of political assassinations, violence and unrest. It established an alternative, peaceful political process at a time when the country was on the brink of civil war.

The Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet is composed of four organisations: the Tunisian General Labour Union; the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts; the Tunisian Human Rights League; and the Tunisian Order of Lawyers. The civil society group was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015, with the Nobel committee saying it hoped the civil society group's achievements would "serve as an example that will be followed by other countries."[8]

2. POLITICAL ANALYSIS

Working Towards Quality Democracies in Africa

Despite the positive developments highlighted in the above, alarmingly, a question heard with increasing frequency is whether democracy has failed in Africa. Is it unworkable? Or perhaps just not suited to the continent?

It is true that many supposedly democratic African countries are characterised by human rights abuses, ethnic conflicts, life presidents and economic chaos. There are also arguments put forward to suggest that democracy is "unAfrican", "Western", somehow anti-African culture, or that pursuing democracy is a luxury given the developmental challenges faced by the continent. Some critics cite democracy as one of the causes of conflict, underdevelopment and chaos in Africa. China's economic rise in the absence of democracy in the past few decades is used to embolden this argument. Powering Democracy Works is the conviction that democracy has not failed Africa; it is Africa's *current, limited version* of democracy that has failed the continent.

Since independence from colonial powers, African states have developed their own peculiar manifestations of "democracy". These states pay too little attention to institutional change and thus retain the worst kind of colonial methods and systems combined with the worst kind of African traditions, behaviours, laws, and practises. The result is a system of toothless institutions that pay lip-service to oversight and are staffed by incumbents spouting empty rhetoric about democracy. This manifestation of 'African-style' democracy is minimalist, technocratic, limited and elementary. As such, when the hard work of delivery comes up against the system, it is easy for the institutions to slip into the autocratic and create a buffer between leaders and the needs of their people.

2.1   'African- style' democracy

In order to subvert the weaknesses of what some contend is 'African-style' democracy, it is important to understand how a limited conception of democratic practice undermines institutions and processes. The first distortion of practice is the idea that democracy is only about elections: if an election takes place, the country is democratic. In trying to sell democracy on the continent, foreign donors, Western nations and electoral observer missions have too often endorsed this view by declaring countries where elections take place to be "democratic". What this creates is a cycle prior to the elections in which dictators intimidate and bribe voters perverting the process and removing the critical element of individual choice.

This first distortion breeds a second problem in that minimalist definitions of democracy narrowly define democratic citizenship. Thomas Humphrey Marshall (1964) argued that citizenship cannot be confined to formal (negative) rights only but should include "social entitlements" [9] or positive rights. Marshall outlines three dimensions of democratic citizenship: Civil rights, which include equality before the law, the right to due process and the right to sell one's labour; political rights, which include the right to vote; and social rights, which include the right to social justice, through getting public services and social security. [10]

African-style democracies afford citizens few rights beyond the nominal right to vote every five years. Colonial legacies of geography and administrative boundaries further pervert the rights of citizens in certain countries such that all citizens are not viewed as equal, not even before the law. Instead, the fullness of one's citizenship can depend on one's ethnic group, regional or religious community, or on one's political or economic status. African countries need nationalisms and identities based on democratic values. Michael Ignatieff's concept of "civic nationalism," whereby the glue that holds different communities together is equal rights and shared democratic cultures, values and institutions, should become our new principle of belonging and of being African. [11]

Colonial legacies perpetuate a third distortion in democratic practice by affording supremacy to the state. This drives a focus on safeguarding state sovereignty and leaders rather than collective interest in many countries, and in continental and regional institutions such as the African Union. The focus on hierarchy and centralisation infects political

parties within 'African-style' democracies, whether ruling or opposition parties, so that ethnic or religious concerns dominate over the interests of the national group. When they come to power leaders and parties tend to look after their "own", rather than governing in the interests of all. This cultivates a "winner-takes-all" style of post-election governance, in which party loyalists dominate the civil service and are rewarded with tenders and services. Elections are no longer competitions for citizen approval of party policies but battles for control of a cash resource from which to disburse patronage.

African-style democracy is self-perpetuating as it creates a culture in which the leader is all-powerful and cannot be questioned or challenged. In an African-style democracy the government and its property become the President's own spoils. This centralisation of power is often enhanced by the right of appointment across government and state institutions undermining the independence of key democratic safeguards such as the judiciary or parliament. It is hard to give up such power and in African-style democracies, leaders do rarely willingly step down and begin to resemble a traditional chief. The operation of the law, the functioning of institutions and the competitiveness of economies all suffer in this framework. If a change is to come it is often wrought through violence driving the high incidence of coups on the continent.

African-style democracies are also unaccountable and sustained by impunity over responsibility. Leaders, too often, do not explain their actions, submit to questions, or take responsibility for their decisions or for the consequences thereof. In African-style democracy, those in power tend not to govern, which means being accountable to citizens; rather, they rule.

How then do citizens reclaim their voice and seek transformation in African-style democracies? This remains a key challenge. In some instances coalitions of civil society groups align themselves with liberation movements or opposition parties, uniting to end minority rule or liberation-party dominance through people's power. In the wake of change however these relationships come under strain as civil society is either discarded by the victors or takes too long to realise it has been co-opted into a new wave of oppression. Where civics rediscover independence they are accused of being fronts for "regime-change" under which guise the state can harass and 'regulate' them out of business. This leaves few allies, internal or external, for citizens in their search for voice and accountability.

The attainment of citizen voice will not come easily for all in Africa. A historic legacy of patriarchy, drawing on the worst of colonial misrule and African tradition, sees women pulled down by cultural, political, economic and religious prejudices that undermine their full participation.[12] The society and broader democratic structures within it as well as the health of economies are deprived of a force for innovation and change. African women felt the brunt of colonialism and apartheid even more than men. African-style democracy continues these rigid social rules for women and gender-based inequalities. Yet, as Amartya Sen argues, "nothing, arguably, is as important today in the political economy of development as an adequate recognition of political, economic

and social participation and leadership of women."[13] Traditional systems in Africa cannot be wished away. But they have to adapt to democratic norms and social change. They will have to be made accountable, responsive and inclusive to citizens. Gender equality must be at the heart of any changes in traditional custom.

One of the key distortions of African-style democracy has been its ageism. African countries have a youth "bulge" and the proportion of Africa's population that is between the ages of 10 and 24 will remain, unusually on the globe, above 30% into the next 25 years.[14] Young people across the continent are alienated from mainstream politics. At the same time young people have strong views about social issues — education, employment and corruption — that impact on them, their communities and their countries. Furthermore, young Africans increasingly have access to new ways to express themselves, such as social media platforms and internet blogs, and new technologies, such as mobile phones.

Young people challenged their exclusion from politics, economics and opportunities during the North African "revolutions" of 2012 using the internet and blogs to "gather and organise protests or support movements to make their voices heard in ways that were not possible before."[15] However, these social uprisings were followed by a backlash as autocratic regimes returned in new forms. Such reversals, may lead to young people withdrawing totally from politics (as we may be seeing in the latest Afrobarometer survey) or turning to violence (finding belonging and an outlet even in the extremism of terrorist activity).[16] Across parts of Africa, young people, who suffer the brunt of unemployment, violence and state repression, are increasingly turning to populism to unseat old-style political parties and leaders who have concentrated wealth in the hands of small elites.[17]

To work towards healthy democracies in Africa, citizens must challenge the flaws in current articulations of democracy on the continent and present alternative understandings of systems, processes and institutions. There is need to increase meaningful youth participation and gender balance in politics; to make political parties and democratic institutions more accessible and to provide citizens with the tools to engage more effectively in politics.

2.2   The fault-lines of African-style democracy

The outcome of 'African-style' democratic practice is a set of formal democracies with informal rules of the game. *The de jure* systems include model constitutions and strong legal frameworks with a proliferation of institutions such as parliament or human rights commissions. *The de facto* system however bears no resemblance to the paper on which it is founded. Formal rights are often not enforced and democratic institutions are purposefully under-resourced, toothless and staffed by political appointees while undemocratic ideological or cultural governance systems are left to flourish, often taking precedence over official democratic rights, institutions and rules.

The low functionality and effectiveness of the *de jure* system means that citizens are treated unequally by state agencies and institutions in terms of their democratic rights, depending on their social, political

and economic status. High levels of inequality make a mockery of equal access to democratic institutions such as parliaments, laws and reliable information, as well as to democratically "mandated" public goods and services such as healthcare, education and transport.[18] The rule of law is selectively applied,[19] and state agencies, institutions and officials may respond to citizen demands with violent force.[20]

To build democracy where inequality and injustice are systemic, demands a substantial social-justice ethos.[21] There has to be a just distribution of political, social and economic "services" and rights in the new democracy, which may well mean redistribution or an effort to provide special access to historically disadvantaged communities who, in spite of the new democratic rights, may still lack the tools to participate. Any new dispensation will have to actively build social equality through creating equitable access to new rights and services, combined with redress and redistribution for past wrongs.

US political scientist Nancy Fraser calls the kind of social justice needed "parity of participation." She argues: "Justice requires social arrangements that permit all (adult) members of society to interact with one another as peers. For participatory parity to be possible…. the distribution of material resources must be such as to ensure participants' independence and 'voice' [and] … institutionalised patterns of cultural value [must] express equal respect for all participants and ensure equal opportunity for achieving social esteem."[22]

The challenge in Africa is that there is no 'ideal type' of democracy that will work across the continent and there is no example of functioning democracy to emulate in the struggle to rule by, of and for the people. The catastrophic attempts to squeeze states into the World Bank/IMF neoliberal economic and social models of the early 1990s are a case in point.[23] In Africa, such policies simply reinforced inequalities between the elites and the poor, undermined democratic participation as the economic policies were insulated from public deliberation, entrenched patrimonialism, and weakened the poor's access to their democratic rights.[24] The problem was and remains the poor accountability[25] in these systems.

The more accountable governments are, the higher the quality of any democracy.[26] At the most basic level, accountability means citizens holding their elective representatives accountable through elections.[27] Yet, regular elections on their own are not the most reliable mechanism for holding elected representatives accountable. In many new democracies it is not simply a question of "switching to alternative representatives,"[28] if the ones in power do not perform. Different parties and "representatives" are often equally inadequate — or in many cases, the governing party has a stranglehold over limited resources, institutions and the way laws are applied.

The second dimension of democratic accountability — oversight by state-sponsored public watchdog institutions — particularly when it comes to their ability to enforce penalties and corrective measures in cases of state transgression[29] — is crucial, yet unevenly manifest in many developing democracies. As crucial is "societal accountability", which is the oversight role of community groups, civil society and media[30] over governments. In other words, political democracy in developing and African countries depends on governments democratising both the state and the market. Many new developing country democracies have been unable to secure inclusive growth or growth with equity, which benefits larger numbers of the poor rather than small elite groups.

New democracies need 'policy space' to come up with independent economic policies, such as industrial, trade[31] and monetary policies, which would produce growth with equity.

3. THE DEMOCRACY WE WANT

Quality, democratic developmental states

Democracy Works Foundation believes that building democracy in countries with high levels of poverty and steep inequality between economic, racial or ethnic groups is difficult but not impossible. However, genuine attempts to build democracy under these conditions need a different set of tools, approaches and support to those usually propagated by international and Western democracy agencies.

Democracies need effective *democratic developmental states*. There is increasingly strong evidence that developmental states can successfully balance economic growth and social development while building democratic institutions at the same time.[32] In his ground-breaking research, the Turkish economist Dani Rodrik[33] shows that democracy is not only compatible with growth and poverty reduction, but may actually be crucial to both. This ties in strongly with Amartya Sen's belief that "a country does not have to be fit for democracy, rather it has to become fit through democracy."[34]

A quality democracy must be built on and by a growing quorum of *democrats*. The one element of this is the nature of political leadership. Political parties, both governing and opposition parties can deliver democratic states, societies and cultures only if their processes and systems are inclusive and democratic. This will help to safeguard the selection of leaders who, once elected govern to serve citizens and espouse and champion democratic values and norms. A service-oriented leadership is an expression of a growing and deepening *democratic culture*, which is the foundation of a healthy democracy and which guides citizens in the exercise of their responsibilities and demanding of their rights within society.[35]

The other element of a nation of democrats is found in strong, effective and democratic *civil society* groups, community-based groups, and civic associations with a citizen-given mandate to hold governments accountable, to foster democratic political cultures, promote active citizenship and provide a source for broader democratic leadership.

A quality democracy demands *informed citizens*. There is need for groups and systems producing, tracking and monitoring information on democratic processes, the conduct of leaders and the status of citizen rights. This information is a tool to expand the ability of citizens to participate in democracy. A quality democracy similarly enshrines freedom of expression and feeds it through nurturing democratic culture, the media and civil society. It guarantees everyone the right to "enjoy their culture" provided it does not undermine other democratic rights, such as gender equality, and human rights. Cultural practices that undermine democratic values, individual dignity or safety, degrade women, and allow traditional leaders to do as they please with no accountability, are not democratic.

Healthy, sustainable democracies also need *strong institutions* including capable public services. At the core of any well-functioning democratic developmental state is a public bureaucracy that is efficient, well-coordinated and staffed with skilled employees. This is crucial to steer both development implementation and democratic deepening. Equally crucial is its autonomy and its public and political legitimacy.

Democracies need effectively managed state owned agencies, companies and entities, particularly given the scarcity of public resources, the importance of delivering public services to the previously marginalised and particularly because most new democracies in developing countries fail because popular expectations of equitable service delivery have not been met. State-owned Enterprises (SOEs) must be run on good corporate governance principles, act transparently, and conserve the environment. For this there has to be effective oversight from civil society and the media.

Democracies in developing and African countries need *democratic* markets, where private and state-owned companies operate responsibly and accountably as democratic corporate citizens. Companies, whether global or national,[36] must behave as responsible corporate citizens and this includes fair labour practices, health and safety com-

pliance, environmentally sustainable practices and good corporate governance. Democracy Works believes that — whether at national or local level – *social pacts* can be struck between business, governments and civil society that bind companies to anti-corruption, above-board trading, payment of taxes over local profits and environmental responsibility in their operations. An important element of the sustainability of such pacts is for vigorous democratic monitoring and evaluation by civil society and the media.

In democratic markets, new types of ownership of national resources should be explored: employees and local communities living where factories or mines are situated should become part-owners/share-holders, and informal businesses should be linked to the supply chains of private companies, multinationals and SOEs.

4. THE DEMOCRACY WORKS APPROACH

Democracy Works Foundation provides solutions to make democracy work better.

Democracy can only work if it receives continued care, attention and investment. Democracy is not a finite 'product'. It is a verb rather than a noun.

A working democracy is a more inclusive political system of governance than we know on the continent. It is a system of governance that provides and functions for its citizens in concrete terms. A working democracy that is stable and healthy is a political system that is equitable, pluralist,[37] inclusive, constitution-based, consensus orientated and collaborative.

To achieve this deeper democracy, more technical interventions are important, as with traditional democratisation interventions focussed primarily on institutions. However, according to Democracy Works this focus is too limited.

What should come first, and this is the core focus of Democracy Works, is investment in and strengthening of democratic practice in building a democratic culture. By practicing democracy, democratic culture is built.

Democracy Works argues for an Alternative Politics which means engagement of citizens, inclusive dialogues, consultations, transparency and accountability. In short, enhancing social capital to allow the institutions of democracy to work effectively.

Democracy Works embraces a more holistic vision for democracy building, with a focus on contributing to the advancement of democratic culture as the foundation of a durable democratic political system. For Democracy Works, it requires four priority areas of investment and work:

1. Sustained investment in democratic citizens and leaders.

This is particularly important in countries where experience with democracy has been historically brief, such as with post-conflict countries or those only having known colonialism and authoritarian rule. In those circumstances, citizens often do not have knowledge of democratic practice and engagement. Leaders then often lack democracy skills or a democratic value base to govern in the interest of the common good. Democratic culture and democracy cannot exist without democrats.

2. Facilitating platforms and spaces for dialogue and engagement.

As Constitutions enshrine the right to gather and organise, spaces or platforms are often not provided for citizens to engage with one and other freely. Platforms for engagement, debate, critical thinking and dialogue are essential to create experience with democratic practice and thereby nurture democratic culture. Reliable and objective information and media play an important role in this. New technologies offer opportunities to reach out to audiences. Informed citizens are critical for healthy democracy.

3. Institutions are the instruments through which democracy works.

For democracy to deliver on its goal, its institutions should have the capacity to deliver. Therefore, capacity-building of the institutions within the democratic dispensation and fostering democratic practice and culture within these institutions, is an important task. Using the new outreach techniques via social media, Democracy Works plans to extend its expertise to advance more constructive dialogues and use of the constitutionally provided instruments to local communities in their interactions with local governments and vice versa.

4. Social pacts are essential in resolving persistent development problems.

Singular approaches to solving structural problems hardly ever work. It is through cross-sector collaboration that the most difficult of chal-

lenges can be resolved. The South Africa transition, for instance, is an inspirational example of all sectors of society mapping reform agenda's in an inclusive collaborative processes. Ideally, Social Pacts should be fostered between governments, trade unions, civil society and local communities. On the local level this is happening in some places with impressive results.

The process for an agreement on social pacts, builds social capital that enhances a democratic culture. Each participant is equal and has a voice in achieving a desired outcome and, hence, has an interest in ensuring its implementation. Social pacts rely on inclusive dialogue to be successful. This is an important method in creating democratic markets.

Footnotes

1. African Union. 2014. Agenda 2063: *The Africa We Want*. Addis Ababa: AU Publications, August

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