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Qualifying Governance towards a New Development Consensus: The Imperative of Accountability, Transparency, Participation and Inclusion

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ABSTRACT

Economic and political reforms of the 80s and 90s in developing countries were predicated on the crisis in the political economy of largely Latin America, Africa, and Asia to reverse the evisceration of state led capitalism that was characterized by inefficiencies. The evolution of the new development consensus for governance therefore targeted economic growth through the imperatives of accountability, transparency, participation and inclusion. Qualitative content analysis was used as a methodological approach to generate and analyze data from documentary evidence. It has been established that democratic practices have since the turn of the twentieth century evolved into principles as the corner stones of governance where democratic governments are necessarily required to incorporate accountability, transparency, participation and inclusion into all facets of governance. Elections have also been accepted as a mechanism for legitimation of democratic government that can propel governance to deliver public goods. For democratic governments to achieve meaningful governance, effective citizen voice and accountability as measures of empowerment are critical to be leveraged on access to information about decisions on public affairs by the electorate. The civil society must see to this for a development consensus to have effective impact on the delivery of governance outcomes.

Key Words: Governance, Inclusion, Participation, Transparency

ABSTRAIT

Les réformes économiques et politiques des années 80 et 90 dans les pays en développement reposaient sur la crise de l'économie politique en grande partie en Amérique latine, en Afrique et en Asie pour inverser l'éviscération du capitalisme dirigé par l'État, caractérisé par des inefficacités. L'évolution du nouveau consensus de développement pour la gouvernance a donc ciblé la croissance économique à travers les impératifs de responsabilité, de transparence, de participation et d'inclusion. L'analyse qualitative du contenu a été utilisée comme approche méthodologique pour générer et analyser des données à partir de preuves documentaires. Il a été établi que les pratiques démocratiques ont depuis le début du XXe siècle évolué vers des principes en tant que pierres angulaires de la gouvernance où les gouvernements démocratiques sont nécessairement tenus d'incorporer la responsabilité, la transparence, la participation et l'inclusion dans toutes les facettes de la gouvernance. Les élections ont également été acceptées comme un mécanisme de légitimation du



gouvernement démocratique qui peut pousser la gouvernance à fournir des biens publics. Pour que les gouvernements démocratiques parviennent à une gouvernance significative, une voix citoyenne et une responsabilité efficaces en tant que mesures d'autonomisation sont essentielles pour pouvoir accéder à l'information sur les décisions relatives aux affaires publiques par l'électorat. La société civile doit veiller à cela pour qu'un consensus sur le développement ait un impact efficace sur les résultats de la gouvernance.

Mots clés: gouvernance, inclusion, participation, transparence

INTRODUCTION

The crisis of development of the 1980s set the tone for introduction of economic reforms in Europe with the United Kingdom leading the pack under Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister. The phenomenology of state led capitalism in which public resources were invested by the state in public enterprises that were considered too capital intensive beyond the private sector was petering out due to the inherent inefficiencies associated with involvement of the state in major economic activities (Bangura, 1998). With preponderant control of the commanding heights of different economies from public utilities to social service provisioning and industrial manufacturing, state involvement in economic activities led to over expansion that spiraled out of control with attendant consequences of inefficient allocation of resources. Waste of public resource became dominant and toxic in the public space feeding widespread corruption and stifled economic growth (Stiglitz, 2008). Many developing countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia also took to this state led model of development with worse results. By the early 1980s most developing economies came crashing due to the rapid fall of prices of commercial commodities in the international market upon which many of those countries depended for foreign exchange. Oil was one such commodity. With the collapse of commodity prices and rising foreign debts, developing economies headed for collapse. Further international engagement for support was then predicated on the introduction of economic and political reforms to ignite growth.

The evolution of a new development consensus crystalized in a governance framework that pointed to economic growth and the imperatives of accountability, transparency, participation and inclusion as prerequisites for development policy to achieve poverty eradication and sustainable development (Carothers & Brechenmacher, 2014). The international donor community and multilateral lending agencies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) touted these principles as a must component of governance and development policy by all countries seeking for international financial assistance. For example, the World Bank in its 2007 governance and anti-corruption strategy argued that governance must engage local communities through vibrant civil societies and “transparent flow of information as measures to support poverty reduction by helping to hold governments accountable for delivering better services, creating jobs, and improving living standards” (World Bank, 2006, p.49). Due largely to the welfare focus of state capitalism, resource management was exclusive and opaque permitting official sleaze and lack of accountability. To reverse the scenario, the donor community like the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) framed its aids policy within an open liberal political context to give voice to citizens in the governance of public affairs. Its governance frames



prioritize democracy and human rights emphasizing “greater citizen participation and inclusion, and more accountable institutions and leaders” which it believed would better empower reformers and citizens to demand accountability from political leaders (USAID, 2013, p.7). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) would assert also that “there is growing consensus on the value of human rights principles such as participation, non-discrimination and accountability for good and sustainable development practice”. But this was only feasible under an effective state defined “as those that have open, transparent, accountable and inclusive political institutions” (OECD, 2007, p.4).

The elaboration of democratic practices in the developing world since the turn of the 20th Century has elevated these principles into corner stones of governance. Democratic governments are necessarily required to incorporate accountability, transparency, participation and inclusion into all facets of governance. These principles became woven into three streams of international donor regimes for developing countries; to strengthen governance, support democracy and advance human rights all geared towards efficient delivery of public services by the state. This paper argues that this consensus is yet to take roots in Nigeria but it is imperative if economic growth and sustainable development were to be achieved and simplified into pulling majority of Nigerians out of poverty and radically reversing the rising unemployment trend and improving overall standards of living of majority of citizens. The paper is organized into five sections with an introduction, a conceptual delineation section that dovetails into a bridging of the principles that qualify governance. The next section highlights in practical terms the feasibility of these principles in governance and the challenges confronting governments in Nigeria and the conclusion that horns the policy direction in the context of the new development consensus.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS AND LITERATURE

Governance Qualified

The modern state system that territorialized space under one national government is “the manifestation of the vision of governance that balances political decision-making and the administration of public affairs” (UN, 2015, p.4). Government decisions have general and specific effects on nearly the entire population in a state which qualifies the public sector description defined as the “segment of the economy, that comprises of persons and organizations engaged in the delivery of public goods and services to citizens” (UN, 2001, p.2). This is the largest sector of the economy and any issue it deals with becomes a public affairs matter with telling effect on the public. At the center of public affairs management is the state with critical political and economic responsibilities for the well-being of citizens. It is for instance responsible for guaranteeing freedoms and social justice. It is also capable of with-holding development itself. Economically, the way and manner the state structure and administer policies has tremendous impact on citizens’ well-being. Public sector administration or governance represents the entirety of state functions and responsibilities. The United Nations (UN) (2015, p. 5) asserted that:

States are responsible for maintaining peace and security; upholding constitutionalism and the rule of law; ensuring fair, accessible and affordable justice for all; ensuring respects for human rights; promoting popular participation and institutions of local governance; providing effective delivery



of essential services; and ultimately creating and sustaining trust and legitimacy of state Institutions

The way and manner the state execute these responsibilities has evolved from public administration which is based on legitimate and rational sets of rules that allows for delegated legal authority. This depends on key principles of expertise, impartiality, integrity and professionalism of public administrators who provide continuous and predictable public services to members of the public. Public administration is considered as indispensable in achieving development which simply means enhancing human well-being or security (UN, 2005). Without public administration it is not possible to attain responsive and accountable governance and development because it is public administrators that constitute the foundation of the rule of law and ensure effective delivery of public goods and services. The economic crisis of the 1980s induced a new thinking about public administration. It challenged the field for over emphasizing respect to rules, regulations, controls, procedures and processes to the detriment of service provisioning to citizens. The field was criticized according to what came to characterize its practice as red tape, resulting in sluggishness, insensitivity to public needs, wasteful utilization of public resources, undue focus on processes and procedure rather than on efficient results. With preponderant corruption in the public sector that has seen constrained growth and expansion, public administrators attention to rules was merely a canopy for malfeasance and private interest.

The virulent criticism of public administration in the 70s and 80s crystalized in the emergence of a new concept of public management that emphasized managing public affairs through application of private sector management principles and practices in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of essential public services like electricity, water and transportation (Philip & Daganda, 2013). This involved reduction in waste and streamlining of services and developing resource focus on public problems. Put differently, the NPM focused on “efficiency in the utilization of resources, effectiveness of results, customer focus and a reliance on market forces especially in matters of economic decisions” (UN, 2015). What this meant in policy focus was deliberate increase in the influence of the private sector and the antithetical roll back of the frontiers of the state which resulted in diminishing the role of public administrators in the public sector. Indeed the size of the public sector had to be radically minimized as much as the field of operation of public administration practices.

The movement from public administration to the NPM failed to achieve the presumed efficient delivery of services. What was obvious was deterioration in the delivery of public services and public goods (UN, 2004). This was blamed on the over emphasis on efficiency outcome of application of private sector principles in the management of public affairs. It is important to note that not all public goods and services are amenable to market forces because of their inelasticity. For example, social services like health and education and security once subjected to market forces operation instantly creates greater social inequalities and this can only be reversed with strong state leadership that would see to more socially inclusive policies. In the face of rising inequalities, strong public institutions are required to guarantee public interest over private concerns otherwise the state could lapse into chaos.

Under the NPM, downsizing, managerialism, decentralization, debureaucratization and privatization and deregulation created much lapses in regulations and control which then



provided avenues for leakages that saw the rise in corruption in the public sector (Irene, 2019). For example, the practice of short term contracts over career appointments eroded commitment to public interest. Market forces thus failed to decide in favour of the public and service delivery worsened because the public was not involved in deciding, planning, and implementing, monitoring and evaluating government action. New ways to strengthen citizen capacity to influence the way governments planned and implemented policies were needed in order to turn the quality of managing public affairs around in the interest of the public. Here then entered the concept of governance. This concept was introduced with emphasis on participation of citizens in the management of public affairs and interest of the public which then meant that public officials would then uphold the principles of strong responsiveness, equity, transparency and accountability of public management. Highly simplified, governance is the process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented (UNESCAP, 2002). Emphasis is laid on formal and informal actors involved in decisions implemented or otherwise in any given setting. Actors may vary depending on the level of governance be it local or national or regional. The World Bank (2007, p.4) conceptualizes governance as “the manner in which public officials and institutions acquire and exercise the authority to shape public policy and provide public goods and services”. This authority is exercised in three distinct aspects: the form of political regime, the process by which authority is exercised in the management of a country’s resources and the capacity of government to design, formulate and implement policies (World Bank, 1994).

In a structural sense, governance symbolized a fundamental transformation in relationship between the government and citizens. Hitherto, the relationship was one way where one side governed the other. Contemporary notion of governance signifies a radical shift “to a set of relationship where mutual interaction takes place in order to make desirable choices for the citizens (TESEV, 2010, p.5). Governance now consist of economic, political and administrative machineries, processes, and institutions that citizens in groups and society wide leverage in joint decision-making and implementation, expressing their interests as well as fulfilling their obligations. This mutually reinforcing interaction occurs between social, economic and political actors in the interest of the public good.

But governance experiences have never always resulted in desirable outcomes for citizens in all societies and at all times. Where it goes awry it turns bad with all the deleterious consequences on citizens’ well-being. Billions of citizens around the world have fallen into poverty and are denied a life of decency and dignity since the 2008 global financial crisis and the accompanying recession. As a result there are rising social inequalities between and within countries accentuated by disparities in opportunities for wealth and power. Gender inequality has remained a critical challenge. Unemployment especially of the youth is rising phenomenally as a national and global concern. Added to this dark pack are global health threats like Ebola and COVID-19 pandemics, cyclical conflicts, violent extremism, insurgencies, banditry and climate change. These are no doubts semblance of bad governance.

The desirable governance is a good one as a qualifying notion. To achieve this public policy making must never lose sight of the transformation in governance which deepens the understanding and operation of democracy to adopt a representative form with space for civil



society to interface between citizens and representatives. Civil society organizations have emerged to bridge the government-citizen-representative yawning gap by providing critical information that feeds decision making and solving of public problems. In this way a new form of participatory democracy is achieved. Civil societies emerged not to take over from representatives or government, but to challenge them to stay focused and improve their functioning in a participatory manner. This is what is good governance which refers to “the public administration process that maximizes public interest” (Keping, 2018, p.4). In many societies public goods such as property rights, education and health are included as indicators of good governance (Grindle, 2010). To the UNDP (2007) good governance refers to governing systems which are capable responsive, inclusive, and transparent.

The World Bank (2006) agreed on the essentials and outcome of good government to mean “the combination of transparent and accountable institutions, strong skills and competence, and a fundamental willingness to do the right thing”. It is doing the right things by public institutions and government that result in the efficient delivery of public goods. The World Bank (1992) believed good governance must consist of a public service that is efficient, a judicial system that is reliable and a public administration that is accountable to the public. Drawing from this emphatic conclusion, good governance has underscores four critical elements. First, it relies on a public sector management that is effective in public resource management including human and finances with no room for corruption. Second, it emphasizes accountability in public services delivery, promote decentralization and seek to achieve accountability by public officials. Third, good governance pride itself with a reliable and predictable legal system where rules are not only well known in advance but the entire judicial system is dependable with effective law enforcement mechanisms. Fourth, good governance is only possible where information on public affairs is available within a transparent regime to enable effective policy analysis and enhanced public debate on all issues affecting the public. Good governance is therefore the active and productive cooperation between the state and citizens and its success depends emphatically on the capacity of citizens to participate in political administration. It means then that citizens can influence governance outcomes only if given the power to choose who governs, add their voice in decision making, administration and supervision and also join hands with the state to strengthen public authority and order. It is important to note that good governance suffers from definitional brevity but are then numerous due to lack of consensus on its nature and the complexity of its components (Gisselquist, 2012). This has deepened the contestation on its important characterizations and the variation therefrom and the difficulty this has raised about classification of countries along the well-governed and poorly governed continuum.

Good governance is characterized by key principles of legitimacy, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, participation, inclusion and equity, effectiveness and efficiency (IMF, 1997, OECD, 1995, Rothberg, 2004). The legitimacy character of good governance points to “the quality that social order and authority are voluntarily recognized and obeyed” (Kipeng, 2018). This is not about legality but the totality of political identity shared by citizens and obtaining their maximum consent. It is enhanced by achieving broad based involvement of all stakeholders in all stages of public policy decision-making from planning, implementation and monitoring. Broad participation by civil society organizations and individuals benefits from collective social capital that makes effective implementation of



public policies. Transparency targets the publicity of political information. All citizens should have access to information on all public policies that deal with their interests including public expenditure. The availability of this information is critical to citizens' participation in policy decision-making. It also means that policy decisions made and enforced are done in an open manner following established rules and regulations (UNESCAP, 2010).

Accountability is critical to good governance and requires holding public officials accountable for their behavior and role in every policy decision and implementation. This is the synergy between responsibility and obligation to the public. The higher the level of accountability the higher the level of good governance (Kipeng, 2018). Interestingly, accountability is only possible where transparency and rule of law are available. The rule of law principle addresses the question of fair and predictable legal frameworks that are impartially enforced. This goes to the enforcement and protection of human rights by an independent judiciary and neutral police force. The rule of law is another key requirement of good governance and it is based on a sound legal system that upholds the supremacy of the law and the equality of citizens. Responsiveness points to administrators attempt to meet the needs of citizens in a timely and responsible manner. It is akin to accountability and demands that public officials be proactive in anticipating public problems. Effectiveness and efficiency of governance ensure that administrative processes and institutions generate results that meet citizens' needs at the lowest cost possible. This means that resources are used with a sense of sustainability and respect for the environment and without compromising the needs of future generations (Emas, 2015). Inclusiveness, the last leg of good governance characterization requires that all citizens be part of policy decision making and implementation. All citizens need to feel that they have an equal stake in public affairs and are not being excluded from the mainstream of society (Johnson, 2010). Inclusivity and equity targets the needs of the minorities and the most vulnerable usually on the margins of society who must be brought in as equal members of the same society. The ideal of good governance has under gone trials in many societies and has become the rallying consensus globally hence the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that succeeded the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Good governance is therefore a long term strategy that leans strongly on the cooperation between citizens and public officials through participation and public institutional resilience.

The Civil Service, good governance and sustainable development

The civil service is the fulcrum of development. It is the clearing house for public policy implementation and without its vigilance no development can be sustainable. It is this realization that made the service to undergo series of reforms in Nigeria. At every critical stage in the country's economy, the civil service is pushed through the furnace of reforms for refining to enable it takes its role with greater vigor. It was the poor state of development in 1999 that was used as a justification for reforms and President Olusegun Obasanjo had noted that "instead of progress and development which we are entitled to expect from those who governed us, we experienced in the last decade and a half, and particularly in the last regime but, one persistent deterioration in the quality of our governance, leading to inability and the weakening of all public institutions".

Reforms were introduced in pension, monetization policy, restructuring of pilot Ministries, Departments and Agencies, down-sizing and payroll reform. Public service



procurement and due process, wages and salaries adjustment and anti-corruption measures were also introduced (Olaopa, 2008; Bayo, 2012; Ehiyamen, 2017). In order to deal with corruption and the phenomenon of ghost workers, the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) was also brought on stream. It was also to improve the maintenance culture and invoke attitudinal change (Stephen, 2011). These reforms were designed to streamline public expenditure, reduce waste, professionalized the civil service for optimum performance in order to deliver good governance. Except for the IPPIS and TSA many states have domesticated the other reforms. Despite the reforms, the situation painted in 1999 has not changed but has rather deteriorated in every facet of the country's national life. It is even worse at state level in many states in Nigeria.

Development statistics in Nigeria are staggering and point to unsustainability of development trajectory. Since 1999, unemployment has remained on the rise from 23.1% in 2019 to 33.5% in 2020. Of Nasarawa state's estimated population of 2,523,395 in 2016 its share of poverty rate is 16.86% (NBS, 2020). There are thousands of school age going children out of school because their parents are too poor to pay their way or the public schools they attend are not teaching them nothing due to poor infrastructure, inadequate teachers or where available, lack the inspiration and motivation to deliver. The basic needs here include a good education, better health care, better job opportunities, affordable and nutritious food, protection against crime and violence, access to clean water and sanitation, better transport and roads, equality for men and women, reliable energy, protection of forests and rivers and actions against desertification. These are demanded to be achieved in a sustainable manner but only responsive, accountable and transparent governance can do so. This is good governance in demand. Put differently, "the centrality of transparent, accountable, efficient, effective, non-discriminatory, professional and citizen-oriented public administration...to the successful implementation of development policies and the management of development programmes" is imperative. Adoption of a multi-stakeholder partner approach promises to allow for shared burdens, catalyze actions and bring all stakeholders together to have a bearing in resolving public sector problems (UN, 2015).

Responding effectively and efficiently to peoples' needs requires direct engagement of the public to identify and articulate their needs. This is derived from the feeling that people have a right to be listened to by their governing institutions especially when public policy has to deal with local issues. Participation in decision making allows them ownership of the projects and programmes designed to solve the perceived problems and can elicit their maximum support. One of the consequences of not involving the people in decision making and governance is perceived not to be responsive to peoples' needs is the decline of trust in government and the attendant threats to political and social stability (Tolbert & Mossberger, 2006). Citizens can easily lose confidence in administrative and political performance and also become highly dissatisfied with public goods and services due to distrust (Thomas, 1998). Public trust is critical to maintaining the legitimacy and stability of a system by encouraging cooperation and compliance with rules and regulations essential for good governance (Avres & Braithwaite, 1992).

Between the people and the state is public service which serves as the basic link and responds to the demands of the people. By the quality of service rendered to the people, public service function as the incubator of public trust or mistrust (UN, 2001). Citizens are



moved to trust government because in the public service there are conspicuous elements of assurance such as technical and professional capacity, integrity, effectiveness and responsiveness of public servants in managing public affairs and delivering public goods and services. These are the determinants of public trust in the government in addition to transparency and accountability. The very absence of these or their scant presence induces mistrust. Where these exist, sustaining trust comes from availability and enforcement of regulations that govern the conduct of public servants such as civil service rules and codes and code of conduct. The practice of these codes in Nigeria has remained inward looking that is highly compromised to serve superficial ends but achieve a different private ends. This inward aspect of public service codes deal with compliance with values, norms, rules and procedures such as those required by procurement. Once that is done, paper work appears perfect but the public receive no quality or effective service and the quality of public goods and services delivered hardly meets public expectations. What is needed here are service standards, citizens' charter and quality assurance programmes which are outward looking and focus on satisfying the expectations of the public by quality, quantity and promptness of the services delivered. Both the inward and outward frameworks are complementary and should be used simultaneously with emphasis on the latter to enhance responsiveness and increase trust in governance (UN, 2008).

Bureaucrats and public servants must develop competences in knowledge, skills and attitudes to facilitate quality engagements with the relevant stakeholders in order to effectively respond to their needs. These competencies are needed to mediate the complex diversity that a public should be drawing representatives from the whole community including women and men, all ethnicities, religious and other groups (Saner, 2013). These broad combinations increase the collective understanding of societal aspirations. This promote inclusion of all groups especially minorities. Inclusivity in governance must leverage competence and diversity in addition to adherence to basic ethical behavior such as a refrain from indulging in acts of corruption. Any improvement in the quality, quantity and promptness of delivery of public goods and services demand putting the interest of citizens in focus for service delivery. However, procedures, structures and processes and even institutions are not designed to effect responsive delivery which needs reforms. First public and civil servants must demonstrate commitment to serving citizens.

Governance and the delivery of services has been revolutionized by the explosion of significant improvements in information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) which allows for nearly unfettered stake holder engagements for consultation and service delivery. The digitalized network offers a unique opportunity for multichannel delivery. ICT tools hold the promise to reduce cost, improve efficiency and quality of public services as well as convenience. Through ICT, more stakeholders can be reached and allow citizens to access faster and more transparent means of reaching out to government. Centralization through a single portal can resolve the challenges to government and service delivery and resolve the in-person contact. The single portal can house all agencies of government providing different services that can be accessed even after office hours. ICT also help in sharing information with citizens and is increasingly becoming an effective means of enhancing citizen participation in decisions about policies and service delivery. Internet and mobile technologies are veritable tools to promote participation in shaping effective response to



public policies. There are challenges here which are human, organizational and technological for developing countries. The solution lies in a committed leadership that is challenged to develop an e-government strategy that integrates with institutional framework required for implementation. It is important to bear in mind that in the digital era “technology and e-government are facilitators of more efficient, transparent, participatory and accountable governance” (UN, 2014). This help to promote cooperation and compliance with regulations and rules as a result of enhanced trust in government by anchoring policies, strategies, programmes, activities, projects and resources in peoples’ needs (UN, 2015).

Another leg of good governance for sustainable development is accountability. It has been stressed that effective governance for sustainable development requires that public institutions must be inclusive, transparent and accountable at all levels. This may be national or local levels. Emphasis here is on accountability that is anchored on transparency that points to “unfettered access by the public to timely and reliable information on decisions and performance in the public sector” (UN, 2015). Accountability is all about holding institutions and public officials to account for their actions inactions. This is about answerability as one dimension of accountability and then facing the consequences of wrong doing as a public official as the other dimension of accountability. In a sense accountability is linked to responsive governance where public officials responsible for delivery of public goods are made to account for failure to do so timely and in the right quantity and quality. Central to accountability is the management of public finances which requires that public funds be used for the purpose they were intended. Upholding accountable standards ensures that public officials act with integrity and respect authority by complying with rules that are consistent with public sector economy (Mulgan, 2003; (Lawal & Oluwatoyin, 2011).

Accountability safeguards public resources and enhances trust in government. Where resource challenge is imminent as it is in Nigeria with dwindling oil revenue, accountability is imperative. It is important to underline hierarchical accountability, an upward and downward model of traditional accountable authority. This is also a typical vertical accountability where a senior government official is held accountable by a minister or commissioner. The government official is inturn required to hold subordinates to account. Vertical accountability is an internal mechanism that maintains the citizen, parliament, government and public sector continuum in accountability. It is highly compromised by network of social relations in Nigeria leading to waste of public resources and poor delivery of services. Waste, mismanagement and corruption are serious barriers to effective mobilization and allocation of resources. They divert resources away from fighting poverty, hunger and diseases and above all sustainable development when public officials turn a blind eye to crime, corruption and tax evasion permitting illicit financial flows to private ends that hurts the marginalized. This is worrisome because of the scale and systematic impact on governance and development.

Accountability is a cornerstone of governance and which is a prerequisite to and undergirds public trust. It is not easy to achieve public accountability especially in developing countries due to two major challenges: the nature and impact of the relationship between formal and informal institutions of accountability and the challenges relating to shared responsibility between public and private actors (UN, 2005). Improving the quality of governance and accountability is touted by every government but this is hampered



consistently by informal arrangements where they clash with formal rules but which tend to complement each other. Many governments have introduced reforms that target formal arrangements that leads to new procurement measures but the reforms fail to acknowledge the fact that it is within informal structures that formal governance transactions are consummated (North, Wallis, Webb & Weingast, 2013). This is why enforcement of accountability always fails because informal institutions enforcement mechanisms do not involve enforcement by formal state agencies. For instance, in Nigeria there are powerful informally organized special interest groups in society drive behavior of formal governmental agencies like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and Other related offences Commission (ICPC) or the police. This is maintained by politics of patronage, being the exchange of favours within informal networks and the use of informal resources to collaborate, construct and maintain political parties and similar organizations in the polity and economy (Khan, 2005). Patron-client relationships are therefore the major bane of accountability in Nigeria and other developing countries.

CONCLUSION

A key condition for good governance is political leadership will to activate the levers of accountability, transparency, participation and inclusion. Effective citizen voice and accountability are critical instruments as measures of empowerment that depends on access to information about decisions on public affairs. Applying the World Banks triangle of accountability holds the promise to deliver good governance for sustainable development. This requires citizens influencing public policy makers; policy makers influencing service providers who in turn deliver services to citizens. Citizens will hold government accountable or government will hold service providers accountable, citizens remain central to effective accountability when armed with relevant information to appraise expenditures in terms of allocation to priorities, assessment of value for money achievements and efficiencies in procurement. Whichever way, citizens voice accountability approach include the elements of participation, inclusion, transparency and accountability essential for good governance and sustainable development in Nigeria.

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