THE AFRICAN UNION'S AGENDA 2063 FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT: POSSIBILITY OR RUSE?

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A b s t r a c t

When Africa emerged from the chains of colonialism, there was great hope for post-colonial African leaders to consolidate the spirit of Pan-Africanism and use Africa's vast resources to spur inclusive socioeconomic development. The Organization of African Unity also supported this vision, as did the Lagos Plan of Action and the New Partnership for Africa's Development. Great emphasis was placed on continental integration and African unity. However, post-colonialism, Africa has been engulfed by never conflict, fragmentation of governance, political instability, and unstable relations between African countries, thus defeating the need for unity and collective development. The African Union Agenda 2063 is Africa's blueprint for achieving inclusive and sustainable socioeconomic development. It seeks to ensure, amongst others, peace and economic and political stability. However, there have been questions about whether the AU can achieve this. This doubt has been driven by the plethora of socioeconomic and political problems currently consuming Africa. This paper reviews current literature to examine the practicality of AU agenda 2063. It seeks to understand whether this agenda can be a possibility or just another plan with little if no substance. The following question will guide this paper: to what extent can the AU's agenda 2063 become realizable, considering the current socioeconomic and political challenges engulfing Africa?

1. Introduction

Africa, since independence, has been touted to be the next fortress of economic development (considering its vast resources) (Leshoele, 2019). However, political instability and the breakdown in governance have consolidated the assertion that it will take time for Africa to realize its true developmental potential. Literature has, over the years, widely pointed out that challenges such as lack of transparency, accountability, and independence of key state institutions have stalled the development of African states (Pasara, 2020). As a result, inadequate infrastructure, unemployment, conflict, inadequate water, healthcare, and education, and a lack of decent housing are challenges that have come to hinder inclusive development

(Kalonda & Govender, 2021). The poor provisioning of the above services is a setback in achieving some of the SDGs within the African context, notably improved health and access to clean water and sanitation (Chigonda & Chazireni, 2018; Odaro, 2012). Regrettably, corruption and the lack of leadership were pertinent issues affecting African states from meeting essential services and the needs of their citizens (Abuki, 2014; Kalonda & Govender, 2021).

Over the years, this has hindered the development of African countries. Hence, adopting strategic frameworks such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) for the continent's sustainability, development, and economic prosperity has become paramount if Africa dreams of inclusive development

(Morsy et al., 2021). If the AfCFTA is implemented efficiently, Africa is set to benefit from a $1.7 billion consumer market and $6.7 trillion in consumer and commercial spending across the continent, respectively (Fofack, 2020). Local markets are said to be flooded mainly by imported international products. Collier and Gunning (1999) suggest that Africa intrinsically manufactures the challenges in economic and trade policies.

Similarly, Brautigam et al. (2010) argue that the continent remains stagnant due to a heavy reliance on raw materials exports, unstable policies, inadequate infrastructure, and the high cost of doing business. However, implementing the AfCFTA will ensure that the intended structural reformations achieve and foster rapid development in infrastructure, communications, energy, and economic diversification (African Union, 2015). Therefore, appreciating Africa's unfortunate development and growth post-colonialism, the African Union agenda 2063 seeks to remedy past misfortunes. Despite the positive objectives of the AU's agenda 2063, this paper examines if this agenda can be achieved or is just a pipe dream. It seeks to understand how Africa should achieve such and what challenges will hinder its realization. A qualitative research approach was employed where a literature review (data collection from secondary sources) was undertaken to engage this highly politicized issue. Data was collected at international, regional, and local levels. This approach was sufficient as it permitted the paper to go deeper into the current debates, arguments, and discussions around the understanding African Union's Agenda 2063 for Africa's development.

2. Developmental Initiatives in a Post-Colonial Africa

The AU Agenda 2063 is a mechanism for bolstering the Abuja Treaty and the Lagos Plan of Action. The agenda allows Africa to adjust its development strategy for structural changes, economic growth, and social improvement. To address issues, the continent is facing in the short, medium, and long term, Agenda 2063 relies on previous initiatives, including the Abuja Treaty, Lagos Plan of Action, and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). It draws lessons from them (Tshiyoyo, 2017). Agenda 2063 seeks to establish an integrated, wealthy, and peaceful Africa led by its inhabitants and a dynamic force internationally. This implies that Africans must drive and take ownership of their growth (Viswanathan, 2018).

The Africa Agenda 2063 advocates for and ensures a united Africa through a series of frameworks. While many challenges continue to impede African integration efforts, the AU's agenda 2063 should develop an integrated continent that is politically unified and founded on Pan-Africanist principles and the concept of African Renaissance. The Abuja Treaty paved the way for forming eight regional economic communities (RECs), which remain today's bedrock for Africa's integration efforts. Ever since African states achieved their independence, the Abuja Treaty argued for the need to consolidate cooperation and unity in the continent (Babić, 2020). The Africa Agenda 2063 must prioritize constructive collaboration between African governments since its success depends on collaborative efforts among African states. The African Union Commission (2020) expanded targets for its regional integration program, unveiled the flagship projects that make up Agenda 2063, and refocused its efforts on achieving the objectives of the Abuja Treaty via establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). African leaders have understood the necessity of developing a unified African economic community since independence. It has been one of Africans' most persistent concerns and a rallying cry. In this spirit, the AU Agenda 2063, which integrates the Abuja Treaty, is planned to be implemented within the context of integration, boosting trade, capital flows, and continental integration. According to the African Union Commission, prior continental agendas such as the Lagos Plan of Action illustrate that for Agenda 2063 to succeed, African people must control the process and influence the conclusion. As a result, the ownership problem must be addressed since it has significant consequences for buy-in, commitment, funding, monitoring, and long-term execution of the agenda (Addaney, 2018). One of the critical goals of the AfCFTA is to increase economic prospects for young people, which will result in job creation. This is significant since most African youths are unemployed, contributing to political insecurity, high crime rates, and a heavier public debt burden for African countries (Thusi, Mlambo, Adetiba, 2022). The LPA did not produce the desired results. Its outcomes fell short of what continental leaders envisioned, owing primarily to the rise of neoliberal ideas and their ramifications for Africa throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Oliveira & Otavio, 2021).

Neoliberal ideas called for lowering trade barriers, which are crucial in Africa's integration of the regional economy. The Africa Agenda 2063 stated that the continent's economy must change. Adopting neoliberal ideas will help by promoting free trade zones, lowering trade barriers, removing price controls, and cutting trade costs (Africa Union, 2022). The African Union (AU) adopted Agenda 2063 to promote sustainable development in Africa. Despite acknowledging earlier attempts and frameworks to reform the continent, the AU says nothing about why they failed. For the AU's Agenda 2063 to succeed, it is critical to revisit the Lagos Plan of Action and examine implementation procedures to guarantee African ownership and leadership (Rukato, 2017). It is essential to emphasize that the Lagos Plan of Action did not include an adequate monitoring and follow-up system for its execution, which may explain why governments

did not have it in their national development plans (Yong, 2020). To guarantee the achievement of the Africa Agenda 2063, the AU must ensure that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are in place to evaluate progress and address obstacles. Kimaro & Fourie (2017) expound that Agenda 2063 must incorporate lessons from past African plans to overcome developmental issues and impediments. The availability of finance, according to NEPAD, is a fundamental requirement for the effective implementation of Agenda 2063. Apart from this, governance and political stability are essential if Africa wants to realize its Agenda 2063. Without peace and harmony in the continent, developmental initiatives are bound to fail.

3. Public Debt Burden in Africa

One of AU's Agenda 2063's objectives is for the continent to assume full financial responsibility for its development. This seems improbable because of Africa's enormous debt, which grows yearly. As a result, the sustainability of the AU's Agenda 2063 strongly depends on stable financial and monetary institutions. Soko (2022) indicated that African governments' rapid accumulation of public debt in recent years raises concerns about debt sustainability, which may jeopardize the continent's capacity to accomplish Agenda 2063 objectives. Africa's total foreign debt was 775 billion USD in 2020, up from 300 billion USD in 2010. Ademola (2022) alluded that the problem of debt overhang is one of the most critical barriers to poverty reduction in African nations today. The debt issue is fundamental, as indicated by the vast sums of money paid to foreign creditors to cover loan interest rates. Chikowore (2021) noted that although Agenda 2063 has been in effect for six years, several African nations are still dependent on external sources of funding, which are notorious for driving them deeper into debt due to ineffective Public Financial Management (PFM) policies on loan contraction, among other things. Adebayo (2013) states that Africa remains the world's poorest, most Africans live in poverty, and the continent is heavily in debt. Due to unmanageable debt, the overall development of African countries will continue to be fiction. Instead, money that could be used to provide social welfare services goes to servicing debt (Ademola, 2022).

Table 1. African Countries Public debts captured in the first half of 2021

Country	Country Total Public Debt ($)
Nigeria	$79.5 billion
Ghana	$21.9 billion
Ivory Coast	$19.5 billion
Senegal	$13.7 billion
Mali	$5.1 billion
Guinea	$4.8 billion
Niger	$4.2 billion
Benin	$3.8 billion
Burkina Faso	$3.7 billion
Cape Verde	$1.9 billion
Sierra Leone	$1.8 billion
Togo	$1.4 billion
Liberia	$1.3 billion
Gambia	$823 million
Guinea-Bissau	$382 million

Source: Benson, 2021

There are increasing worries about Africa's soaring debt levels. Most nations have debt levels higher than the benchmark of 60% of GDP (Ndoricimpa, 2020). Africa's national debt is increasing, raising additional questions about its sustainability. It has emerged as one of the most significant constraints to Africa's growth (Owusu-Nantwi, 2021). Despite debt forgiveness and cancellation by the Paris Club creditor nations in 2005, it is noteworthy that African countries have accumulated further debt and are again pleading for debt forgiveness (Ademola, 2022). Without adequate and stable governance, African governments will find it impossible to make positive use of the continent's vast natural resources to spur development. Potential benefits from additional assistance and debt reduction are unlikely to be as effective as one may assume (Nwebo, 2018). Most African nations have on paper sound public debt management strategies. These strategies, however, are neither incomprehensive nor well applied. Debt sustainability levels have also deteriorated noticeably as more and more nations approach critical debt levels. The number of countries at high risk of financial distress climbed from 9 to 23 between 2012 and 2022 (Soko, 2022).

4. Reflecting on the Challenges of AU Agenda 2063

4.1. Lack of Infrastructure, Regional and Trade Integration

The African Union reflects that the need for robust, modern, and well-functioning infrastructure is driven by the need for Africa to consolidate trade integration and increase Africa's global offering regarding trade. Building on these insights, Coulibaly (2020) and Ishikawa (2021) argue that the countries in the (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) ASEAN region have become key manufacturing hubs for multinational companies because the region was able to leverage the need for unity and to work together to ensure the availability of modern infrastructure needed to attract international companies. However, Austin (2020) & Hirsch and Lopes (2020) question why African leaders

in a post-colonial era have failed to consolidate this unity and invest in infrastructure development, especially considering the continent's vast availability of natural resources. For decades, it has been argued that inadequate infrastructure remains a significant obstacle to Africa's economic growth potential. The infrastructural crisis is the bane of Africans doing business throughout the continent (Dovi, 2018). Not all hope is gone, however. Over the past fifteen years, although Africa has lagged behind the rest of the world in the coverage of essential infrastructure classes such as energy, road and rail transportation, and water infrastructure, infrastructure investment in Africa has been increasing steadily. This has been made possible by the rise in new role players (Lakmeeharan, Manji, Nyairo, and Poeltne, 2020). While this may be seen as beneficial, the problem is that Africa has a terrible track record of bringing projects to a financial close: 80% of infrastructure projects fail in the feasibility and business plan stage. The expected cost of upgrading the infrastructure in sub-Saharan Africa for the next ten years is US$93 billion yearly (The World Bank, 2010). A total of $60 billion is required for entirely new infrastructure, while an additional $30 billion is required to upkeep the current infrastructure (Smith, 2020). According to the African Development Bank, the continent's lack of infrastructure development is due to the sharp cuts in infrastructure funding made by African governments and their development partners in the 1980s and 1990s due to the structural adjustment programs most African nations adopted under the so-called Washington Consensus. As a result, the continent's infrastructure deficit has persisted ever since (African Development Bank, 2018).

Apart from this infrastructure, Africa must accelerate growth and "structural transformation" to take the bulk of its population out of poverty, and at the center of this process should be regional economic communities (RECs). There are eight RECs in Africa, and while one assumes that their existence should contribute towards a deeper level of integration, because of internal issues, cooperation and integration between RECs policies and that of the AU have at times not worked in tandem (Nathan, 2010, & Mlambo and Mlambo, 2018). For example, multiple and overlapping memberships of Africa's RECs are common, especially in East and Southern Africa. Such arrangements are costly and cumbersome, and compliance requirements are duplicated by belonging to several RECs simultaneously (Nagar & Nganje, 2016). RECs were developed and formed outside of the OAU/AU. However, there have been ongoing attempts at the continental level to improve their performance due to their importance to the African regional integration initiative (Nagar & Nganje, 2016). The growth of regional economic communities (RECs) as tools for sub-regional integration has been uneven in the setting of significant disparities in regional political dynamics,

even though RECs have been recognized as crucial participants. Long-standing rivalries among regional powers have often fueled tensions between the RECs. They had hindered the ability of RECs' and the AU to coordinate effectively, especially regarding peace and security (Mlambo, 2020; Nagar & Nganje, 2016).

Moreover, RECs are autonomous legal persons whom the Abuja Treaty governs. As a result, the strong national interests that steer Africa's sub-regional institutions have sometimes compromised their obligations and devotion to continental integration. Because of the dispersion of RECs, trade integration will be difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish. Most people believe that intra-African commerce is modest when compared to other areas. Intra-African commerce has remained modest over the last ten years; the greatest levels were seen in 2015 and 2016, when it accounted for 19 percent and 20 percent of all trade, respectively (Khadiagala, 2018 & Mlambo et al., 2022). While the recently established African Continental Free Trade Area has the potential to lift 30 million people out of extreme poverty by 2030 and increase intra-African trade from 18% of total trade to 50% by 2030, this will require significant policy reforms, trade facilitation measures, and infrastructure investment (World Economic Forum 2022). Therefore, the effective implementation of Agenda 2063 would be jeopardized in the absence of the required infrastructure, REC mobilization, and the need to ensure their policies are consistent with the AU.

4.2. Corruption and Governance Instability

Africa loses billions of dollars annually due to corruption, contributing to the continent's rising poverty and underdevelopment. According to the Global Corruption Barometer — Africa 2019, most respondents said corruption has risen in their country. However, the majority (53%) believed that civilians might make a difference in the battle against corruption, although 67% believed it might result in punishment or reprisal (Jones, 2021). Corruption has increased poverty and unemployment in Africa and cemented neo-patrimonialism, nepotism, and political patronage. According to Tella (2013), corruption in Africa impedes economic, political, and social growth. It is a substantial impediment to economic progress, effective governance, and fundamental freedoms such as free expression and the ability of individuals to hold governments accountable (Transparency International, 2019). Corruption and governance instability has been driven by the political and economic structures inherited from colonial masters. According to Parashar and Schulz (2021), postcolonial African nations, like most other locations, are little more than a carbon copy of colonial states. Fagbadebo (2019) stated that African politicians are more political predators than liberation warriors fighting colonial legacies. Instead of using the state's authority to advance the

public interest, African leaders are more concerned with their well-being, taking advantage of people's vulnerabilities. This has resulted in stagnant growth, growing marginalization, and public despair. Low levels of economic development, poor governance, weak constitutions, political instability, high levels of poverty and increasing levels of unemployment encourage corruption in Africa (Mlambo et al., 2019). From the never-ending oil-driven war in the Niger delta to blood diamond-driven hostilities in Sierra Leone and Liberia to oil and ethnoreligious conflicts in Sudan and the Central African Republic, all concerns are tainted by corruption tentacles. Governance deficiencies are a significant contributor to the situation. They undermine state legitimacy and make post-conflict democratic transitions challenging. According to Diatta et al. (2021), some of the continent's governance challenges stem from poor state management, where leaders cannot manage economies, diversity, and political inclusion efficiently. This results in a lack of faith in government institutions and their ability to carry out critical duties. Governance has failed to address political exclusion and economic marginalization concerns, and the continent's rising inequality and population growth will become more unsustainable, thus giving rise to instability.

4.3. Poverty, Poor Education, and Health Systems

The African Union Agenda 2063 aspires to achieve sustainable development to foster equitable socioeconomic growth on the African continent. Poverty and a lack of access to education and healthcare, on the other hand, impede Africa's desire for inclusive progress in the post-colonial age. Higher levels of economic disparity, inflation, conflict, and a growing population (without economic opportunities) exacerbate poverty in Africa. They are detrimental to inclusive development on the continent (Anyanwu, Kayizzi-mugerwa, and John, 2013). According to the World Bank, although the poverty rate has reduced from 56% in 1990 to 40% in 2018, the number of impoverished people continues to climb. In summary, although measures have been implemented to reduce poverty, the rate at which poverty has been reduced on the continent has not kept pace with population increase. (Schoch & Lakner, 2020). The desire to eliminate poverty in Africa is based on increasing access to education and youth development opportunities. However, access to education in African nations remains unequal. According to the UN, Sub-Saharan Africa has the world's highest percentage of educational exclusion. Almost 60% of youth aged 15 to 17 are not enrolled in school (Kaledzi, 2022). Furthermore, education in Sub-Saharan Africa has grown considerably during the last half-century. Between 1970 and 2010, the proportion of pupils who finished elementary education increased by about 50% (from 46% to 68%) (Evans & Acosta, 2021). However, African nations continue to confront enormous

educational hurdles. Low-quality teaching and learning, as well as inequality and exclusion at all levels, plague Africa's education, and training programs. Despite a significant rise in the number of children receiving a basic education, many stay out of school (Musau, 2018). Given the above, it is difficult to see how the united struggle against poverty would succeed if there were still hurdles to education access on the continent. Poor access to healthcare services has become another impediment to long-term growth. Africa's healthcare systems are severely neglected, with underfunding, brain drain, and decaying infrastructure. This implies that African nations could not achieve the basic criterion for good healthcare systems (Oleribe et al., 2019). The failure to expand healthcare access and infrastructure imply that Africans will continue to be vulnerable to the continent's three major killer diseases: malaria, TB, and HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, according to Clausen (2015), less than half of Africans have access to contemporary healthcare facilities. In many African nations, health care accounts for less than 10% of GDP. Likewise, there is a scarcity of skilled healthcare professionals from Africa since many opt to live and work in countries such as the United States and European countries. These obstacles, put together, have significantly hampered Africa's drive for inclusive development.

4.4 Youth rural-urban migration

Globally, youth are seen as the backbone of future progress. In 2020, Africa's under-35 populations was about a billion people (540.8 million 0-14-year-olds and 454.5 million 15-34-year-olds), accounting for 22.7% of the world's total young population, second only to Asia (58.0%) (Rocca & Schultes, 2020). Rural-urban migration creates fast population growth in secondary cities in low-income nations, resulting in significant urban development, albeit considerable challenges. Unfortunately, people who leave rural areas deprive them of creativity, skills, and innovation. However, one cannot examine rural-urban migration in isolation without considering the socioeconomic factors that drive it. Youth suffer widespread poverty, limited educational opportunities, lack of job prospects, limited gains from globalization, water shortages, peace and security difficulties, violent extremism, sexual violence, corruption, and forced migration (Monyae, 2020). As a result, relocation becomes the only option. Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 mentions youth as the cornerstone of the plan's success. Furthermore, African adolescents have expressed dissatisfaction with their perceived lack of involvement in decision-making forums and a lack of financing for their developmental initiatives (Monyae, 2020). Because their approaches to issues and solutions may vary from the widely used and accepted approaches, African youth have the economic potential to contribute to development. Some of the concepts advocated in Agenda 2063 and the SDGs have been present for a long time, only to be repackaged and rebranded.

Youth may recognize and oppose ingrained conventions and ideas that keep them out of socioeconomic activities and existing power systems (Monyae, 2020). As a result, there is an urgent need to engage the concept of rural development via youth-led initiatives such as entrepreneurial enterprises, agricultural development, and assistance in establishing the necessary infrastructure to discourage rural-urban migration. The AU recognizes that if the young are ignored, the 2063 Agenda is unlikely to see the light of day; hence, member states should implement steps to boost rural development.

4.5. Climatic Change

Africa's quest for stability, sustainability, and inclusive development cannot be achieved if the threat that comes with climate change is not collectively managed. Unfortunately, the rapid change in the climate means countries with limited resources and a lack of technological know-how will find it difficult to protect themselves, and climatic changes will not only reduce Africa's growth potential but will lead to conflict and governance instability. According to Osano (2022), the African Union's Peace and Security Council produced a paper in November 2021 that emphasized the threat of climate change to the continent's future peace and security. According to the paper, climate change is a threat multiplier for Africa. Climate change causes food and water insecurity, job loss, increased demand for natural resources, increasing water shortages, and more climate-related people displacements (Ofori, Cobbina, and Obiri, 2021 & Osano, 2022). Climate change has worsened existing vulnerabilities and heightened tensions and violent conflicts. Food insecurity, crop farmer-herder disputes, and displacement and migration are all likely to become more common. Climate change's destabilizing impacts are already being felt in West Africa, where farmers and herders have become involved in violent battles fueled by climate change. While Yanda and Bronkhorst (2011) argue that for thousands of years, people in Africa have adapted to climate change through migration and mobility and by following pastoral/nomadic livelihoods, Mulhern (2020) believes that climate change may influence many current ongoing conflicts in Africa. For example, the Darfur crisis is the first wholly caused by climate change; rainfall scarcity has led to strife. Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger have very high proportions of poor people who rely on agriculture. Droughts have uprooted millions of people who have also become endangered by ongoing Jihadist violence in Burkina Faso or massive community tensions caused by a paucity of resources (Mulhern, 2020). Climate change will likely be a significant source of conflict, and Agenda 2063 must consider climate change issues.

4.6. Democratization and Human Rights

After decolonization, Africa grappled with another fundamental issue: protecting human rights and consolidating democratic rule. For Fye (2015), the issue of a democratized Africa remains highly controversial. Some states can be regarded as democracies as they guarantee some form of civil liberties and participation of citizens in governance processes; however, some are still ruled by leaders who came into power during independence. In some cases, this power was attained through political instability, which led to military coups. As a result, in these countries, there is an absence of freedom of speech and civil liberties (McGowan, 2003). The AU 2063 agenda envisions a continent with a universal culture of good governance, democratic values, gender equality, and respect for human rights, justice, and the rule of law. However, this paper argues that the AU understands that ensuring all countries become fully democratized is a mammoth task as African leaders have become obsessed with power. This paper contends that instead of pushing for democracy, the AU should ensure that leaders support continental integration efforts and the protection of human rights. However, in Africa, where culture and traditional values reign supreme, it is unlikely that all aspects associated with human rights will be accepted. Somervill (2011) contends that while democracy as a system cannot be regarded as perfect, nevertheless, it is the closest form of system that allows people to have a say in the governance process.

The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) released its 2019 democracy index. Except for Seychelles, South Sudan, Somalia, and Sao Tome & Principe, it included 50 African countries (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2019). According to the index, democracy fell internationally in 2019, mainly on the African continent, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, the region's average score declined from 4.36 in 2018 to 4.26 in 2019, the lowest since 2010 (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2019). Military coups, religious and ethnic conflicts, the obsession with power by leaders, political patronage, and, to some extent, external meddling in African affairs are all factors impeding Africa's development. Concerning human rights, this paper argues that minority religious and ethnic groups, the LGBTQI community, and critical media are likely to face discrimination and unlawful jail sentences. This was especially evident during the COVID-19 epidemic, when various African countries imposed significant restrictions on mobility and freedom of assembly and, in some cases, complete lockdowns that stifled people's freedoms and led to human rights violations (Amnesty International, 2021). During this time, arbitrary arrests, beatings, torture, and reports of extrajudicial executions committed by government troops in Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, and South Africa became the order of the day. While comprehensive democratization of Africa may prove to be a difficult, if not

impossible, inclusive and sustainable development as envisioned by Agenda 2063 will be difficult, if not impossible, to attain.

5. The Quest for A Politically Stable Africa: Possibility or Ruse?

It is imperative to understand and highlight that Africa is in a race against time to consolidate unity and promote the collective development of its people. While this paper argues for the AU Agenda 2063, it reflects that Africa has many challenges which may derail the AU's plan for collectively developing Africa. This paper acknowledges that without addressing challenges such as the lack of infrastructure (energy, rail and road, and water), human capital development, improvement in the standards of living, governance, and conflict-related issues, increasing threat of cross-border terrorism and the marginalization of the youth, women, and girls, the realization African Union Agenda 2063 remains in great jeopardy. Isaac (2019) notes that advanced infrastructure systems allow easy integration in conducting business, multiplying productivity, and deepening economic and social integration. These are essential in the context and aspirations of an integrated African economy. The calamity many African states face is a lack of good governance which is most cases is a result of corruption. As a result, this has contributed to the multiplier effect in challenges such as reducing living standards, contributing to continued poverty, widening inequality (Azeez, 2018), and in the process, stagnating African countries from actively playing being at the forefront of their development and growth. However, the implications and effects of poor governance and corruption are felt by marginalized groups who continue to be deprived of service delivery. Marchetta and Dilly (2019) reveal that another stumbling block in Africa's developmental path is poor education and inefficient school infrastructure. For example, some parts of Africa, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Ghana, and Madagascar, lack the adequate infrastructure needed for educational development. Hence this becomes worrisome in the quest for collective and human capital development.

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collective and human capital development. The aspirations of the African Union, if adequately implemented, stand to be successful as that of the European Union's multilateralism kind of community-based regional integration model, which has been a success in contributing to regional development despite its associated challenges (Omolo, 2019). With the above, this paper concludes that while 2063 is possible, its eventual implementation and success depend on whether African states can work together to address the abovementioned challenges. We locate our argument in the notion that having a peaceful and stable Africa is possible only if governance is stabilized. We argue that the 2063 Agenda will remain a pipe dream without political unity.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Undeniably, Africa is going through many governmental developmental issues. Nevertheless, African leaders must unite to consolidate good governance, coordination, and political unity. The 2063 agenda of the AU is significant in ensuring that Africa can be self-sustainable and use its natural resources for self-development and change the lives of its people. One cannot help but observe that Africa has failed to consolidate collective economic development in a post-colonial era. While strategies such as the Lagos plan of action, NEPAD, and the Abuja treaty outline the route Africa should undertake to ensure economic growth, they did not result in an effective developmental platform where Africa can play a role in ensuring collective development. Political instability, military coups, and a poor record of human rights continue to hinder Africa's quest for unity. Even though RECs exist, they are fragmented and have not been effective as one might have expected.

There is greater awareness of the need for sustainable natural resource management, with almost all African countries placing it as one of the priority areas in their development plans. The solidarity and unity of purpose seen in the development of Africa's common position on climate change that enabled Africa to speak with one voice were unprecedented. This unity of purpose could form the platform for managing Africa's cross-boundary natural resources for the benefit of her citizens. As such, we also argue that resources in Africa can be used to spur growth and integration. Still, because of instability in the continent, resources continue to be plundered by multinational corporations and the name of investment and creating job opportunities. Leaders need to work together to ensure the continent's development and improve the people's lives; otherwise, the 2063 agenda for Africa's development will remain a pipedream. The need for proper natural resource management has re-emerged as an issue of global importance following the 1992 Earth Summit and recognizing the mismanagement of natural resources as a security factor. This makes it imperative for Africa to manage its resources sustainably.

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