

## Editorial

---

**Betty C Mubangizi**

According to the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, “34 countries, home to approximately three out of four Africans (71.6% of Africa’s citizens), have improved their governance performance over the last ten-year period. It does leave, however, at least one in four Africans (27.2%) experiencing decline in governance as 18 countries register a deteriorated score over the last ten years.” (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2018:17). Governance is the bedrock of socio economic development and a lot of Africa’s development challenges of poverty and socio economic exclusion are attributed to poor governance. Improvement in governance would thus suggest that Africa is well on the much needed growth path to reducing poverty and social exclusion – or is it?

In this Issue we reflect on a multiplicity of factors which, in isolation and in combination, increase our understanding of Africa’s challenges as a global player, its growth trajectory in fighting poverty as well as the potential to leverage developments on the global scene to ensure social inclusion of its people.

**Mtapuri and Sibanda** set the scene by providing an in-depth discussion on the historical causes of Africa’s current situation. Their conceptual article “Of poverties and inequalities in post-colonial Africa,” argues that at the source of Africa’s poverty are slavery and colonialism while the effects of globalisation appear fuzzy as they simultaneously attenuate and exacerbate poverty. This hard-hitting analysis advances the argument that the emergence of Africa’s relationship with China is a response to the frustration that is borne out of the effects of the dual historical injustices of slavery and colonialism. And while Mtapuri and Sibanda acknowledge the positive developments on the continent and the fact that some of the world’s fastest growing economies are to be found in Africa, they caution that the growing Sino-African relationship should be studied and analysed against the backdrop of the historicity of poverty in Africa.

**Mubangizi** takes the discussion further when he explores poverty and social exclusion within contemporary South Africa. Mubangizi

grounds his discussion in the context of human rights and sustainable development. He acknowledges that poverty and exclusion are not unique to South Africa but that in South Africa, they are accentuated by the country's historical, social, economic and political dynamics compounded by issues of race, discrimination and inequality. Against this backdrop, he suggests that South Africa has to ratify and domesticate all relevant international human rights instruments and uphold good governance, ethical leadership and accountability.

**Netswera and Phago** take the discussion on good governance, accountability and ethical leadership further by analysing the prevalence of public sector corruption in South Africa. They do so while reflecting on the relevance of societal norms in counteracting this scourge, which seems to be growing in South Africa's public institutions at the same rate that societal tolerance towards it is increasing. **Netswera and Phago's** discussion posits that group values are an interplay between societal, cultural, communal, as well as individual values. They bemoan the breakdown of the family structure as a possible contributory factor in the erosion of values since it is in the family unit that ethical and moral standards of an individual are nurtured.

With all the gloom and doom it is worth noting that cross-country economic geography has experienced a rebalancing, with some major developing countries well on an impressive growth trajectory. For instance, Ethiopia (8.5%), Ivory Coast (7.4%), Rwanda (7.2%) and Senegal (7%) were projected to be among the fastest growing economies in 2018 (World Bank, 2018). Yet in some cases, the in-country economic geography of many countries has grown more uneven, with successful cities and regions capturing an increasing share of their countries' populations and output. There is a need for the cities to get smarter through the application of innovative solutions to address large-scale urbanisation challenges and find new ways of creating liveable, competitive and self-reliant cities. **Mwesigwa and Mubangizi** discuss findings of a study on the prospects of attaining a smart municipality in the context of Uganda's Support to Municipal Infrastructural Development (USMID) policy using Hoima Municipality as a case study. The findings of that study bring into sharp focus the futility of the 'one size fits all' approach to planning for and funding of municipalities and smaller towns. Specifically, the study noted that the *modus operandi* of USMID did not enhance a smart municipality in terms of ICT, management as well as strategic initiatives. Consequently, while the idea is noble in its aim of

ensuring in-country equity and social inclusion it will be a while before a smart municipality can be achieved in this public entity.

Private institutions are profit-driven, this motivates them to function efficiently, and effectively – their *modus operandi* being different. On the other hand, the functioning of many public institutions is poor and wasteful; expenditure is high and executives are often political appointees rather than people with skill and acumen. This gap between public institutions' creative potential and the reality that public sector institutions face is a perfect opportunity to engage with the private sector to learn from their best practices and most creative ideas.

A case in point is the advancement in innovation and information communication technologies (ICT) that have enabled banks to service their customers through new channels of internet and mobile banking. **Redda and Surujlal** empirically validate an internet banking service quality (IBSQ) scale for the banking sector in South Africa. In their study a multi-dimensional scale was identified as useful to assess service quality in the South African banking environment. This scale may also be relevant for other emerging markets in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Specifically, this principle can be applied to establish service standards in the delivery of public services.

## REFERENCE

---

Mo Ibrahim Foundation. 2018. *Mo Ibrahim Index report on Good Governance*. Available at <http://mo.ibrahim.foundation/iag>. Accessed on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2018

