

**AFRICA: A TALE OF TWO CONTINENTS AND WHY
PROSPERITY CONTINUES TO ELUDE US – THE CASE OF
ZAMBIA**

PRESENTATION AT RHODES HOUSE, TUESDAY 8 MARCH 2011

BY

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PRESIDENT – NATIONAL RESTORATION PARTY (ZAMBIA)

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PRELIMINARY REMARKS

GOOD EVENING LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

LET ME START BY THANKING WARDEN DONALD MARKWELL FOR ACCORDING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO FULFIL A SECRET DESIRE TO SPEAK AT RHODES HOUSE. I RECALL MY TIME AT OXFORD – SOME 20 YEARS AGO NOW – WITH FOND MEMORIES. ALTHOUGH I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT I AM BY ANY STRETCH OF THE IMAGINATION, OLD, I AM CERTAINLY OLDER AND, HOPEFULLY, WISER.

EVERY TIME I THINK ABOUT GROWING OLD AND I AM FACED WITH HAVING TO ADDRESS AND AUDIENCE – WHICH THESE DAYS, GIVEN MY NEW CAREER AS A POLITICIAN, IS QUITE OFTEN – I FIND MYSELF RECALLING A STORY TOLD BY A SENIOR TOUR GUIDE ON ONE OF THE OXFORD TOUR BUS COMPANIES. IT IS THE STORY OF TWO PROFESSORS COMPETING TO DEMONSTRATE HOW BADLY THEIR MEMORIES WERE DETERIORATING AS THEY ADVANCED IN AGE. ONE TELLS THE OTHER THAT HE HAS BECOME SO FORGETFUL THAT WHEN HE HAS TO COLLECT SOMETHING FROM THE UPPER FLOOR OF HIS HOUSE, HE INVARIABLY FORGETS WHAT IT WAS HE WENT TO COLLECT AND HAS TO GO BACK DOWN AGAIN IN ORDER TO REMEMBER BUT THE PROCESS SIMPLY REPEATS ITSELF UNTIL HE GIVES UP. NOT TO BE OUTDONE, THE OTHER MAN SAYS: “IF YOU THINK THAT IS BAD, WAIT TILL YOU HEAR WHAT HAPPENED TO ME”. HE THEN PROCEEDS TO EXPLAIN HOW HE HAD FORGOTTEN ABOUT A SCHEDULED PRESENTATION AT AN OFFICIAL EVENT AND CALLED THE ORGANISERS TO APOLOGISE FOR NOT

TURNING UP. THE PERSON ON THE OTHER END OF THE LINE WAS QUITE SURPRISED AND SAID: “BUT PROFESSOR, YOU *DID* TURN UP AND YOU GAVE A VERY GOOD PRESENTATION”!

INTRODUCTION: WHY TWO CONTINENTS?

THE TITLE OF MY TALK IS: “AFRICA: A TALE OF TWO CONTINENTS AND WHY PROSPERITY CONTINUES TO ELUDE US – THE CASE OF ZAMBIA”. A TITLE LIKE THIS IS PROBABLY BOTH DARING AND UNSURPRISING. UNSURPRISING, BECAUSE YOU CAN FIND DICHOTOMY IN ALMOST ANYTHING YOU CARE TO OBSERVE IN LIFE – DEPENDING ON WHAT ASPECT YOU SEEK TO EXAMINE. WE SOMETIMES HEAR OF A PLACE BEING DESCRIBED AS TWO CITIES – ONE REFLECTING THE SCENES THAT GREET THE EYE AND ONE THAT HIDES AN UNDERCURRENT OF CRIME. OR WE HEAR TALK OF A PERSON LEADING TWO LIVES – ONE THAT THE PUBLIC SEES AND ONE THAT IS SEEN BY VERY FEW ALTHOUGH THIS IS USUALLY THE ONE THAT REFLECTS THE TRUE NATURE OF THE PERSON LIVING IT. BUT IT IS PRECISELY BECAUSE OF THE NEGATIVE CONNOTATION OF IDENTIFYING A DICHOTOMY IN CHARACTER THAT I FEEL I AM TAKING SOMETHING OF A RISK IN SUGGESTING THAT AFRICA IS REALLY TWO CONTINENTS AND NOT ONE. THE DIFFERENCE IS OBVIOUSLY NOT PHYSICAL BUT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL. IN CASE YOU HAVEN’T ALREADY GUESSED IT, AFRICA’S DICHOTOMY – IN THE SENSE IN WHICH I INTEND IT FOR THIS PRESENTATION – IS ONE THAT ARISES FROM THE RURAL/URBAN DIVIDE.

BUT WHY – YOU MAY ASK – SHOULD THE RURAL/URBAN DIVIDE IN AFRICA FORM THE BASIS OF A DISTINCTION THAT WOULD ALLOW US TO CHARACTERISE THE LIVES OF THE INHABITANTS OF ONE COMMUNITY AS BEING SO DISTINCT FROM THE LIVES OF INHABITANTS IN THE OTHER THAT THEY MAY AS WELL BE LIVING ON TWO DIFFERENT CONTINENTS?

WELL, THERE ARE TWO REASONS FOR THIS. THE FIRST IS THE SHEER NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN RURAL COMMUNITIES IN AFRICA. ACCORDING TO THE 2005 REPORT OF THE POPULATION DIVISION OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, RURAL POPULATIONS IN

AFRICA CONSTITUTED 62 PER CENT OF THE OVERALL POPULATION. ZAMBIA – A COUNTRY THAT I WILL FOCUS ON DURING THIS TALK – HAS JUST COMPLETED A NATIONAL CENSUS AND PRELIMINARY FIGURES PUBLISHED BY THE CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE IN DECEMBER 2010 INDICATE A RURAL POPULATION OF 61 PER CENT; OR APPROXIMATELY 8 OUT OF 13 MILLION PEOPLE.

THE SECOND REASON IS THE STARK VARIANCE BETWEEN URBAN EXISTENCE AND LIFE IN RURAL AFRICA.

IN RURAL AFRICA:

- INFANT AND MATERNAL MORTALITY RATES ARE FAR HIGHER THAN IN URBAN AREAS
- MALNUTRITION IS A COMMON FEATURE
- PRIMARY CARE SERVICES ARE EITHER NON-EXISTENT OR LOCATED SEVERAL KILOMETRES FROM VILLAGES – CERTAINLY TOO FAR TO SAVE LIVES IN CASES OF EMERGENCIES
- ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER IS A MAJOR PROBLEM
- EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT IS LIMITED AND SCHOOLS ARE OFTEN LOCATED SEVERAL KILOMETRES FROM HOMES
- SCHOOLS ARE POORLY STAFFED WITH HIGH TEACHER ATTRITION RATES
- ARTERIAL ROADS LEADING INTO THE COMMUNITIES ARE SO BADLY DAMAGED IN PARTS THAT LONG STRETCHES ARE DIFFICULT TO NAVIGATE BEYOND SPEEDS OF 10-20 KILOMETRES PER HOUR

THE LIST GOES ON.

AS ONE WOULD EXPECT, THERE ARE SOME GREY AREAS AND THE REALITY IS OBVIOUSLY MORE TEXTURED. FOR EXAMPLE, SOME PERI-URBAN AREAS BEAR THE NEGATIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WORST AFFECTED RURAL AREAS AND OF COURSE NOT ALL RURAL LOCATIONS (PARTICULARLY THOSE

CLOSE TO THE MAIN NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION ROUTES) FACE THE SORT OF PROBLEMS I HAVE OUTLINED ABOVE. BUT THE BROAD DISTINCTION HOLDS TRUE.

IT WILL BE CLEAR TO THE CAREFUL OBSERVER THAT THE DIFFICULTIES ROTATE AROUND THREE CORE DEVELOPMENT ISSUES:

- DELIVERY OF BASIC HEALTH SERVICES
- PROVISION OF A MINIMUM STANDARD OF EDUCATION; AND
- THE DEVELOPMENT OF CORE INFRASTRUCTURE (ESSENTIALLY A STURDY ALL-WEATHER ROAD NETWORK)

IN MANY WAYS, ZAMBIA IS A PRIME EXAMPLE OF THE RURAL/URBAN DIVIDE. THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN NATION THAT GAINED ITS INDEPENDENCE FROM BRITAIN IN OCTOBER 1964 IS A LAND OF ABUNDANT NATURAL RESOURCES AND HOME TO THE VITORIA FALLS – ONE OF THE SEVEN NATURAL WONDERS OF THE WORLD. ZAMBIA IS ALSO AFRICA’S BIGGEST COPPER PRODUCER BY A LONG WAY, PRODUCING A RECORD 820,000 TONNES IN 2010 AT A TIME WHEN BASE METAL PRICES WERE REACHING THEIR HIGHEST LEVEL YET. WITH COPPER PRICES PROJECTED TO AVERAGE MORE THAN US\$10,000 PER TONNE IN 2011 (A MORE THAN 30 CENT INCREASE FROM LAST YEAR) PRODUCTION IS ESTIMATED TO EXCEED 1,000,000 TONNES THIS YEAR. GROWTH IN ZAMBIA HAS AVERAGED 6.6 PER CENT OVER THE LAST 5 YEARS AND RECENTLY THE COUNTRY RECEIVED A NON-INVESTMENT GRADE RATING FROM FITCH RATING AGENCY OF B+. THIS HAS PUT ZAMBIA IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS OTHER RATED AFRICAN COUNTRIES LIKE KENYA, GHANA AND ANGOLA AND RESULTED IN COMMENTATORS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE FALLING OVER EACH OTHER IN A BID TO BE THE FIRST TO CONGRATULATE THE GOVERNMENT ON A JOB WELL DONE.

WITH SUCH A SEEMINGLY IMPRESSIVE ECONOMIC BACKDROP, YOU MAY WELL ASK WHY I AM NOT JOINING THE SCATTERED CHORUS OF PRAISE. THE REASON IS THAT IF WE LOOK CAREFULLY AT WHAT

HAS SPURRED ZAMBIA'S GROWTH AND THE PRICE WE HAVE PAID TO ATTAIN IT, WE WILL BEGIN TO GAIN A SENSE OF THE DANGERS OF PROCEEDING DOWN OUR CURRENT ECONOMIC PATH. WE WILL ALSO START TO SEE THE MISSING INGREDIENT IN AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS AND TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF THE CORE CRISIS THAT HAS ENGULFED THE CONTINENT.

SO WHAT IS AFRICA'S GREATEST CRISIS?

I WANT TO BEGIN TO ADDRESS THIS QUESTION BY PLANTING TWO IMAGES IN YOUR MINDS: FIRST OF ALL I WANT YOU ALL TO THINK ABOUT AN ELEPHANT. I THEN WANT YOU TO THINK ABOUT A DUCK. BEAR WITH ME – THE REASON FOR ALL THIS SHOULD BECOME CLEAR AS WE GO ALONG. I NOW WANT YOU TO THINK ABOUT THIS QUESTION: "WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A DUCK AND AN ELEPHANT"? NO DOUBT THERE ARE QUITE A FEW SMART PEOPLE IN THE AUDIENCE THAT ARE THINKING: YOU ARE MORE LIKELY TO FIND "DUCK" ON A JAMIE OLIVER MENU THAN YOU ARE "ELEPHANT". THIS MAY WELL BE TRUE BUT IT IS NOT THE ANSWER I AM LOOKING FOR.

THERE ARE THREE THINGS THAT I WOULD LIKE TO ACHIEVE TONIGHT. THE FIRST IS TO MAKE THE POINT THAT ALTHOUGH AFRICA IS A CONTINENT OF MANY CRISES, ONE CRISIS SURPASSES THEM ALL AND THE FAILURE TO PROPERLY ADDRESS THIS ONE CRISIS HAS RESULTED IN SUSTAINED UNDERDEVELOPMENT ON THE CONTINENT AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO UNTIL THIS ISSUE IS PROPERLY ADDRESSED.

SECONDLY, I WILL SEEK TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE BROAD APPROACH TO RESOLVING AFRICA'S MYRIAD CHALLENGES HAS BEEN "SYMPTOMATIC" RATHER THAN "CAUSAL". I WILL TRY AND SHOW HOW AN IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTION (AND PERHAPS THE MOST WIDELY RECOGNISED); A RENOWNED DEVELOPMENT ECONOMIST; AND A BILLIONAIRE PHILANTHROPIST WITH DREAMS OF A BETTER AFRICA, HAVE ALL TYPIFIED THIS SYMPTOMATIC APPROACH AND THEREFORE INADVERTENTLY HELPED TO PREVENT A MORE ROBUST RESPONSE TO CHALLENGE OF BUILDING THE CORRECT FOUNDATION FOR CONTINENTAL PROSPERITY.

LASTLY, I WANT TO OFFER SUGGESTIONS ON HOW WE CAN MORE PROACTIVELY ADDRESS AFRICA'S MOST PRESSING DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES.

BUT LET US MORE DIRECTLY RE-ENGAGE WITH TONIGHT'S MAIN THEME: WHY DOES PROSPERITY CONTINUE TO ELUDE AFRICA? THE SHORT ANSWER IS REALLY QUITE SIMPLE: **ITS LEADERSHIP, STUPID!** AFRICA'S GREATEST CRISIS IS NOT MALARIA OR HIV AIDS OR CONFLICT OR BAD GOVERNANCE. IT IS NOT POVERTY OR UNDERDEVELOPMENT OR EVEN ITS WEAK ECONOMIC FOUNDATION. AFRICA'S GREATEST CRISIS IS THE ABSENCE OF QUALITY LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY.

WHEN HAROLD MACMILLAN MADE HIS "WINDS OF CHANGE" SPEECH IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PARLIAMENT IN 1960, THE TIDE OF INDEPENDENCE HAD ALREADY BEGAN TO SWEEP WEST AFRICA AND WAS HEADING RAPIDLY SOUTH. HOPES WERE HIGH AND OPTIMISM AT ITS PEAK FOR THE NATIONS OF A CONTINENT THAT HAD FELT SHACKLED BY THE CHAINS OF COLONIALISM. BUT HOW PREPARED WERE THESE COUNTRIES TO MEET THE RESPONSIBILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH SELF-GOVERNANCE? IN ZAMBIA'S CASE, THERE WAS LITTLE TO OFFER CONFIDENCE: BARELY 100 GRADUATES WERE ON HAND AND LITERACY LEVELS ACROSS THE COUNTRY WERE EXTREMELY LOW. IN MY BOOK: *UNEQUAL TO THE TASK? – AWAKENING A NEW GENERATION OF LEADERS IN AFRICA*, I ARGUE THAT AFRICAN LIBERATION LEADERS DID LITTLE TO PROMOTE SUCCESSION AND ENDED UP FOSTERING A CULTURE OF PERSONALITY THAT ENTRENCHED A SPIRIT OF INTOLERANCE TO CRITICISM AND ALTERNATIVE VIEWPOINTS. I DESCRIBE THIS INTOLERANCE AS HAVING THE EFFECT OF ACID, CORRODING THE FOUNDATION UPON WHICH ANY FORM OF COMBATIVE AND VISIONARY ALTERNATIVE LEADERSHIP COULD EMERGE.

ZAMBIA, LIKE SEVERAL OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES, IS LITTERED WITH EXAMPLES OF POOR LEADERSHIP DECISIONS THAT COURSE THROUGH ITS POST-INDEPENDENCE HISTORY. ONE EXAMPLE THAT HIGHLIGHTS THE PRESSING NATURE OF THIS PROBLEM IS OUR ATTEMPT AT ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AND OUR DESIRE TO ATTAIN FOOD SECURITY.

IN A RECENT MEETING IN LUSAKA WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD BANK, OUR 4TH REPUBLICAN PRESIDENT, RUIAH BANDA, DECLARED THAT IN ORDER FOR THE COUNTRY TO ACHIEVE ITS VISION OF BECOMING A PROSPEROUS MIDDLE INCOME COUNTRY BY THE YEAR 2030, WE NEED TO DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY FROM ITS DEPENDENCE ON COPPER. SADLY, THIS OBSERVATION HAS BEEN DOING THE ROUNDS CONSISTENTLY FOR OVER 40 YEARS. IN A MAJOR ADDRESS TO THE UNIP NATIONAL COUNCIL IN 1976, ZAMBIA'S 1ST REPUBLICAN PRESIDENT, KENNETH KAUNDA, ASSERTED BOLDLY THAT THE COUNTRY HAD WAITED 5 YEARS TOO LONG TO IMPLEMENT A DIVERSIFICATION PLAN AND CALLED FOR A CONCERTED MOVE AWAY FROM RELIANCE ON COPPER. CLEARLY, THIS CONCERN IS NOT NEW.

WE HAVE ALLOWED OURSELVES TO BECOME VICTIMS OF THE SO-CALLED "RESOURCE CURSE" OF DUTCH DISEASE SYNDROME – ALLOWING OUR ECONOMY TO BECOME DEPENDENT ON A SINGLE COMMODITY AND EFFECTIVELY CROWDING OUT INNOVATION IN OTHER AREAS. ALTHOUGH THE CASE FOR ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION SHOULD BE SELF-EVIDENT, IT IS PROBABLY WORTH RESTATING FOR TWO REASONS. FIRST OF ALL, SIMPLY TALKING ABOUT A PROBLEM DOES NOT MAKE IT GO AWAY. WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY IGNORED THE RESPONSIBILITY TO DRASTICALLY REDUCE OUR DEPENDENCE ON A COMMODITY THAT IS SUBJECT TO THE VAGARIES OF INTERNATIONAL DEMAND. VOLATILITY IN WORLD DEMAND LEADS TO VOLATILITY IN PRICING WHICH IN TURN LEADS TO ECONOMIC VOLATILITY. GIVEN THAT 40 YEARS OR MORE HAVE ELAPSED SINCE THIS PROBLEM WAS IDENTIFIED, IS IT NOT TIME THAT WE DID MORE THAN JUST TALK ABOUT THE PROBLEM?

THE SECOND REASON TO RESTATE THE CASE FOR DIVERSIFICATION IS THE CURRENT INTERNATIONAL BENCHMARK PRICE FOR COPPER. THE PRICE OF ZAMBIA'S MAIN EXPORT COMMODITY HAS BROKEN ALL PREVIOUS RECORDS AND THE TREND LOOKS SET TO CONTINUE FOR A WHILE. AS HAS BEEN THE CASE SO OFTEN IN THE PAST, A HIGH COPPER PRICE IS LIKELY TO BREED ONLY COMPLACENCY. THEREFORE,

RATHER THAN SEEK COMFORT FROM THIS TURN OF EVENTS, WE SHOULD BE MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO ENSURE THAT WE CAN CAPITALISE ON THE OPPORTUNITY THAT THE CURRENT SURGE IN PRICE PRESENTS WHILE WE PREPARE OURSELVES FOR THE IMPACT OF THE DOWNTURN THAT WILL SURELY FOLLOW AT SOME POINT IN THE FUTURE.

THE PACE OF ZAMBIA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SINCE INDEPENDENCE HAS BEEN ALMOST SINGLE-HANDEDLY SET BY THE MINING INDUSTRY. THROUGH ITS SHEER DOMINANCE, MINING HAS CONSISTENTLY PRESENTED ITSELF AS THE "ENGINE" POWERING ZAMBIA'S ECONOMY. MINING ACCOUNTS FOR OVER 60 PER CENT OF EXPORT EARNINGS AND THE INDUSTRY IS THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST EMPLOYER. AS IS EVIDENT FROM THE RECENTLY PUBLISHED SIXTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (THIS IS THE GOVERNMENT'S 5 YEAR ECONOMIC PLAN THAT WILL RUN FROM JANUARY 2011 – DECEMBER 2015), THE CURRENT ADMINISTRATION ENDORSES THIS SENTIMENT AND INTENDS TO RELY HEAVILY ON INCREASED MINE OUTPUT TO FUND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT PLANS OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS. NOW WHILE IT IS BROADLY TRUE THAT MINING HAS SPEARHEADED DEVELOPMENT IN SEVERAL PARTS OF THE INTERIOR, MOST OF THE COUNTRY IS DEVOID OF SUCH ACTIVITY. AS A RESULT, MINING HAS NOT BEEN A TRUE ENGINE OF GROWTH FOR THE WHOLE ECONOMY. THE MOST OBVIOUS SECTOR THROUGH WHICH MORE UNIFORM NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COULD BE ACHIEVED AND THROUGH WHICH NUMEROUS ATTEMPTS AT DIVERSIFICATION HAVE BEEN MADE IS, OF COURSE, AGRICULTURE. ZAMBIA IS A COUNTRY WITH A LAND MASS OF 752,000 KM². MORE THAN HALF OF THIS (420,000 KM²) IS OF MEDIUM TO HIGH QUALITY ARABLE POTENTIAL. YET ONLY 15 PER CENT (60,000 KM²) OF ARABLE LAND IS CURRENTLY UNDER CULTIVATION.

AS A NATION THAT HOSTS POSSIBLY 40 PER CENT OR MORE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA'S FRESH WATER; WITH QUALITY ARABLE LAND IN EXCESS OF SEVERAL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES PUT TOGETHER; AND WITH

THE MOST FERTILE AREAS OF THE COUNTRY OFFERING UP TO THREE TIMES THE AVERAGE CROP YIELD WITHIN THE REGION, ZAMBIA LIVES WITH THE VERY REAL POSSIBILITY OF BECOMING THE CONTINENT'S AGRICULTURAL GIANT. IN ORDER TO BE REALISED, HOWEVER, THIS POTENTIAL MUST BE HARNESSSED THROUGH MASSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT – PRIMARILY THROUGH THE CONSTRUCTION OF MAJOR NEW ROADS IN CURRENTLY INACCESSIBLE AREAS AS OPPOSED TO SIMPLY REHABILITATING EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE. THE COUNTRY DESPERATELY NEEDS A PLAN TO ENSURE THAT ACCESS TO ARABLE LAND CAN BE DRAMATICALLY AND SUSTAINABLY INCREASED IN ORDER TO TURN ZAMBIA INTO THE CONTINENTAL EPICENTRE OF AGRICULTURE IT HAS ALWAYS HAD THE POTENTIAL TO BE.

WHAT ABOUT THE RECENT BUMPER HARVEST?

NOW REMEMBER THAT THE POSITIVE MACRO-ECONOMIC PICTURE IS PRIMARILY THE RESULT OF GROWTH IN MINING, AGRICULTURE AND CONSTRUCTION. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE INTERNATIONAL BENCHMARK PRICES FOR BASE METALS HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GROWTH OF MINING. CONSTRUCTION HAS BEEN PROMPTED BY A GOVERNMENT KEEN TO BE SEEN TO BE SEEN TO BE ACTIVE IN ORDER TO BOOST ITS ELECTORAL PROSPECTS FOR 2011. BUT WHAT ABOUT AGRICULTURE? WELL THIS IS WHERE THINGS START TO BECOME RATHER SCARY.

THOSE OF YOU THAT ARE FAMILIAR WITH EVENTS IN ZAMBIA MAY BE AWARE THAT WE RECORDED A RECORD MAIZE HARVEST OF NEARLY 2.8 MILLION METRIC TONNE IN 2010. MAIZE IS MORE IMPORTANT TO ZAMBIA THAN POTATOES ARE TO THE BRITISH DIET. TO GIVE YOU A SENSE OF THIS, THE ATTEMPTED COUP AGAINST THE ADMINISTRATION OF FORMER PRESIDENT KENNETH KAUNDA IN JUNE 1990 THAT EVENTUALLY LED TO THE RE-INTRODUCTION OF PLURAL POLITICS AFTER 18 YEARS OF ONE-PARTY RULE WAS PRECEDED BY FOOD RIOTS AFTER KAUNDA HAD ALLOWED MILLERS TO RAISE THE PRICE OF THE

STAPLE COMMODITY. TWO RECORD MAIZE HARVESTS IN A ROW IN 2009 AND 2010 THEREFORE PRESENTS AN INTERESTING CASE STUDY AGAINST WHICH TO ASSESS WHETHER THE COUNTRY IS REALLY BEGINNING TO MOVE AWAY FROM ITS LEGENDARY OVERDEPENDENCE ON COPPER. IT IS ALSO TEMPTING (BECAUSE OVER 80 PER CENT OF MAIZE PRODUCERS ARE SMALLHOLDER FARMERS) TO BELIEVE THAT THE BUMPER MAIZE HARVEST IN 2010 IS AN INDICATION THAT WE ARE ALSO ON THE PATH TO ATTAINING RURAL DEVELOPMENT. HOWEVER, A CLOSE LOOK AT HOW THE RECORD HARVEST WAS ACHIEVED REVEALS A VERY TROUBLING RETURN TO A PAST APPROACH THAT IS ALMOST CERTAIN TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY BANKRUPT WITHIN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME.

IN AN EXCELLENT PAPER BY THE FOOD SECURITY RESEARCH PROJECT – A COLLABORATION PROJECT BETWEEN THE ZAMBIAN-BASED AGRICULTURAL CONSULTATIVE FORUM; THE ZAMBIAN MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATIVES; AND MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY – THE 2010 BUMPER HARVEST HAS PRODUCED WINNERS AND LOSERS. WITHOUT A DOUBT, HOWEVER, THE MAJOR LOSER IS THE ZAMBIAN TAXPAYER – TO THE TUNE OF NEARLY TWO THOUSAND MILLION KWACHA – K2 TRILLION (NEARLY US\$420 MILLION OR JUST OVER ONE MILLION DOLLARS A DAY). THIS IS THE MONEY THAT HAS BEEN SPENT BY THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT TO PRODUCE THE HARVEST. THIS LET US BRIEFLY ANALYSE WHERE THE MONEY WENT AND WHAT PROSPECTS THERE ARE OF ANY RETURN ON THIS INVESTMENT (OTHER THAN A SHORT TERM POLITICAL ONE):

- THIS EXPENDITURE (ON MAIZE ALONE) EXCEEDED 10 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL NATIONAL BUDGET FOR 2010
- THE EXPENDITURE WAS LARGELY MADE UP OF:
 - FARMER INPUT SUPPORT APPROXIMATELY K400 BILLION (OR JUST OVER US\$80 MILLION)

- K700 BILLION LOAN FROM AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK WAS PROCURED TO PURCHASE INITIAL 300,000 METRIC TONNES (JUST OVER US\$145 MILLION)
- AN ADDITIONAL K690 BILLION TO MOP UP SMALLHOLDER MAIZE (APPROXIMATELY US\$143 MILLION)
- AN UNBUDGETED ADDITIONAL K680 BILLION (US\$141 MILLION) WAS APPROVED AS A BUDGETARY SUPPLEMENT TO PURCHASE THE REMAINING SMALLHOLDER STOCKS
- AT OVER ONE MILLION DOLLARS A DAY,THE TOTAL EXPENSE IS SIMILAR TO THE SUBSIDY GRANTED IN THE LATE 1990'S TO THE MINING CONGLOMERATE THAT PRACTICALLY BANKRUPTED THE COUNTRY

ALL OF THIS MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE IF THERE WAS TO BE A RETURN ON THE INVESTMENT. BUT THIS LOOKS VERY UNLIKELY FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

- POOR INFRASTRUCTURE MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO COLLECT ALL THE RURAL MAIZE AND THE LATE DECISION TO BUY UP ALL 870,000 TONNES (AS OPPOSED TO THE ORIGINAL 300,000 TONNES) MEANT THAT HIGHER TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICAL COSTS WERE INCURRED
- THE FOOD RESERVE AGENCY'S STORAGE CAPACITY IS ONLY 1.2 MILLION METRIC TONNES AND 720,000 TONNES OF THIS HAD ALREADY BEEN LEASED TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND STOCKS FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S HARVEST WERE STILL IN STORAGE
- THE AGENCY HAS HAD TO ADOPT ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF STORAGE (THROUGH THE PURCHASE OF TARPULINS BUT THIS IS NOT ENOUGH TO PREVENT THE MAIZE FROM BEING DAMAGED BY PESTS OR GOING TO SEED BECAUSE OF THE HIGH MOISTURE CONTENT)
- THE ONSET OF THE RAINS IN NOVEMBER HAS MEANT THAT MUCH OF THE UNCOLLECTED MAIZE HAS BEEN DESTROYED BECAUSE IT GOT WET

- TO FREE UP SPACE FOR COLLECTION, GIVEN THE REQUIREMENT TO PURCHASE THE NEW MAIZE AT THE START OF **THIS** YEAR'S MARKETING SEASON ON 1 MAY, THE GOVERNMENT IS HAVING TO OFFLOAD STOCKS FOR EXPORT AT A MAJOR LOSS
- THE PURCHASE PRICE OFFERED FOR THE SMALLHOLDER MAIZE (ROUGHLY 870,000 METRIC TONNES) WAS 40 PER CENT HIGHER THAN THE MARKET PRICE MEANING THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE A LOSS OF APPROXIMATELY US\$150 PER METRIC TONNE ON EXPORTED MAIZE (GOVERNMENT IS OFFERING MAIZE AT US\$160 PER METRIC TONNE AND PURCHASED IT AT US\$262 PER METRIC TONNE)
- FOOD RESERVE AGENCY PRICES WERE SO GOOD THAT SELLERS IN NEIGHBOURING MALAWI AND MOZAMBIQUE HAVE BEEN SMUGGLING MAIZE INTO ZAMBIA TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR GENEROSITY – SO WE ARE INADVERTENTLY DOING OUR BIT TO HELP OUR NEIGHBOURS!

SO THIS IS HOW WE MAY END UP LOSING AN INVESTMENT OF OVER US\$1 MILLION A DAY.

SMALL-SCALE AND LARGELY RURAL FARMERS CAN AND SHOULD BE ASSISTED BY GOVERNMENT AND THIS OUGHT TO BE DONE IN A SMART AND MORE SUSTAINABLE MANNER. ONE IDEA THAT WAS PREVIOUSLY MOOTED FOR BOOSTING STABLE MAIZE PRODUCTION IS INTERESTING: IDENTIFY SEVERAL COMMERCIAL FARMERS TO GROW MAIZE FOR FOOD SECURITY AND AT THE SAME TIME FACILITATE PRODUCTION OF (NON-MAIZE) CASH CROPS (SUCH AS COTTON AND TOBACCO) BY SMALLHOLDER RURAL OUT-GROWERS. SENSIBLE AS THIS MAY SOUND, THIS APPROACH WOULD NOT ADDRESS THE REQUIREMENT FOR MASSIVE IMPROVEMENTS IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND SMALL-SCALE FARMER SUPPORT SERVICES. THE MAIN BENEFIT MIGHT BE A MORE DECISIVE MOVE TOWARDS A COMMERCIALLY VIABLE BASE FOR AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT. HOWEVER, INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRAINTS MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO REPRODUCE SUCH A MODEL ACROSS ALL RURAL AREAS. FOR THIS

REASON, WE NEED TO CONSIDER OTHER WAYS OF ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE WE FACE IN DEVELOPING RURAL COMMUNITIES AND PROMOTING DIVERSIFICATION THROUGH AGRICULTURE.

OVERALL, AFRICAN LEADERS USUALLY CARRY OUT PLANS WITH AN EYE FIRMLY ON BEING RE-ELECTED. ONE WAY TO PROMOTE THE CHANCES OF ELECTORAL SUCCESS IS TO ENSURE THAT ONE IS ON HAND TO COMMISSION EVERY SINGLE PROJECT THAT MIGHT LOOK AS THOUGH IT WILL ATTRACT THE PUBLIC'S IMAGINATION, REGARDLESS OF HOW RELEVANT OR RATHER IRRELEVANT THE PROJECT MIGHT BE TO THE COMMUNITY IT HAS OSTENSIBLY BEEN BUILT TO SERVE.

18 MONTHS AGO, THE PRESIDENT OF ZAMBIA COMMISSIONED A 27 KILOMETRE RAILWAY LINK INTO NEIGHBOURING MALAWI. THE DESIGN AND COSTING FOR THE LINK HAS BEEN COMPLETED SEVERAL YEARS EARLIER. THE THEORY RAN THAT ONCE THIS RAIL SPUR WAS CONSTRUCTED, ZAMBIA WOULD PROVIDE EXPORTERS (PARTICULARLY THE MINING COMPANIES) WITH THE SHORTEST ROUTE TO A DEEP WATER PORT (FROM CHIPATA IN THE EAST OF THE COUNTRY, THROUGH MALAWI AND ONTO THE DEEPWATER PORT IN MOZAMBIQUE). HERE WAS A CLEAR OPPORTUNITY TO BE SEEN TO BE WORKING; SO THE GOVERNMENT SET ABOUT CONSTRUCTION OF THE 27 KILOMETRE TRACK AND HAD A GRAND COMMISSIONING.

FOR OVER A YEAR AND A HALF, THE ONLY TRAIN THAT HAS USED THE TRACK IS THE ONE THAT WAS BROUGHT IN FOR THE CEREMONY. THE STATE OF THE ROAD NETWORK LEADING TO THE NEW RAIL LINE IS NOT SUITABLE FOR THE LOADS TO BE CARRIED AND THERE ARE NO DRY PORT FACILITIES IN PLACE TO SHIFT LOADS FROM TRUCK TO TRAIN.

IT IS NOT THEREFORE SURPRISING WHEN ONE THINKS OF SUCH AN EXAMPLE, THAT THE ECONOMIST MAGAZINE IN ITS 12TH FEBRUARY EDITION THIS YEAR VENTURED THE FOLLOWING GENERALISATION:

“AFRICANS JOKE THAT THE ANIMAL THEY SEE MOST OFTEN THESE DAYS IS THE WHITE ELEPHANT – HIGH PROFILE INVESTMENT PROJECTS THAT SERVE NO PURPOSE”

BUT LET US LOOK NOW AT HOW THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAS TENDED TO RESPOND TO THE PROBLEMS CONFRONTING DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA. I BELIEVE THAT THEY HAVE DONE THIS THROUGH WHAT I CALL A SYMPTOMATIC APPROACH.

A “SYMPTOMATIC” APPROACH

IN A 1987 DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUE PAPER, THE DAG HAMMARSKJOLD FOUNDATION HAD AS ITS HEADLINE ARTICLE A PIECE ENTITLED: *THE STATE AND THE CRISIS IN AFRICA – IN SEARCH OF A SECOND LIBERATION*. IT IS WORTH REPRODUCING THE OPENING STATEMENT IN FULL:

THE PRESENT CRISIS IN AFRICA IS LARGELY AN INSTITUTIONAL CRISIS. IN PARTICULAR, IT IS A CRISIS OF THE STATE. THE DILEMMA FACING THE AFRICAN STATE IS THAT BECAUSE IT WAS INHERITED, IN MANY INSTANCES JUST LIKE AN EMPTY SHELL FROM THE COLONIAL POWERS, THE AFRICAN LEADERS, IN FILLING THIS LACUNA, HAVE BEEN FORCED TO DEVOTE PRIME ATTENTION TO DEFINING OR REDEFINING POWER RELATIONS WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY BEING ASKED TO IMPLEMENT OFTEN ILL-CONCEIVED, USUALLY DONOR-FUNDED, DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS WITH UNREALISTIC TIME HORIZONS. IN THIS SITUATION, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT SHORT-TERM CONSIDERATIONS HAVE TAKEN PRECEDENCE OVER LONG-TERM ONES, POWER OVER WELFARE, PERSONAL OVER INSTITUTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS, AND SECURITY OVER DEVELOPMENT.

BUT IN A SITUATION WHERE NOT ONLY HUMAN WELFARE BUT ALSO HUMAN LIFE IS INCREASINGLY AT STAKE ON THE CONTINENT, HOW MUCH LONGER CAN AFRICA AFFORD TO BE CAUGHT IN THESE CONTRADICTIONS? WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS FOR GETTING OUT OF THE PRESENT PREDICAMENT? HOW CAN AFRICAN STATEHOOD BE ENHANCED AND DEVELOPMENT ACCELERATED IN PARALLEL FASHION?

THE FIRST THING TO NOTE ABOUT THIS STATEMENT IS THAT IT IS FOCUSED ON “GOVERNANCE” RATHER THAN “LEADERSHIP”. THIS IS A CONSISTENT APPROACH THAT IS TAKEN BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS, DEVELOPMENT ECONOMISTS, AS WELL AS PHILANTHROPISTS AND OTHERS SEEKING TO PROMOTE GENUINE DEVELOPMENT ON THE CONTINENT. I WANT TO SHOW HOW THIS APPROACH PLAYS ITSELF OUT IN RESPECT OF EACH OF THESE PROPONENTS OF DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA, STARTING WITH THE PLAN BY THE UNITED NATIONS TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATIONS

THE OBJECTIVE BEHIND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS IS TO ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY BY THE YEAR 2015. THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS ARE 8 TARGET OUTCOMES THAT ARE DESIGNED TO ADDRESS ABJECT LEVELS OF POVERTY IN THE WORLD.

THE GOALS ARE BROADLY TO ACHIEVE THE FOLLOWING BY 2015:

- ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER
- ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION
- PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN
- REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY
- IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH
- COMBAT HIV AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES
- ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
- DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

THE KEY TO ENSURING THAT THESE GOALS CAN BE MET IS LEADERSHIP. HOWEVER, BECAUSE THEY ARE OUTCOMES (AND THEREFORE SYMPTOMS) THAT HAVE ARISEN FROM POOR LEADERSHIP, IT IS POSSIBLE

THAT SOME OF THESE TARGETS CAN BE MET SUPERFICIALLY BY A MASSIVE INFUSION OF MONEY (AS WE SAW IN THE CASE OF ZAMBIA'S ABILITY TO GENERATE A BUMPER HARVEST). THIS WILL NOT HOWEVER, ADDRESS THE PROBLEM IN THE LONG TERM AND MAY ONLY SERVE TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE BY DIVERTING RESOURCES FROM MEETING LONG-TERM CHALLENGES THAT WOULD IN TIME HAVE HAD THE DESIRED OUTCOMES.

DEVELOPMENT ECONOMISTS

SADLY, NOTHING WITHIN THE CHALLENGE TO THE LEADERSHIP OF NATIONS TASKED WITH MEETING THESE GOALS ADDRESSES THE ISSUE OF LEADERSHIP. THIS CAN BE EXPECTED FROM A BODY DESIGNED TO MAINTAIN UTMOST DIPLOMACY. AND SO THE TASK OF BRINGING THE LEADERSHIP ISSUE TO THE FORE REALLY RESTS WITH OTHER INFLUENTIAL COMMENTATORS LIKE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ECONOMISTS. UNFORTUNATELY, HOWEVER, THE UNITED NATIONS DOES NOT MONOPOLISE THIS TYPE OF THINKING. IN HIS BOOK: *THE BOTTOM BILLION*, PAUL COLLIER CHALLENGES THE NOTION THAT HAS UNDERPINNED DEVELOPMENT THINKING OVER THE LAST 40 YEARS – THAT THERE IS A RICH WORLD OF ONE BILLION PEOPLE FACING A POOR WORLD OF FIVE BILLION PEOPLE. COLLIER ARGUES THAT THE TRUE PICTURE REVERSES THESE RATIOS AND THAT THERE ARE NEARLY ONE BILLION PEOPLE LIVING IN THE WORLD'S POOREST COUNTRIES THAT GOT CAUGHT IN ONE OR OTHER OF FOUR TRAPS: THE CONFLICT TRAP; THE NATIONAL RESOURCES TRAP; THE TRAP OF BEING LANDLOCKED WITH BAD NEIGHBOURS; AND THE BAD GOVERNANCE TRAP.

THE BOOK THEN EXPLAINS EACH OF THE TRAPS AND OFFERS SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO ESCAPE THEM. ARGUING THAT ALTHOUGH THE AFFECTED COUNTRIES ARE ABLE TO BREAK FREE OF THE TRAPS FROM TIME TO TIME, THEY ARE NEVERTHELESS UNABLE TO AVOID ECONOMIC STAGNATION. FOUR INSTRUMENTS TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM OF THE TRAPS ARE SENSIBLY OFFERED:

- AID

- MILITARY INTERVENTION
- LAWS AND CHARTERS
- TRADE POLICY FOR REVERSING MARGINALISATION.

ALTHOUGH COLLIER'S ANALYSIS AND THE SOLUTIONS HE OFFERS REINFORCE AND EXTEND THE SYMPTOMATIC APPROACH TOWARDS ADDRESSING AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES, HE DOES HINT AT THE POTENTIAL THAT BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY CAN RELEASE. IT IS A PITY THAT THIS THEME IS NOT MORE FULLY DEVELOPED. AS IT IS ALL WE ARE OFFERED IS THE SOMEWHAT DEFEATED ASSESSMENT:

"UNTIL THE COUNTRY HAS TURNED ITSELF AROUND, CAPACITY BUILDING IS PRETTY DIFFICULT. YOU TRAIN PEOPLE TO AN INTERNATIONAL STANDARD, AND IF THERE ARE NO PROSPECTS, THEN THEY USE THEIR CREDENTIALS AS A PASSPORT OUT OF THE COUNTRY. I KNOW – I HAVE BEEN TRAINING PEOPLE FOR THREE DECADES".

MY VIEW IS RATHER DIFFERENT. THIS IS WHERE WE NEED TO BE CONCENTRATING OUR LONG-TERM EFFORT – IN MASSIVE TRAINING. IT MATTERS NOT IF PEOPLE LEAVE TO WORK ABROAD. THIS MAY EVEN BE A GOOD THING AS IT WILL EQUIP FUTURE TECHNOCRATS AND LEADERS WITH REQUISITE DEVELOPED AND OTHER WORLD EXPOSURE AND EXPERIENCE. WITH A MAJOR PROGRAMME OF TRAINING, HOWEVER, NOT ALL WILL ABANDON SHIP. MANY WILL LEAVE BUT MANY WILL REMAIN. NOT ALL WILL OPERATE IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR – IN FACT IT IS PREFERABLE THAT THEY DO NOT CROWD INTO THE PUBLIC SECTOR BECAUSE THE REAL ENGINE OF GROWTH OF ANY ECONOMY SHOULD BE THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND THE MORE CAPABLE IT IS, THE MORE EFFECTIVE IT WILL BE AS A PARTNER TO THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN RESPONDING TO DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES.

BAD GOVERNANCE IS NOT A CAUSE OF AFRICA'S UNDERDEVELOPMENT. I WOULD VENTURE TO SUGGEST THAT IT IS A CONSEQUENCE – AND THEREFORE A SYMPTOM – OF POOR LEADERSHIP AT ALL

LEVELS OF SOCIETY. NOW IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS ARGUMENT COULD LEAD US TO ENDLESS REBUTTAL OF GENERATIONAL BLAME, RATHER LIKE TODAY'S CHRISTIANS BLAMING ADAM AND EVE FOR THE SIN THAT EXISTS IN THE WORLD. IN REALITY, WE ARE NOT INCAPABLE OF TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR ACTIONS TODAY. THE CHALLENGE LIES IN IDENTIFYING WHAT THE CORRECT REFERENCE POINT FOR CHANGE SHOULD BE. I BELIEVE THAT POOR LEADERSHIP RATHER THAN BAD GOVERNANCE IS THE MOST RELEVANT REFERENCE POINT – IN OTHER WORDS THE POINT AT WHICH INTERVENTION CAN ADDRESS THE PROBLEM OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN A SUSTAINABLE MANNER

I AM NOT TRYING TO PUT DEVELOPMENT ECONOMISTS OUT OF WORK. I AM SIMPLY TRYING TO MAKE THEIR WORK MORE MEANINGFUL FOR AFRICA. YOU SEE THEORIES AND PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE NEED EFFECTIVE LOCAL COUNTERPART THINKING. THE NATURE AND CONTEXT OF THE CHALLENGES FACING DIFFERENT AFRICAN COMMUNITIES REQUIRES EVEN THE BEST SUGGESTIONS TO BE PROCESSED AND ABSORBED ACCORDING TO THE UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES OF EACH VILLAGE, EACH TOWN, EACH CITY AND EACH NATION.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE RESPONSE OF THE PHILANTHROPISTS? FOR THIS WE CAN LOOK AT THE WONDERFULLY INNOVATIVE MO IBRAHIM PRIZE FOR LEADERSHIP.

THE MO IBRAHIM PRIZE FOR LEADERSHIP

THIS IS AN AWARD THAT WAS INITIATED BY THE FORMER OWNER OF AFRICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS GIANT CELTEL – AN ENTITY HE ESTABLISHED AND WENT ON TO SELL FOR BILLIONS TO KUWAIT'S ZAIN. MR IBRAHIM WENT ON TO ESTABLISH A FOUNDATION "TO STIMULATE DEBATE ON GOVERNANCE ACROSS SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA AND THE WORLD". ONE OF THE KEY ROLES OF THE FOUNDATION IS TO IDENTIFY EACH YEAR, A RETIRING AFRICAN LEADER THAT IS WORTHY OF BEING AWARDED A PRIZE OF US\$5MILLION PAYABLE OVER 10 YEARS AND THEREAFTER THE ANNUAL SUM OF US\$200,000 A YEAR UNTIL DEATH. AS A PRIZE THAT CELEBRATES AFRICAN LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE, IT IS UNFORTUNATE

THAT SINCE IT WAS ESTABLISHED ONLY 2 LEADERS HAVE MERITED FAVOURABLE CONSIDERATION: FESTUS MOGAE OF BOTSWANA (2007) AND JOACHIM CHISSANO OF MOZAMBIQUE (2008). ALTHOUGH NELSON MANDELA WAS ALSO HONOURED, THIS WAS AN HONORARY AWARD AS HE HAD ALREADY LEFT OFFICE AT THE TIME THE PRIZE WAS ESTABLISHED.

ONE OF THE THINGS ONE NOTICES ABOUT THE PRIZE IS THAT IT CONFLATES LEADERSHIP WITH GOVERNANCE AND THEREFORE FOCUSES ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON POLITICAL LEADERSHIP – AND THEN ONLY THE VERY TOP POLITICAL LEADERSHIP.

MY PROPOSAL IS THAT WE OUGHT TO CONSIDER STIMULATING A DEBATE ON THE BROADER AND MORE PRESSING QUESTION OF “LEADERSHIP” RATHER THAN “GOVERNANCE”. THE IBRAHIM FOUNDATION DOES – LIKE PAUL COLLIER IN HIS *BOTTOM BILLION* – RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING CAPACITY WITHIN THE LOWER RANKS AND SHOULD IN DUE COURSE, GIVE THIS MATTER GREATER PRIORITY. IT DOES, AFTER ALL, OFFER SCHOLARSHIPS FOR POTENTIAL FUTURE LEADERS AND THIS IS VITAL IF AFRICA IS TO PROGRESS.

A FINAL THING TO NOTE ABOUT THE PRIZE IS THAT A PARTICULARLY DETERMINED AFRICAN LEADER TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE INCOME GENRATING OPPORTUNITIES CREATED BY LAX ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS IN AFRICA COULD – WHEN RETIRING FROM OFFICE – PROBABLY ACQUIRE THE LIFESTYLE THAT THE PRIZE OFFERS TO INCENTIVISE. AFTER ALL, AS ANVER VERSI, IN AN EDITORIAL IN THE MARCH 2011 EDITION OF ***AFRICAN BUSINESS*** MAGAZINE POINTS OUT:

“THE REASON WHY THERE IS SUCH FIERCE COMPETITION TO GET INTO GOVERNMENT AND STAY IN POWER IS THAT ONCE YOU’RE ‘IN’, YOU HAVE A LICENCE TO VIRTUALLY PRINT MONEY”

A WAY FORWARD

IN ORDER TO MOVE FORWARD CONSTRUCTIVELY, I WOULD ADVOCATE THREE THINGS:

- THAT WE IMPROVE THE FERTILITY OF THE SOIL THAT CAN PRODUCE QUALITY LEADERSHIP
- THAT WE PROMOTE A SENSE OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY IN EACH CONTINENTAL DWELLER
- THAT WE EMBARK ON A NOVEL WAY TO FIGHT CORRUPTION

IMPROVING THE SOIL

THE PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE IN THE BIBLE KNOWN FAMOUSLY AS THE *PARABLE OF THE SOWER* IS QUITE INSTRUCTIVE IN THIS INSTANCE. JESUS TELLS HIS DISCIPLES A STORY ABOUT A FARMER WHO SCATTERS SEED. SOME OF THE SEED FALLS ALONG A PATH WHERE IT IS PROMPTLY EATEN UP BY BIRDS. SOME SEED FALLS ON ROCKY PLACE WITHOUT MUCH SOIL AND SPRINGS UP QUICKLY BUT BECAUSE THE SOIL IS TOO SHALLOW, WITHERS IN THE HEAT OF THE SUN. OTHER SEED FALLS AMONG THORNS WHICH GROW UP AND EVENTUALLY CHOKE THE PLANTS. FINALLY, SOME SEED FALLS ON GOOD SOIL AND PRODUCES A CROP A HUNDRED, SIXTY OR THIRTY TIMES WHAT WAS SOWN.

GOOD GOVERNANCE, MALARIA-FREE SOCIETIES, QUALITY BASIC HEALTHCARE, MINIMUM STANDARD EDUCATION ARE ALL PRODUCTS OF AN ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH GOOD LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY CAN FLOURISH. SEEKING TO TACKLE THESE OUTCOMES WITHOUT IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT FOR QUALITY LEADERSHIP TO FLOURISH IN AFRICA, HAS RESULTED IN PAST EFFORTS FALLING INTO ONE OF THE FIRST THREE CATEGORIES IN THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER. THE LONG-TERM SOLUTION MUST LIE IN PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY LEADERS. SO LET US DEFINE WHAT WE MEAN WHEN WE REFER TO QUALITY LEADERSHIP.

QUALITY LEADERSHIP:

- IS STRATEGIC IN THINKING
- VISIONBARY IN OUTLOOK
- FOCUSSES ON SUCCESSION

- EXPOSES ITSELF CONTINUALLY TO INDEPENDENT THINKING
- OPERATES ACCORDING TO A MORAL CODE

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

THE POINT I WISH TO MAKE ABOUT THIS IS THAT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHANGE CANNOT LIE IN A COUNTRY'S TOP LEADERSHIP. I HAVE ARGUED IN MY BOOK THAT THIS IS PRECISELY WHAT HAS CAUSED DIFFICULTY FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT.

DEALING WITH CORRUPTION

THE LATEST EDITION OF THE NEW AFRICAN MAGAZINE OFFERS BRILLIANT INSIGHTS INTO THE ISSUE OF CORRUPTION. ESTIMATING THAT CLOSE TO US\$500 BILLION HAS BEEN SIPHONED OUT OF GOVERNMENT COFFERS IN CORRUPT DEALINGS, IT OFFERS USEFUL SUGGESTIONS ABOUT THE ROLE THAT COUNTRIES SUCH AS BRITAIN CAN PLAY IN BUILDING A DISINCENTIVE FOR SUCH PRACTICES TO CONTINUE TO PREVAIL.

POINTING OUT THAT THE NEW MAJOR OPERATORS DO NOT DEAL IN CASH:

"COMMISSIONS WORTH MILLIONS, OFTEN INVOLVING 'RESPECTED' FOREIGN PARTNERS, WHIZZ SEAMLESSLY AND INVISIBLY THROUGH A BEWILDERING NETWORK OF ACCOUNTS IN SEVERAL COUNTRIES BEFORE FINALLY 'LANDING' IN THE FORM OF HIGH VALUE PROPERTIES AT CHOICE LOCATIONS AROUND THE WORLD. THE TRADITIONAL SWISS BANK ACCOUNT HAS BEEN LOSING ITS APPEAL EVER SINCE THE SWISS AUTHORITIES HAVE TAKEN TO FREEZING ACCOUNTS OF LEADERS WHO LOSE THEIR POSITIONS – AS THEY HAVE DONE IN THE CASE OF BEN ALI AND MUBARAK"

THEY GO ON TO MAKE THE CASE THAT IF CORRUPTION IS TO BE REDUCED, THE CORRESPONDENTS SHOULD BE FIRST IN THE FIRING LINE AND THAT THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT SHOULD NOT WATER DOWN ITS PROPOSED ANTI-BRIBERY LAW.

I BELIEVE THAT SUCH AN APPROACH IS IMPORTANT AND NECESSARY. I WOULD GO FURTHER TO SUGGEST THAT WE OPEN A DEBATE ON THE NEED FOR AFRICAN COUNTRIES TO SET UP TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSIONS ON CORRUPTION. THIS IS PROMPTED BY THE IDEA THAT BECAUSE LOWER RANKING OFFICIALS ALONG THE FOOD CHAIN ARE EASIER TO IDENTIFY AND CONVICT, IN RETURN FOR AMNESTY, THEY WOULD PROVIDE VITAL EVIDENCE OF CORRUPTION MUCH HIGHER UP THE FOOD CHAIN. THIS PROCESS WOULD ALSO PREVENT GOVERNMENTS THROWING GOOD MONEY AFTER BAD – SECURING CONVICTIONS IN CASES OF HIGH LEVEL CORRUPTION IS NOTORIOUSLY DIFFICULT IN AFRICA. FINALLY, JUST AS WITH THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION IN SOUTH AFRICA, THERE WOULD BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO FOR THE PUBLIC TO FULLY UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF THE TRANSACTIONS INVOLVED AND TO WORK WITH THE GOVERNMENT IN ORDER TO MINIMISE THE EFFECT OF THE CONTINUED ABUSE OF PUBLIC RESOURCES THROUGH CORRUPTION.

CONCLUSION

THERE SEEMS TO BE A GENERAL RECOGNITION THAT LEADERSHIP IS KEY TO RESOLVING AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES. THE PROBLEM IS THAT THE SOLUTIONS APPEAR TO BE TAILORED TO ADDRESS THE TAIL END OF THE LEADERSHIP PROBLEM – GOVERNANCE. BY THE TIME GOVERNANCE TURNS BAD, THERE HAS A FAILURE AT A MUCH LOWER LEVEL. IT IS AT THIS LEVEL THAT THE CORRECT SOIL NEEDS TO BE CREATED. IF WE TAKE CARE OF THE SOIL, THE PLANTS WILL TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES AND THE BEST YIELDS WILL COME FROM THE BEST SOILS. PLANS THAT FOCUS ON GOVERNANCE ARE AKIN TO APPLYING FERTILISER TO ATTAIN DESIRED CROP YIELDS. THE FERTILISER

BENEFITS THE PLANT AND NOT THE SOIL. IN FACT, THE TENDENCY IS THAT THE FERTILISER HAS A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT IT SEEPS INTO.

IN ANSWERING THE QUESTION: “*WHY DOES PROSPERITY CONTINUE TO ELUDE AFRICA?*” I WOULD SAY THREE THINGS:

FIRST, WE HAVE A SERIOUS CRISIS OF POOR QUALITY LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY WHICH FAR SURPASSES ANY OTHER CRISIS WE FACE AS A CONTINENT AND THE LONGER WE IGNORE THIS ROOT CAUSE OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT, THE LONGER IT WILL TAKE TO SEE MEANINGFUL AND SUSTAINABLE PROGRESS ON DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTINENT.

SECOND, IT SEEMS THAT THOSE THAT ARE IN A POSITION TO BE ABLE TO ASSIST AFRICA HAVE ALLOWED THEMSELVES TO BECOME ENTRANCED BY A SYMPTOMATIC RATHER THAN A CAUSAL APPROACH TO THE CONTINENT’S DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES.

THIRDLY, A MAJOR PART OF THE SOLUTION TO AFRICA’S DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES LIES IN PROMOTING AN AGGRESSIVE PLAN TO DEVELOP LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY. THIS WILL DEMAND A SENSE OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FROM EACH AND EVERY CONTINENTAL DWELLER. IN THIS REGARD, FIVE KEY ATTRIBUTES WILL BE NEEDED:

- BETTER MANAGEMENT OF OUR TIME
- BETTER COMMITMENT TO OUR OBLIGATIONS
- OBJECTIVE RATHER THAN EMOTIONAL ASSESSMENTS OF THE CHALLENGES WE FACE AS A CONTINENT
- BETTER VISION AND PLANNING
- LESS OF A SENSE OF DEPENDENCY

AND SO BACK TO OUR PICTURES OF AN ELEPHANT AND A DUCK.

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN AFRICAN LEADERS SOUGHT TO BRAND THEIR ECONOMIES ALONG SIMILAR LINES AS THE ASIAN TIGERS BY CALLING THEMSELVES THE AFRICAN ELEPHANTS. FORTUNATELY THIS IDEA SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN ABANDONED. FOR IF LEADERS IN AFRICA PRACTICED MEDICINE, MANY OF THEM WOULD NOT BE DOCTORS, THEY WOULD BE QUACKS...AND WE ALL KNOW WHICH ANIMAL MAKES A QUACKING SOUND! IT IS A DUCK.

DEVELOPMENT ECONOMISTS HAVE BEEN GRAPPLING TO DEFINE THE SOLUTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT. RATHER LIKE THE BLIND MEN TRYING TO DEFINE AN ELEPHANT BY FEELING ITS LEGS, TAIL AND TRUNK AND GIVING IT DIFFERENT DESCRIPTIONS BASED ON THAT EXPERIENCE, WE NEED TO LOOK SQUARELY AT THE PROBLEM OF POOR QUALITY LEADERSHIP IN AFRICA AS THE GREATEST CRISIS FACING THE CONTINENT: IF IT LOOKS LIKE A DUCK, WALKS LIKE A DUCK AND SOUNDS LIKE A DUCK – THEN IT MUST BE A DUCK.

I THANK YOU ALL.