INDUSTRIALIZATION, JOB CREATION: INDICES FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH – EXPERTS

AfriHeritage holds People & Power Conference

Network of NGOs, CSOs Preach Non-Violent, Free and Fair 2019 Elections
Experts in the field of development and applied economics have made a strong case for infrastructural and human development; full industrialization and massive job creation as necessary indices for sustainable economic growth in Africa. These were part of the submissions at the 2018 International Conference hosted by the African Heritage Institution (AfriHeritage), Enugu, last week, August 30-31, 2018. The Conference themed: Economics of Sustainable Growth in Africa, which took place in Enugu, South-east, Nigeria, attracted scholars from Nigeria and beyond.

In his keynote presentation, a former national economic adviser in the government of former president Olusegun Obasanjo, and now director, Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, Professor Osita Ogbu, identified productivity as the basis for sustainable economic growth. According to him, the economy should be designed in a way that wealth is adequately distributed and not concentrated. He believes that one sure way of doing so is by ensuring massive development of the industrial sector and technological acquisition.

‘Africa must introduce industrial parks. Banks should concentrate resources on few important sectors with bias towards the productivity sector. Africa needs intelligent leadership that understands sustainable growth’. Professor Ogbu who is a member of Board of Directors of AfriHeritage, cited the China example where he says China has left a certain space at the low end manufacturing which Africans can adopt and occupy. ‘Since we have few venture capitalists, government should step into this space and invest in profitable ventures’.

In his contribution, another keynote speaker at the event and Associate Fellow of AfriHeritage, Rev Fr. (Prof) Hyacinth Icheoku, of the department of Economics, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, posited that redistribution and inclusive economic growth can catalyze sustainable economic growth in Nigeria. According to him, a means to achieving inclusive economic growth is by providing good and productive employment and decent work for everyone. He however, advised African countries to focus on labour intensive industrial growth in order to create jobs and opportunities to carry everyone along in their “So, labour intensive modal of sustainable development should be adopted so that no one is left behind in the growth of any African country”.

“Leaders in Africa must get their people out of poverty by looking into agriculture and cottage industries, which can be easily financed by these countries going with their relatively financial incapability”, he concluded.

Earlier in his opening speech, the executive director of AfriHeritage, Professor Ufo Okeke-Uzodike noted that African economists needed to come up with ideas that will uplift economies across the continent, and help to effect transformative change that can move the region away from extreme poverty. According to him, despite significant improvements in policy spaces across the region, Africa continues to experience serious challenges due to highly uneven economic growth patterns. “So, in Nigeria and around our continent, the quest for sustainable economic growth is a driver of government concerns and policy”.

“However, despite significant improvements in policy spaces across the region, Africa continues to experience serious challenges due to highly uneven economic growth patterns”. “This challenge is made less tenable by inadequate growth rates for the world's poorest region, youngest region, and demographically fastest growing region”, he says.

He noted that even beyond Africa, the issue of Sustainable Growth is central to the trade wars between some countries such as the United States and Germany (European Union), the United States and China. To this end, he charged the participants to use the opportunity of the Conference and deliberations to contribute ideas that will yield policy recommendations for policymakers. “I wish us all robust engagements across the sessions and lots of ideas on how to fuel our economies across the continent, to grow at the double digit levels that we need to effect transformative change and move our region away from extreme poverty”. Threatening indigenous cultures; engagement
across the sessions and lots of ideas on how to fuel our economies across the continent, to grow at the double digit levels that we need to effect transformative change and move our region away from extreme poverty”.

In continuation of its citizens’ engagement advocacy, the African Heritage Institution (AfriHeritage), Enugu, in collaboration with FLED International Leadership Institute, Abuja has held a Conference titled; People and Power Conference, in Enugu, South-east, Nigeria, on Thursday August 16, 2018. The Conference with the theme “Citizens Power to Choose Responsible Leaders in a Democracy” was held as an enlightenment program to educate and enlighten the public towards the 2019 general elections. The event which main goals include to mobilize citizens for to responsible, non-violent political participation to forestall security breaches, before, during and after the 2019 elections; explain to the electorates how to engage with political aspirants during campaigns; promote issue-based electoral campaigns and discourage negative/abusive political rhetoric or hate speech was attended by Civil Society Organizations, youth organizations, students and other interest groups.

* In his opening speech at the event, the Executive Director of AfriHeritage
lamented the disappointment which many citizens have experienced in democracy. According to him, democracy is meant to solve the problem of bad leadership, that is why a popular definition amongst political scientists is that democracy is a system of government that determines ‘who gets what, when, and how’, but “unfortunately, it is especially baffling that citizens have become so weak and desperate that they feel so powerless that they have resorted to selling their electoral franchise for a few day’s meal. In the process, they are condemning themselves and their families to lives that can only be marked by penury and hopelessness”. He identified some issues that are presently threatening the resolve of democracy in Nigeria to include - declining popular participation in elections and politics due to safety issues; weaknesses in the functioning of governments due in part to lingering corruption and massive incompetence; declining trust in institutions due to their seeming cooptation against government opponents; widening gap between political elites and electorates; decline in media freedoms due to elite driven licensing system.

In his contribution, the INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) in Enugu State, Dr Emeka Ononamadu, urged the electorate to be alive to their responsibility of voting and protecting their votes in order to ensure that only credible leaders are voted into office. He noted that only credible leaders would give Nigerians good governance and deliver dividends of democracy to the people.

According to him, credible election is a multi-stakeholders’ business involving everybody assisting INEC to get it better.
“INEC is adequately prepared for the 2019 general elections because we started preparing for it since 2017. The commission has announced the election timetable and its processes. INEC is making good progress, so far. “For INEC activities in Enugu State, we have been working relentlessly every day, even Sundays, to ensure that the process of the ongoing CVR and PVC collection is not interrupted any day.

“We have done far-reaching consultations with all critical stakeholders to ensure that the people buy into, and start taking ownership of the entire electoral process for it to be a great success.

“The idea of hotlines is an innovation created by the INEC office when I took over, it has helped to bridge the gap between the people and INEC in the state.

Another key speaker at the event, Mr. Ike Okere, Zonal director of the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, Enugu, admonished the people to utilize the opportunity of alternatives offered by the availability of multi-party system being practiced by the country in their choice of voting or to be voted for.

---

Network of NGOs, CSOs Preach Non-Violent, Free and Fair 2019 Elections

A group under the umbrella of Network of Civil Society Organizations/Non-Governmental Organizations in Nigeria has met in Enugu, South-east, Nigeria, to deliberate on governance and developmental issues with particular focus on the upcoming 2019 elections. The group prayed for a non-violent, free and fair elections come 2019 across the country. It also advised politicians to ensure they play by the rules of the game, and to be guided by the spirit of fair-play, service delivery, accountability and honesty. The event titled: CSOs/NGOs Engagement Forum which took place on Wednesday August 15, 2018, with the theme: Collaborating to Make Impact; was organized and hosted by the African Heritage Institution (AfriHeritage), a not -for-profit, non-partisan think-tank organization based in Enugu, fully devoted to economic, political research, capacity building, advocacy and networking.

In his opening remarks at the event, the Executive Director of AfriHeritage, Professor Ufo Okeke-Uzodike, emphasized on the need for collaboration among CSOs/NGOs to drive the change the country truly desires. He indicated the importance of working together or collaboration to ensure improvement in the electoral process in order to bring about change in the ways things are done. According to him, “although CSOs/NGOs do not have express mandate to conduct elections but they possess moral authority to work for improvement and change in the election process”. Along this line, he suggested that awareness is important to change the orientation of the people to understand the importance of participating in election and voting the right people. He stressed further on the need for CSOs/NGOs to work in collaboration to identify the needs of the people and to ensure that the political parties factor solutions to such needs in their manifestoes and programs.
On the issue of what specific role the CSOs and NGOs can play to make a meaningful impact in the coming elections, the AfriHeritage Executive Director said “the first important step to free and fair elections is registration, therefore, it is important to get registered to be eligible to vote. So, the CSOs/NGOs should collaboratively be involved in the sensitization of the people on the importance of participating in election to make an impact”. Thus, he encouraged representatives of the organizations present at the Forum to ensure that the message of the discussion does not die within the discussion room but should be carried beyond and put to actions that will bring about an improvement and positive change to the existing process. The participants resolved to engage in serious political education/awareness drive to sensitize the masses and other stakeholders on the importance of election and the need to participate fully to make sure that only credible people are elected into public offices. The Forum equally condemned the issue of vote buying; politicization of security agents by politicians and those in power. Other key observations made by the Forum include: - That Tribunals/Courts should adopt/consider reports from election observers (who are mainly CSOs and NGOs) in any given elections, in electoral litigations.
The International Development and Research Center (IDRC), Canada, a major partner of the African Heritage Institution (AfriHeritage) has paid a scheduled visit to the Institution in Enugu. The visit which was undertaken by Dr. Diakalia Sanogo, Regional Program Officer of IDRC in the West and Sub-Saharan Africa took place between Monday 16th and Tuesday 17th July, 2018. During his visit, Dr Sanogo held meetings with the Executive Director and other members of Management of the Institution. The meeting reviewed the subsisting institutional work-plan and identified already executed projects as well as pending ones. The regional officer noted the challenges, successes and other issues surrounding the implementation of scheduled programs and activities of the institution in the areas of research, organizational development and performance as well as policy engagement and communications.

The Executive Director of AfriHeritage, Professor Ufo Okeke-Uzodike, briefed the IDRC officer on the various policy influence successes the Institution has so far recorded in its engagement and advocacy activities especially in the areas of education and electricity infrastructure in the country. He thanked the IDRC through the regional program officer, for having confidence in AfriHeritage and supporting the institution in its research and advocacy activities towards promoting evidence-based policy making.

The Program Officer expressed satisfaction with the Institution in its compliance and strict implementation of the agreed workplan between the two organizations. He encouraged AfriHeritage to think ahead and make plans for the 2018/2019 half year work plan, he also encouraged the Institution to prepare adequately for the upcoming Think Tank Initiative Exchange (TTIX 2018) in Bangkok, Thailand.

The visit by Dr. Diakalia Sanogo is one of the regular visits undertaken by the IDRC to all the organizations in its Think tank Initiative (TTI) list for effective monitoring and supervision. IDRC is a development partner, it supports think-tank organizations in their quest for research and provision of policy recommendations to governments in the developing world.
The Human Resources and Administration Manager (Ag) of the African Heritage Institution (AfriHeritage), Mrs. Beatrice Ndibe, in the month of September, attended a 5-day workshop at the prestigious Center for Management Development (CMD), Lagos. The workshop which was on Performance Management (PM) held from September 17 through 21, 2018. The course which exposed its participants to the processes and procedure of Performance management, Performance appraisal (360 Feedback System); Performance Measurement; Performance Audit; Rewarding Performance and Improved Standards); etc. was designed for Human Resource Managers, General Managers, Heads of Departments and senior officers in both government and private organizations. According to Mrs. Ndibe, having passed through the course, participants are expected to follow their respective organization’s strategic direction from where targets ought to be set for staff members; this will enable them to effectively deploy and engage performance management systems.
The Executive Director of AfriHeritage, Professor Ufo Okeke-Uzodike has met with senior editors in the media industry, the meeting which held in Abuja on Wednesday September 19, 2018, at the Capital Klub and Apartments, Asokoro, was attended by title editors, desk editors, news managers and senior producers of media houses based in the Federal Capital Territory. The meeting which was a continuation of the Institution’s consultation of critical stakeholders, was quite fruitful as many of the media men praised AfriHeritage for the inestimable role it is playing in applied research and policy advocacy. The Executive Director briefed the editors on the activities of the Institution and its contributions since it was established in the year 2000. He explained to them that AfriHeritage has been a significant player in major landmark documents on strategic development in Nigeria. Documents like the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS); States’ Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS). He equally highlighted the contributions of the Business Environment Competitiveness across Nigerian States (BECANS) series to the overall improvement in the ease of doing business in Nigeria. He appealed to the media chiefs to join hand with the Institution by bring to limelight, the various research reports which AfriHeritage has concluded in the past. He canvassed their support by apportioning prominent media space to project news items on the activities of social entrepreneurs such as AfriHeritage who devout their time, energy and resources into projects and programs that promote public good and wellbeing.

Responding, the editors thanked AfriHeritage for deeming it fit to involve the media in their research, advocacy and other programs and activities, saying that such move was in the right direction, especially given the fact that the media is a partner in good governance. They pledged to work with the Institution in advancing and promoting the course of evidence-based policy making in the country. Dr Austin Maho, Editor (Daily) of Pilot Newspaper commended AfriHeritage for its various research works and advocacy activities, he assured the Institution that PILOT Newspaper will always be a dependable partner by providing adequate publicity to AfriHeritage research reports and advocacy campaigns. The Media chiefs admonished the Institution to consider holding some of its engagement programs in Abuja, the nation’s capital in order to attract wider attention.
IMAGE GALLERY
Press Coverage!
The Institution’s events where publicized by different media organizations within the period.
Some of them are;
**LEADERSHIP** Wednesday July 4th, pg. 20
**LEADERSHIP** Saturday 18th August 2018 pg. 14
**LEADERSHIP** Sunday 19th August 2018 pg. 8
**DAILY TIMES** Tuesday 28th August 2018 — pg. 11
**THE AUTHORITY DAILY** Wednesday 29th August 2018, — pg. 11
*Different Blog Sites e.g. ELANZA news.com, Buzznews.com, enugunow.com, etc. publicized AfriHeritage Events.*
Many radio stations, e.g. Dreams FM, Solid FM, Urban FM, Caritas FM, etc.

News Links!
http://www.elanzanews.com/productivity-is-basis-for-sustainable-economic-growth-ogbu/
https://leadership.ng/2018/09/03/%e2%80%8eproductivity-is-basis-for-sustainable-economic-growth-ogbu/