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Building Sustainable Capacity for Poverty Reduction in Africa
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GOVERNANCE AND TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP IN AFRICA: *Progress, Prospects and Challenges*

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Swedish Ambassador to Zimbabwe





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THE ACBF DEVELOPMENT MEMOIRS SERIES

ACBF's Development Memoirs Series is a key instrument in the Foundation's knowledge management strategy aimed at harnessing the know-how and learned experiences of eminent senior policymakers and development managers. Central to the Series is the understanding that knowledge management tools and practices can be effectively employed to leverage both local and externally generated knowledge to bridge the knowledge gap between sub-Saharan Africa and the developed world.

The Series is generated through contributions from the ACBF Senior Policymakers and Development Managers Knowledge Sharing Program (SPM-KSP). It provides professional insights, reflections, skills, processes and experiences in the management of specific policies and programs, and offer case studies on processes, practices and experiences associated with specific policies and programs that have made measurable impact on the continent's development experience. The individual voices captured via the SPM-KSP collectively contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of the Foundation's operations, identifying learning and knowledge-sharing opportunities, and providing practitioners with guideposts to best practices in policymaking and development program management.

The Development Memoirs Series reflects the Foundation's vision and quest to actively embrace a diversity of knowledge sources including the ways gender, values and culture influence the generation, sharing and application of knowledge. The Series speaks to ACBF's vision that the creation, sharing and deployment of cutting edge knowledge in an increasingly complex, competitive and changing world, is imperative to Africa's current development efforts and future prospects.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Peace and Security remain critical development factors for Africa. This calls for transformative leadership that can set visions, provide selfless and capable leadership to turn the fortunes of the continent around. Africa has the potential to become a powerful global player. The continent can transform from aid dependent to self sufficient continent if the question of leadership is addressed. There are pockets of visionary and transformative leaders whose contributions have made remarkable impacts on their countries. We have seen this in Angola, Botswana, Ghana, Mauritius, Tanzania and South Africa among others.

The critical issues that must arrest the attention of leaders in Africa include issues of good governance, transparency, rule of law, private sector development and respect for property rights. When countries adhere to these principles, it serves as incentive for return of their citizens in the Diaspora to their respective motherlands to contribute to national development. Disregard for liberty and property rights only drive away potential investors.

In many respects, Africa's leadership has been very progressive and increasingly responsive to the continent's needs. The African Union, with a revised mandate to enforce peace in troubled regions, present significant milestone in the continent's quest to maintain peace and security as essential ingredients for economic growth and development. As with all regional bodies, the AU has its own challenges. These include inadequate resources. However, the

apparent lack of will power to arrive at consensus to tackle seemingly sensitive and controversial issues, including a call to order of errant leaders poses a great challenge to the continental body's ability to make political progress. As Africa evolves and asserts itself on the international stage, it will be helpful to have leadership defined by common universally accepted standards.

Beyond sound visions and programs, transformative leadership also call for prudent macro-economic management. In an intricately inter-related global world, there is always the need to build partnerships and mutually beneficial relationships with the international community. This requires capacity in many areas including trade negotiations and conflict resolution.

The emergence of China as a strong competitor to the West on the African scene must send a wake-up call to Europe. Africa demands respect and recognition. Europe must view Africa as an important player in global economic relations. Africa must be given adequate space to negotiate a fair deal in their trade relations with the West.

Central to the development of Africa is strong institutions. Regional institutions such as the African Capacity Building Foundation need to be accorded support and encouragement to continue to roll out contextually relevant capacity interventions across the continent. When all is said and done, Africa holds the key to its own development. The continent needs transformative leaders.

I. INTRODUCTION

The African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) through its Knowledge, Evaluation and Learning Department (KEL) is geared towards generating, sharing, disseminating and utilizing cutting-edge knowledge for capacity building and development management. ACBF's knowledge management program seeks to achieve four major objectives, among others. These are to:

- Enhance the performance of internal project/program operations based on innovative methodologies, strategies and instruments;
- Foster the sharing of best practices in capacity development, in the design and implementation of development policies and programs as well as in reform programs that are directed at strengthening the effectiveness of Africa's development process;
- Contribute to programs for extracting and sharing tacit knowledge for the benefit of national and regional development; and
- Enhance returns to, and the efficiency of, investments in capacity building.

One of the key tools in the Foundation's knowledge management strategy is the Senior Policymakers and Development Managers' Knowledge Sharing Program (SPM-KSP). The program provides a platform for successful development practitioners, who have made significant contributions to the development process especially insofar as it relates to Africa - to share and document their tacit knowledge in the form of development memoirs, for the benefit of future efforts at African development. The program specifically targets very senior policymakers and development managers, including visiting academics and eminent guests to ACBF. Participants are drawn from national, regional, continental and global institutions. These include

public/private sector organizations; national, regional and continental institutions; international development agencies; civil society organizations; ACBF partner institutions; tertiary institutions of learning; research and specialized training institutes, among others.

Within this context H.E. Sten Rylander, Swedish Ambassador in Zimbabwe, draws on his extensive experience and shares insights on the theme: *Governance and Transformative Leadership in Africa: Progress, Prospects and Challenges*.

II. PROFILE OF THE CONTRIBUTOR

H.E. Ambassador Sten Rylander started his professional career at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in 1970 on various positions for ten years 1970-79, including postings at the Nordic Office of the World Bank in Washington, DC (1972-74), and the Swedish OECD-delegation in Paris (1974-76). Given his passion for Africa and its development, in 1979, Ambassador Rylander took up his new position as the Country Director of SIDA in Botswana (1979-81). Following a brief stint back in Sweden, Ambassador Rylander was appointed Swedish Ambassador to Angola (1985-88) during a very difficult and volatile period. During these years he had close contacts with the liberation movements – African National Congress (ANC) and the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) which had wide-ranging activities in Angola; SWAPO with their headquarters in Luanda. After two years in Stockholm as Assistant Under-Secretary for Bilateral Development Cooperation in the Ministry, again with much work towards the liberation movements, he moved to become Ambassador in Namibia during the first exciting years of independence in 1990-95. Following his term in Namibia, Ambassador Rylander served as the first Head of the Eastern

and Western Africa Department and later after a merger of the full Africa Department of SIDA (1995-98). In 1998 Ambassador Rylander took up a new position as Swedish Ambassador in Tanzania where he served for five years. He then became roving Ambassador for dialogue with Africa at the Ministry for three years - including serving as the EU Representative during the Abuja peace talks regarding the Darfur conflict. H.E. Sten Rylander, since 2006, has been the Swedish Ambassador in Zimbabwe. In September 2009, Ambassador Rylander was nominated to be the Chair of the ACBF Board of Governors, a position he currently holds.

III. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Drawing on his distinguished career service spanning almost four decades, Ambassador Rylander held a face-to face interview with the ACBF Knowledge and Learning Unit on the August 20, 2010 in Harare, Zimbabwe. During the sit-down, Ambassador Rylander shared his views on the following issues:

- First-hand experience gathered during his duty tour of duty on the African Continent and in Zimbabwe in particular, of the missing links in Africa's quest to negotiate political conflict and promote good Governance.
- The critical issues for development cooperation in Africa.
- The missing links in Africa's quest for transformative leadership and sustainable development.
- Current efforts, or lack thereof, in restoring peace, promoting good governance, achieving the MDGs and regional integration in the SADC region in particular, and Africa in general.
- Desired reforms for an improved

contribution of the African private sector in the ongoing efforts at improving good Governance and for reducing poverty in Africa.

- Strategies for resolving some of the pressing governance and leadership issues of the African continent, and the main Governance challenges facing the SADC Region in general and Zimbabwe in particular.
- Critical challenges of managing post-conflict reconstruction in Africa in general, and what is required for Zimbabwe to move forward.
- The long-term economic growth prospects in Africa vis-à-vis that of the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India & China), and the possibility of growth poles emerging on the continent over the next decade.
- The priority areas for the continent over the coming five years and why? Also, what role, if any, ACBF can play in addressing the challenges.
- What steps African policy makers, political leadership and the development partners, ACBF included, need to take to foster transformative leadership and good governance.

IV. TRANSCRIPT OF KNOWLEDGE-SHARING INTERVIEW

What follows in this section is a record of the interview between the Knowledge, Evaluation and Learning Department of the African Capacity Building Foundation (KEL, ACBF), and Ambassador Rylander. Herein, Ambassador Rylander shares his thoughts and experiences guided by the theme: *Governance and Transformative Leadership in Africa: Progress, Prospects and Challenges*.

KEL, ACBF: *You are no stranger to Africa, having been in Zimbabwe since 2006. Could you please give us a bit of history about yourself and your career?*

Ambassador Rylander: Well, there is a dividing line in 1979. Before that year I was dealing with a number of general issues – multilateral world issues, new world economic order etc. In 1979 I moved to Botswana, which was my entry point into Africa. I was also then Head of SIDA in Botswana and Lesotho. And from that time onwards, more than 30 years ago, I have been concentrating on Africa, particularly Southern Africa. I had four postings as Ambassador – Angola, Namibia, Tanzania and finally Zimbabwe. So that has been my career, I have been hooked on Africa but let me add that I don't regret it at all because that was my luck, I think.

KEL, ACBF: *So you have been in Africa, working on the continent at very interesting times. Could you tell us a bit about your time in Angola because that was a very interesting time for that country?*

Ambassador Rylander: Well that was an interesting period indeed. It coincided with liberation struggles in many places in Southern Africa and as you know, Sweden did not sit on the fence. We were on the side of many of the liberation movements- SWAPO, ANC, ZANU, ZAPO, FRELIMO, MPLA etc. We were on their side, supporting them politically, morally and of course socially. We could not provide them with weapons, that was provided by others but there was a lot we could do to support them in the social sectors and politically as I said. In Angola during my time there were intense negotiations that went on regarding the presence of Cuban troops and as you know the exchange for withdrawing these troops was Namibia's independence so it was the old bipolar timing in the world, you had the United States and the Soviet Union on both ends of

the divide and then also the UN was a key player in global politics. Thus there was a very protracted negotiation but I must say it all ended well. Namibia became independent in 1990. Afterwards, we had the collapse of the Soviet Union, leading to a new situation with the US as the one and only superpower.

KEL, ACBF: *One of your quite lengthy diplomatic postings was in Tanzania. Could you take us through the memory lane, what was happening during that time in the Country, 1998?*

Ambassador Rylander: Yeah, I must say I love Tanzania and I feel like I am a half Tanzanian myself. This was a difficult time because the country was going through difficulties, especially with the economy and the country had estranged relations with the donor community. Then came in Benjamin Mkapa as president. He started to redo things to turn around the situation. He actually did all the right things on the economy.

During the five years that I was in the country, we developed very good relationships between the donor community and the government. This relationship actually became the model for donor-government relationship, which was also given a fillip by the Paris Declaration that called for collaboration between donors and governments. Tanzania showed that in terms of ownership of the development process, they were at the forefront and this worked well for the country. I must confess it was a happy time.

KEL, ACBF: *From Tanzania, you became a “Roving Ambassador”. What does a Roving Ambassador actually do?*

Ambassador Rylander: Actually I was a sort of “Dialogue Ambassador” for Africa, representing my country in Africa, but this scope was expanded. I was involved in the

question of Sudan. I attended the negotiations in Abuja on peace talks about Darfur. That was in 2004/2005 when Salim Ahmed Salim was representing the African Union and I was representing the European Union. The negotiations were very intense. There was some progress but there were setbacks afterwards and as you know, the whole situation in Sudan is still yet to be settled. It was fascinating to be involved in those discussions. When it comes to the issue of security in Africa and the continent's future, you have Sudan, the DRC and Nigeria. These three giants of the continent are very important for Africa's future and therefore, it is important that problems in these countries are solved permanently because they can impact on Africa as a whole.

I did this job of dialogue Ambassador for two years until I was appointed as the Ambassador for Zimbabwe.

KEL, ACBF: *How did you feel, when you were told that your final assignment was going to be in Zimbabwe? What came on your mind in terms of what you hoped to be able to do while in Zimbabwe?*

Ambassador Rylander: Well I was very inspired, optimistic and hopeful. I felt that there had been a lack of contact, a lack of dialogue between Zimbabwe and the rest of the international community and so I thought this was an opportunity to bridge this gap, of course with harder effort. I thought we could achieve something quickly but unfortunately things did not happen the way I had hoped for. The reason is that Zimbabweans must first build bridges between themselves in order for them to be able to make progress in the dialogue with the international community.

As it were, I soon found out that it was a very divided society. Till today it is still divided to some extent but with the government of national unity, I see Zimbabwe coming together again as a nation. We are now about

“Zimbabweans must first build bridges between themselves in order for them to be able to make progress in the dialogue with the international community.”

to make very important breakthroughs, I think. I must also admit that it was very difficult during my first two years here. I had to pay a price when I and my government stood up against the violence and torture in the country. The government did not take my position and criticism lightly, especially coming from people like me who had been involved in the liberation struggle but I am very proud of what I did during this difficult period.

KEL, ACBF: *While in Zimbabwe you have assumed another role, which is the chairman of the ACBF Board of Governors. How did that come about?*

Ambassador Rylander: I actually do not know how it came about but I think it was a good move to have someone close to the location of the Foundation to chair the Board during those difficult times. I must also say that I have keenly followed developments pertaining to the establishment of the Foundation over the years. As you know Sweden was quite instrumental in the ACBF's establishment during the early 1990s. Some of my best friends were also directly involved in activities of the Foundation at the time. I recall that my friend, Professor Lennart Wohlgemut played a very instrumental role in those days. I personally also share in the believe that this was a very good initiative and so since I became a member of the Board during my stint as Ambassador of Sweden, I played an active role in its activities and I think this was recognized by my colleagues on the Board who elected me as the Chairman of the Board.

KEL, ACBF: Speaking to the theme of governance and transformative leadership in Africa, could you talk a bit about Africa's prospects, progress and challenges and any missing links?

Ambassador Rylander: One missing link definitely was that 10 years ago there were challenges in how to deal with peace and security at the continental level. You remember there was the Organization of African Unity, which did not have the mandate to intervene in the affairs of member countries due to the policy of “non-interference” in member countries' affairs. This was a weak role of the OAU. With the OAU's transformation into the African Union, which I consider very important, the whole dynamics changed. The whole peace and security network was now built up although I think it still needs to be strengthened. With the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU came a paradigm shift, which I find very important. Now the AU has decided that the body should intervene in conflict situations and make things good particularly when the conflict is as a result of internal divisions.

Beyond the continental space, I think the African Union also needs to strengthen the sub-regional organizations or bodies such as SADC, EALA, ECOWAS, UEMOA among the others. Of course these efforts are time-consuming and no one should be under any illusions about that. However, I am certain that with concerted and dedicated efforts, the AU can make a major impact on the continent.

KEL, ACBF: So conflict resolution and peace building are central to Africa's future prosperity?

Ambassador Rylander: That is key. Without peace and conflict resolution mechanisms, all efforts to develop the economies will come to naught. Without peace and security in most African countries it will be difficult to make a headway in other areas like capacity building.

KEL, ACBF: As the former Country Director of SIDA in Botswana and also as the head of bilateral cooperation and later as the head of the Africa department of SIDA, what in your view, constitute the critical issues for development cooperation in Africa?

Ambassador Rylander: Again, I think a couple of things: peace and security are very important and a strong macroeconomic framework. These have been discussed in the development circles for some time, remember it was referred to as the Washington Consensus but now we say these things are old-fashioned because the World Bank and IMF were seen as strong institutions who were trying to impose their ideas on the rest of the developing world. The models they proposed had challenges and were not really successfully adapted into individual countries' development agenda. The policies espoused by these institutions brought a lot of hardship on the people because critical areas like education and health were affected. But I think that approach has now changed as there is now a general recognition to support the weak or vulnerable people in society. Now the Breton Woods institutions have to work with the governments to ensure agreement on the policies. That brings down the social tension in the various countries. Tanzania has been leading the way in this endeavor as they have managed to effectively blend social protection measures with open competitive policies.

In this regard I always say to the Zimbabweans that they should not be afraid to carry out macroeconomics reforms because countries such as Tanzania, Zambia and the rest have succeeded. Go for debt relief, I say to them, and also that they should work with the World Bank and the IMF because there is no other way. They stand the risk of even sinking deeper if they do not go this route. As of now, not much is coming in even after the formation of the government of national unity because it takes a bit of time to get consensus on debt relief and other rescue packages even for the Highly Indebted Poor Countries. I think there still

remains some suspicion on the ZANU-PF side but I am sure that these things will be resolved with time.

KEL, ACBF: Having talked a bit about Tanzania and Zimbabwe, could you also share some ideas on your days in Namibia and Angola, working with some of the political actors in those countries. On account of these experiences, what would you consider as some of the successes and challenges in Africa's quest for transformative leadership?

Ambassador Rylander: I think Namibia has been doing well. It was fantastic to see how they managed to take over the leadership of the country in the early 1990 and also to deal with national reconciliation and transformative leadership. It was kind of difficult for my friend Sam Nujoma to step down from the presidency both in the party and at the national level but finally he did that and Pohamba, who is now the president, is a very good person who abides by the rule of law and has managed this transition very successfully. I think it is also a lesson for Zimbabwe because people have to realize that it is possible to go through transformative change even if you have an icon as your president so they should use such positive lesson.

In Angola the situation was more difficult but I think it is fantastic to see the progress made so far. When I lived in Angola in the mid 1980s it was chaotic, a very difficult situation arising out of the civil war but look at where Angola is today – they are doing extremely well economically and they are together as one nation now. Of course they have their own problems but they managed to go through a successful transition. Don't forget that Dos Santos had been president for a longer time than Mugabe so there you understand that the people understand the need to go through a

change. They are currently doing very well economically and they are competing very well with South Africa as the economic giant in Southern Africa so I think that is fantastic.

KEL, ACBF: Having been at the forefront of development aid to Africa, your country has a lot of lessons to share on aid effectiveness. In terms of the Paris Declaration, how do you see the practical realities of cooperation both among partners and between donors and Africa?

Ambassador Rylander: It is a good question. The experience is that only a few countries are really doing well in terms of cooperation and coordination of aid by building on ownership and the changes that came through the Paris declaration. Here I mention again Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia at some stages. A couple of years ago, it became more difficult in Zambia for some reasons but it is very easy to slide back into the old habits where governments, instead of being in control, resort to begging for assistance in all directions, such that at some points you can have different sector ministries in one country going in different directions to request for aid. Such lack of coordination affects both the amount of aid that comes into a country and the effectiveness of aid. Having said that, I must say also that I am hopeful and glad to see that there is better coordination now in most African countries than what was the case in the early 1990s when the international community virtually controlled all the aid related discussions because there was weak ownership. As it is now, countries have become more assertive whether they are dealing with the World Bank or the IMF. This shows that they are running the show and doing the proper things. We in the West are only there to support the local efforts in carrying out their own programs to build on that ownership.

KEL, ACBF: *In terms of transformative leadership and capacity to deal with conflicts, what would you say about Rwanda, where President Paul Kagame has been credited with setting the pace for the rest of the continent in these two critical areas?*

Ambassador Rylander: I am happy about the progress made in Rwanda. I am also happy to note that ACBF played a very important role in the tremendously difficult transition in that country during the mid-1990s. That is certainly one of the sources of pride for you ACBF because I am aware that the Foundation played significant role in building capacity in that country.

I think the reason why Kagame has attracted so much commendation is probably because of his ability to manage a very difficult and tragic situation in Rwanda. When you have a leader who is able to break a pattern of negative situations of epic proportions as we saw in Rwanda and succeeds to bring stability and good governance I think that is worth commendation. Kagame has also been able to maintain relations with the international donor community in a very effective way. But it has not been all easy you know? Recently my government for instance had to cut budgetary support to the country because we felt that not enough was being done to contain violence in the Eastern Congo where we felt that there was Rwandese involvement in the violence there. But as a leader, one needs to nurture this kind of relationship all the time with partners and other key stakeholders in the nation and that is what I see as a challenge for Kagame and other leaders in Africa.

KEL, ACBF: *In light of the colossal development challenges facing Africa, what would you consider as priority areas for the continent now and in the coming years? Do you envisage any role for ACBF in this direction?*

Ambassador Rylander: That is a very difficult and broad question. But as I said earlier, peace

and security, stability, rule of law and sound macroeconomic environment are certainly important for Africa today and will continue to be tomorrow. I think ACBF can play an important role in these areas as it has been doing over the years. I mentioned your role in Rwanda and other countries.

I also think that trade issues will remain important for Africa in the coming years. I think it is very important that Africa also places emphasis on building trade negotiation capacity. Mauritius is one country that has done very well in this area. But this is not easy. The European Union for instance has been very tough, difficult and often at times not constructive in their dealings with Africa on trade issues. I am one of those who have been saying to my government and others in the EU that we must behave much better than we are doing now if we want to play a constructive role in Africa because there are other players around – we see China, Brazil, Turkey, India and others mounting a strong competition. This means that we Europeans cannot continue to see Africa the way we used to see the continent in the past. We must behave, we must do better by conducting these negotiations in a better manner than we did before.

KEL, ACBF: *How do you see the role of the private sector and civil society in this whole question of development in Africa?*

Ambassador Rylander: Very important role. Much more important than even the donors and the donor community. I belong to the school of thought that believes that maybe 10 – 15 or maybe 20 years from now we will have no development assistance as we know it today. That requires that there must be a strong private sector driven economy. Zimbabwe is in fact a case in point. It is not we in the donor community who can take the country out of the mess, so to say, there has to be a strong and vibrant private sector which can revitalize the whole agricultural sector and the industrial

sectors. I see that coming but sometimes I have a feeling that there is too much emphasis on us the donors but they should do more to encourage the private sector and do it in a clever way, not as we have seen recently with the Indigenization Law that has scared away all foreign investors for now. Zimbabwe can correct that because I think it was an unnecessary mistake to do things the way it happened. I know many people in government are unhappy about that as well so that is why we see some types of damage control that is being undertaken right now.

KEL, ACBF: *It has been argued that the real challenges that face African countries in post-conflict reconstruction are political and socio-economic. These manifest in challenges such as having the garbage collected, restoring electricity supplies, getting tap water flowing etc. Do you subscribe to the line of thinking that says that once we address the political question, all of these services will fall in place?*

Ambassador Rylander: Well, it is really a matter of embarking on a process of good governance including rule of law, transparency, accountability among others. For instance, in Zimbabwe, there is need to address the problem of a rooted system of patronage that has been there for 30 years now. We see that playing out all the time. People are dependent on the top and the President has a hold on the citizens, a situation which feeds into political patronage. Then also there is need to negotiate how to divide and distribute benefits that comes from government operations. One very telling example, which has repeated itself time and again is diamond in the Marange area. I read in Newsday (local newspaper) today about an article that estimates that up until now about US\$30 million has been accumulated from proceeds from these mines,

however, none of that has gone through the government's budget or through the Ministry of Finance. This is an observation made by Tendai Bitti, the Minister of Finance who is making the case that he wants to have an open and accountable systems so that this money can come into the government coffers. Once you have such a situation, the government will have significant access to resources to fund its business.

This will, in turn, reduce dependence on the international community for assistance. So this is a particular system in Zimbabwe, the patronage system is very extreme here albeit we have similar situations in some other countries on the continent. Thus the way to go in any post-conflict reconstruction situation is leadership and good governance.

KEL, ACBF: *If I may do a quick follow up, are you implying that revenue mobilize and governance hold the key to success in this effort? What is the role of corruption in post-conflict reconstruction efforts?*

Ambassador Rylander: Sure, effective revenue mobilization is key but it must go along with good governance – transparency and accountability because without these elements, seepage in the systems will thwart every genuine and effective revenue mobilization effort. In Zimbabwe, corruption or perception of corruption is certainly real just as it is in many other countries. Where civil servants or revenue collectors are paid inadequate salaries, it leads to corruption. But there are solutions to this problem. There are tremendous resources in the country and I believe that effective, open extraction of such resources and an equitable distribution system will go a long way to reduce the incidence of corruption.

KEL, ACBF: You mentioned China and Brazil. What are your views on the long term economic prospects between Africa and some of these BRIC countries?

Ambassador Rylander: I have very positive views about Africa's future. I must confess that I am an afro-optimist. When it comes to Africa, I use to advise people to behave like the multinational companies, some of whom do planning for long periods, 30 or 40 years ahead of time. These companies see Africa as a potentially strong market with a lot of under-utilized benefits and under-developed resources. I am sure some 20 years from now, the main part of the world where we would see enormous growth will be in Africa.

Some people are afro-pessimist because of various shorter-term scenarios such as problems in Somalia, Sudan and others. These negative scenarios are portrayed in the media in the western world so people draw the conclusions that nothing is going to work. But my advice is that people should look at the brighter side, look into the future – the 30- 40 years scenario and in that way they will become very optimistic.

The country that has seen growth founded on some of these factors better than others is probably China. I use to tell my government and the European governments to realize this and to be part of the future scenario and not take Africa for granted any longer because other players are coming in. I for instance reported to my government recently citing the sudden rise in Chinese trade value in Africa. From around US\$10 billion in 2000, China is now doing something like US\$100 billion of trade value in Africa. This is just over a period of ten years and there is tenfold increase. Similarly, Chinese investment value has also seen a big jump in Africa. There are about one thousand Chinese companies doing business in Africa with over one million Chinese working as entrepreneurs or doing all sorts of business on the continent in the various countries. I am told

in Angola there are more than one hundred thousand Chinese workers. In Zimbabwe, they are in the region of ten thousand. Thus China sees the potential on the continent so they are looking at long term engagements.

China has been able to establish partnerships on the continent, which are mostly geared not necessarily to help Africa but to secure their own needs as well. I think the rest of us in the Western world need to start seeing Africa as a potential strong partner in the global economy. Those with an old fashioned way of thinking need to adapt to the current realities.

KEL, ACBF: Some commentators have likened the present competition between the West and China for Africa's resources to the era of the colonialisms when there was a scramble for resources and political control by the West. The unfolding competition is also seen in differences in approach. Unlike the West, China does not make issues of human rights and democracy a cornerstone of its interventions. It is said when two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers. Do you see Africa coming out as the beneficiary of the competition between the West and China for economic control of resources of the continent?

Ambassador Rylander: I think it is good for Africa to have this sort of competition. I honestly do not see China as being aggressive vis-à-vis the West. They are exploiting the fact that they are doing very well in Africa while many of us in the West remain old fashioned in our approach to the continent. You can just look at the trade negotiations going on between the EU and Africa, which in my opinion have not been conducted in a very good way.

There is this kind of paternalistic atmosphere surrounding the negotiations. But China is exploiting our weaknesses if you will, but in all, I think it is good for Africa that there is a strong competition or alternatives. That said, my

experience with China is that they are also putting emphasis on good governance in an open transparent economy. At least that is what they have been telling me and my colleagues in Zimbabwe. They want to have an end to the mess in the economy, for instance the huge hyperinflation situation that was not benefitting anyone. They want to have order in the house and a good transparent system to work with. So there are many common grounds between us and the Chinese when it comes to creating a favorable investment climate in Africa.

KEL, ACBF: *If we may take a step back to the issue of Afro-optimism which you alluded to earlier. Besides the countries such as Angola, Rwanda, South Africa and Botswana, do you see specific possible poles of excellence on the continent?*

Ambassador Rylander: Some of these countries you mentioned are very small within the larger geographical space of Africa. They have very small economies as well. There is Angola, which has amazingly done very well during these periods. I was ambassador to Angola in the mid 80s for three years. It was a country full of civil wars and other conflicts but just look at where it is now. It is an emerging economy almost as big as that of South Africa and indeed they are a threat to South Africa in that sense. The Angolan economy has potential to even surpass South Africa if it continues to grow the way it has been over the last few years. Of course there are other good examples on the continent, one of which is Ghana. I use to point to Ghana as an example whenever I am discussing Zimbabwe problems. That country also had a very difficult past that involved civil tensions arising from military interventions, but currently they have managed to put all of that behind them and have succeeded in establishing a strong democracy. There is good governance and good political systems.

But while we talk of these good examples, we also need to talk about the three giants in Africa – DRC, Sudan and Nigeria. These are three huge countries whose political and economic situations have a strong impact on the rest of the continent. Unfortunately, these countries are somehow under threat today. DRC has never been a strong consolidated nation. Sudan also stands the risk of being divided when they hold the forthcoming referendum next year. Nigeria has also been beset with ethnic and religious tensions for many years. These are huge challenges and responsibilities for the leaders of these countries and indeed the rest of the continent.

KEL, ACBF: *In the light of the colossal developmental challenges facing Africa, what would you consider as priority areas for Africa in the coming five years, and why?*

Ambassador Rylander: I think one high priority area is the question of private sector involvement in national growth. Governments have to encourage the private sector to serve as the engine of growth. There is huge potential in this area. When well supported, the private sector could generate significant employment opportunities and generate income to run the economies.

Again, issues of rule of law, transparency, independent judiciary and accountability need to be emphasized in Africa's development discourse. These are the foundations of good governance. When a country adheres to these tenets it sends positive signals to its citizens in the Diaspora and to the international community. A country that deviates from these issues suffer the consequences. Look at Zimbabwe for instance. Many of its best people are living outside the country as is often the case with many African countries. However, when the citizens in the Diaspora feel that there is improvement in good governance in the country, they will be willing to come back to

help to develop the economy. I think there are too many Africans living outside the continent and so I feel this is one area the African Capacity Building Foundation needs to do something about. The Foundation needs to put in place programs and strategies to bring people back to Africa to help build the continent because there are so many talents out there.

The history of development aid shows that external inflows cannot be the sole source of investment. As a matter of fact I see a return to the situation we faced 30, 40 years ago where donor aid at a point slows down because of challenges in the donor countries. That requires a redirection of local strategy to ensure self-dependence. There is need to build strong private investors who can effectively spearhead local growth. Of course such private partners also need skills in negotiation in international trade and that is where organizations like the ACBF become very important. ACBF also needs to introduce programs that will tap into the experiences and resources of people in the Diaspora.

KEL, ACBF: Actually the Foundation has been mulling plans to organize African Home Coming Summits that will target African intellectuals and business people in the Diaspora to explore how best their contributions could be harnessed for the continent's development. The Foundation recognizes that beyond traditional remittances, there is need to tap into the skills, experiences and insights of these sons and daughters of the continent.

Ambassador Rylander: I think that will be a great idea that will be supported by the ACBF Board of Governors. I urge the Foundation to move to implement such a program because I am convinced that much in the same way as talented Africans are helping to build other countries around the Western world, they could also support the transformation of their own individual countries. Of course this

depends on creating the right atmosphere for their contributions. The right laws and political climate are necessary for such plans to succeed.

It is equally important for governments to build effective partnership with the private sector to develop the infrastructure. As you know, many of the people who travel abroad and do not want to come back do so because after having access to well developed infrastructure in the Developed countries, they find it difficult to relocate back home if there are no good roads, good drinking water, electricity and ICT infrastructure among others. This also requires a policy shift by the governments.

As you know I spent quite sometime in Tanzania. Initially the country was a socialist state that was not supportive of the private sector. After switching from a socialist state to one that supports individual property ownership and private sector development, Tanzania is now a very successful country that has become a beacon of hope for the region and indeed the rest of the continent just like those countries I mentioned earlier. They are doing very well in the mining and tourism area and I think that sends a message for other countries to follow along similar paths.

KEL, ACBF: Looking back on your 30 years plus experience, the bulk of which you dedicated to promoting issues of good governance in Africa, what advice would you want to share with African policy makers and their development partners?

Ambassador Rylander: This is a broad question, but I think basically the advice goes to the heart of the issues we have been discussing: issues of good leadership, good governance, transparency and accountability, promotion of private sector development, rule of law, respect for property rights and things like that. I am worried about the future of Southern

Africa. In Zimbabwe, the expectation has been that the self-imposed crisis would be solved with the coming in of the unity government. My concern is with South Africa where they also have tensions over land and other economic problems. We see some of the young leadership there, particularly the Youth League of the African National Congress led by Julius Malema making very inflammatory political statements about the future direction of the country. If someone like Julius Malema is expected to be lead the country in the future, say in 20 years time then there is reason to be worried because in that case the country stands the risk of degenerating into a situation like Zimbabwe. The problem is that there does not seem to be adequate and effective peer review mechanisms in the region to check these dangers. If you look at the Southern African Development Cooperation, SADC, I think it is a good organization but it is not doing well in many areas. For instance look at the SADC Tribunal. Because of Zimbabwe the whole region is failing to back the Tribunal, which is otherwise meant to be a very effective tool to check abuses of people's rights.

For us in the rest of the world we see SADC as wavering on a very important principle of property rights and the rule of law. They are not handling this with a lot of care that would be expected. So far the SADC Tribunal has shown promise but it needs to be supported by all the member countries at the highest levels, even though that will have some negative consequences for some people in Zimbabwe including Mugabe. Because of these possible consequences, I see that many of the member countries are very cautious in their support for the institution but that is a very dangerous course to take.

At the continental level, I applaud the African Peer Review Mechanism of NEPAD, but I think the continent needs to keep up with the moment because the process started well but we don't hear much of it these days. There is a lack of momentum at present because of what

I think is less commitment by the political leadership. I think it is a good thing that the African Union is increasingly asserting its authority on the continent. The Peace and Security Council is a very important arm of the Union and I think it needs all the support to build its capacity for effective performance.

KMD, ACBF: It does appear that around the continent, there are revolutionary leaders to whom many of the younger generation of leaders look up to for counseling. Could we safely conclude that the issue of “big man” mentality has gone down in Africa with the resurgence of democracy on the continent?

Ambassador Rylander: Yes, but there is still a long way to go. Perhaps the best example of generational leadership is Nelson Mandela, for whom I have a lot of respect and admiration. The way he talks and handles issues is to me the best for the continent and indeed the rest of the world. He said “tolerance is one of the best ways to solve major national issues”. This type of tolerance is lacking in Zimbabwe and so many countries across the continent.

I thank you for the opportunity to share a few ideas with you. I wish ACBF the best of luck in the coming years and I hope we can strongly support you as you move ahead in the good work you doing on the continent.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Africa has the potential to become a powerful global player and lead in international discourse about development. The Continent has abundance of resources, both natural and human. What is required is the right leadership. A leadership that can harness the various potentials and provide exemplary leadership that will motivate the younger generation to think become nationalistic and enthusiastic about the future of their respective countries. This path has been threaded before by the now Asian Tigers. Africa can do the same.

The African Capacity Building Foundation

ACBF is Africa's premier institution in Capacity Building. Established in February 1991, ACBF is the outcome of collaboration between African governments and the international donor community. The major sponsoring agencies of the Foundation are the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) became a member of ACBF in 2002. The African Union is an Honorary Member.

ACBF's mission is to build sustainable human and institutional capacity for sustainable growth, poverty reduction and good governance in Africa. The Foundation intervenes in six core competency areas, namely, economic policy analysis and management, financial management and accountability, strengthening and monitoring of national statistics, public administration and management, strengthening of the policy analysis capacity of national parliaments, professionalization of the voices of the private sector and civil society.

Besides intervening directly in the area of capacity development, ACBF also provides a platform for consultation, dialogue, cooperation as well as information and knowledge sharing amongst development stakeholders and partners across the African continent.

The Foundation is present in some 44 sub-Saharan African countries and has committed more than US\$350 million to interventions in capacity development since its inception.

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