POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE FOR RESULTS

AfCoP Secretariat

Knowledge Brief N° 2

SYNOPSIS

This AfCoP Knowledge Brief points out and examines political leadership and governance gaps in Africa linked to development results strategies. The text underlines that these gaps are mostly associated with the rule of law and to the lack of specific capacities of institutions, governments and leaders. The specific capacities that need to be built to reduce this gap are stretched out and the role of knowledge and policy research to this extent is emphasized.

Introduction

Under the auspices of the Africa for Results Initiative (Afrik4R), the African Community of Practice (AfCoP) on Managing for Development Results (MfDR) from November 11th 2013 to November 30th 2013 held an online discussion on "Political leadership and governance for results". The purpose of this e-discussion was to allow an exchange on Managing for Development Results (MfDR) experiences beyond national boundaries and to give some policy directions towards a better political leadership and effective governance in Africa.

African countries need leaders, endowed with strong political will and an engagement towards development results. This strong commitment is often recognized to be lacking in African political leadership and consequently contributing to slow down development processes and development-focused policies and initiatives. In countries where political leaders are committed to MfDR and uphold good governance, there is higher likelihood to achieve development results.

Transformative political leadership for Africa's development

African countries have leadership gaps in many sectors (business sector, civil society, etc.). Political leadership, at the core of any social system, is also challenged on the continent. Therefore, African countries, being development-focused, have a strong need for transformative leadership. Leaders ought to effectively mobilize resources and possess a vision and related strategies to build capable institutions that will pertain beyond the single leader.

Even if African countries are at different levels of embracing results based management, it is to be noted that leadership for results, political buy-in and ownership of MfDR and governments' accountability for results are indispensable. In effect, through such processes of informed decision-making, capable leaders are able to mobilize towards a common goal/project.

Parliamentarians can be crucial political leaders sustaining a culture of results; through their legislative, representative and oversight roles, they

are catalysts to achieving sustainable development results in their respective countries.

To this extent, a democratic environment and correlated free and fair elections are considered indispensable for ensuring good leadership and sustainable development.

Relying on the rule of laws, which remains a difficult issue to tackle (as shown by the IIAG, Box 1) for African countries, as well as the quality of leadership, African institutions are still fragile. For this reason, a country's constitution can play a vital role to entrench a culture of results within the political leadership.

Governance for results in Africa

Political leadership drives the strategy for concerted governance among the different stakeholders in a given society (private sector, public sector, and civil society). To achieve results, innovative models of governance are required to foster peace and security, achieve sustainable economic development, financial management, and human development.

Decentralization/devolution of governance, including fostering participatory approaches to development, is then encouraged for the achievement of development results. These systems of governance facilitate effective and inclusive implementation of plans for development results. Pertinent to the inclusive approach is the involvement of women, youth and marginalized social groups in planning, designing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and reporting for development results.

To put results based management theory into practice three steps need to receive particular attention to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the entire process:

1. *Policies for development planning*: pro-MfDR policies need to be set in place and maintained in a country, despite the

eventual changes in political leadership that may happen.

2. *Planning for development results*: the involvement of senior political leaders on the onset is central to implementation.

3. *Implementation for development results*: regular and consistent follow-up on the implementation of the plan is crucial. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is then a key element in the results agenda.

Capacity building for better leadership and governance for development results

Development results processes in Africa require enhancing leadership and governance capacities in different domains. Among other areas, the following are crucial capacity needs that are transversal to all countries.

- Knowledge in governance and policy design and implementation as well as the technical capacities of government officials have to be deepened,
- Integrated results based capacities for parliamentarians have to be built,
- Capacities have to be reinforced to strengthen country institutions,
- Political leaders have to be equipped with knowledge and skills to foster a culture of results,
- A culture of planning and implementation for results, to monitor program implementation and evaluate results, ensure the relevance of policies to the citizen's needs, has to be built at the public sector's top management level,
- Capacities of countries to use ICT-based systems to better manage all aspects of policy and development management have to be improved and enhanced,
- Capacities to manage political transitions and

successions have to be sustainably built at the country and regional levels,

- Statistical capacities for M&E have to be built to ensure effective monitoring of changes,
- Countries need to enhance their capacities for policy research, knowledge sharing and management: think thanks and policy institutes may be crucial actors to this extent.

Conclusion

African countries are still less affected in governance and leadership thereby, hindering achievement of development results. Addressing these gaps is a pressing matter for ensuring that institutions can work properly, and development is achieved and really benefits all Africans. This requires that a number of capacities need to be built for institutions and individuals. Policies, knowledge, planning and monitoring remain key-factors ensuring the sustainability of the measures to be undertaken at the country and regional levels. Communities of practice such as AfCoP can play an important role in ensuring that success stories and experiences are shared among African countries, allowing people to capitalize on the new insights and better use information.

References

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