

THE ROLE OF AFRICAN WOMEN LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE AS RELATES TO THE AFRICAN UNION AGENDA 2063.

Presentation by:

Hon. Nakawuki Susan, MP
East African Legislative Assembly

To the
African Women Diplomatic Forum (AWDF) Conference.
Carleton University Ottawa.

March 12 2015

Methodology:

The paper is written from the point of view of a participant observer of the African situation and as a woman leader in the African context. The paper is not intended to be a scholarly treatise of the subject matter, but a commentary on the challenges and opportunities as seen by the author.

Women Leaders' Engagement in Agenda 2063 Implementation

The AU process on Agenda 2063 is premised on transparency, openness and participatory with all stakeholders; including citizens having the opportunity to participate and provide inputs into the various processes at various levels.

The spirit of the AU Agenda 2063 formulation and negotiation process to create a new era in Africa calls for the active participation of Women, Civil society and other stakeholders including parliamentarians in the debates around the agenda in order to ensure that national governments are ambitious about development outcomes for the next fifty years, as well as lay the foundation for an accountability framework.

a) Understanding the leadership and governance mandate:

Leadership and governance are complex terms with various approaches to their definition. For simplicity, the following definitions are selected to guide our understanding:

Kevin Kruse, a Forbes Magazine contributing author, after outlining what leadership is not, finally defines Leadership as “a process of social influence, which maximizes the effort of others, towards the achievement of a goal”.

The Institute on Governance defines “Governance” as follows:

“Governance determines who has power, who makes decisions, how other players make their voice heard and how account is rendered”.

The Year 2015 was declared as a year of Women's empowerment and Development towards Africa's agenda 2063

The African Union developed a long term strategy that would harmonise and integrate all plans and frameworks available at National, Regional and Continental level. This kind of approach has worked in China before and it can work for Africa too.

b) Salient aspects of the AU Vision 2063:

There are 7 salient aspirations or sub-themes of the AU Vision 2063, as follows:

ASPIRATION 1.

A PROSPEROUS AFRICA BASED ON INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

- Elimination of Poverty, high standards of living, health
- Well educated citizens
- Modern Agriculture; the hand hoe will be banished
- Value addition
- Climate change Mitigation
- reduce dependence on Donor aid
- Job creation for Women and Youth
- Gender Equity and equality

ASPIRATION 2.

AN INTEGRATED CONTINENT, POLITICALLY UNITED BASED ON THE IDEALS OF PAN AFRICANISM AND THE VISION OF AFRICA'S RENAISSANCE.

- Be a united Africa, integrated and self reliant.
- Free movement of People, goods, services, capital etc
- Establishment of continental institutions and government
- World class infrastructure connecting major African capitals.
- Boarderless with no visa restrictions

ASPIRATION 3.

AN AFRICA OF GOOD GOVERNANCE, DEMOCRACY, RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, JUSTICE AND THE RULE OF LAW.

- Gender Equality with women integrated in all structures of decision making and governance
- Rule of Law
- free and fair elections, Level playing field in political competitiveness
- Affordable and timely access to independent courts (Justice delayed is Justice denied)
- No corruption and impunity
- Grassroot participation in decision Making

ASPIRATION 4.

A PEACEFUL AND SECURE AFRICA.

- By 2020 all guns will be silent

- Peaceful resolution of conflicts
- A culture of human Rights, democracy, Gender Equality
- Free from armed conflict, Terrorism, gender based violence, human trafficking
-

ASPIRATION 5.

AN AFRICA WITH A STRONG CULTURAL IDENTITY, COMMON HERITAGE, VALUES AND ETHICS.

- Pan AFRICANISM shall be fully entrenched and taught in all Schools.
- African languages will be a basis for administration and integration
- Women and youth will be the drivers of Change

ASPIRATION 6.

AN AFRICA WHERE DEVELOPMENT IS PEOPLE-DRIVEN, UNLEASHING THE POTENTIAL OF ITS WOMEN AND YOUTH.

- No Woman, Man, Child will be left behind on the basis of Gender, Political Affiliation etc
- Right to own and inherit property and Contract
- No Violence against Women
- Women Occupying at least 50% of elected public offices at all levels plus Managerial positions in both Public and private sector
- Full implementation of the African Charter on the Rights of a child.
- Elimination of youth Unemployment

ASPIRATION 7.

AFRICA AS A STRONG, UNITED AND INFLUENTIAL GLOBAL PLAYER AND PARTNER

- Advocate for reform of the UN and other Global institutions eg UN Security Council where Africa is the only region without a permanent seat. (China, France, Russia, UK, USA)
- Speak with one voice on priorities in global negotiations.
- introduce an African passport
- avoid visa requirements by 2018.
- Capable of financing her development

These aspirations require that Africa embarks on a process that will harness the potential of all her people: men and women, girls and boys, young and old. And herein are the challenges and opportunities.

c) Challenges and priorities for African women leaders

Often, the leadership function focuses on prioritizing, in the face of limited resources. For this reason, women leaders in Africa need to focus on priority areas likely to impact women's participation in the Vision 2063 process. A key goal here should be: "Achieving gender parity in education". The active participation of women in the AU Vision 2063 requires renewed effort to deal with the factors that discourage girls from education.

The strong patriarchal cultures in many countries, make women subordinate to men making it impossible for them to participate in public life, leadership and decision making.

In many Countries the Political arena is largely dominated by Men contrary to the Universal Declaration on Democracy and the Beijing platform for action.

Women struggle to feed families owing to prescribed Gender roles so most of them don't wish to add more responsibility.

d) Opportunities for African women Leaders: using a neglected opportunity to partner with men. An overarching theme of AU vision 2063 is the need to promote inclusive development in all areas, principally referring to equal participation based on gender. However, whereas the AU Vision 2063 has strong statements on how women and youth should participate in the process, there is no specific mention on how men will participate in the plan. This is a weakness that needs correction in future versions of the plan.

Neglecting direct mention of the role of men in the plan may be a result of what some may see as a radical feminist approach to development, where gender conflict has more often than not been used as a strategy instead of promoting gender unanimity.

Helping men to embrace gender equality as an important aspect of the development process needs to be brought at the centre of every development effort. It would cost less, if men became champions of women's emancipation with the African family setting.

e) Role of women in light of the challenges and opportunities.

Given the above challenges and opportunities, women leaders need to re-think their approach to leadership and governance. There are opportunities for faster transformation once new approaches to issues like gender equality, women empowerment are considered. The need to define the role of men in the process of the AU Vision 2063 should be given the urgency it deserves.

*** Although Women remain significantly under represented in the different leadership positions, it's important to look beyond the numbers and focus on what women Leaders can actually accomplish while in those positions and how they can make a positive impact. (21.9 % of Women Parliamentarians in Dec 2014)

What identifies us as women Leaders is not the lack of challenges but the capacity to address such challenges and Addressing the gaps that hinder full participation is key.

1. Legislation.

- Shaping and amending legal framework that underlines and determines women's rights

- promoting and passing laws which generate an enabling environment for full implementation, alignment and mainstreaming of the Agenda with national development policies and Programs.
- Designing policies and Programmes
- Uganda passed a law against FGM
- Amended laws which discriminate against women plus archaic cultural beliefs.
- increase in Constitutions that are realistic Women rights.
- it was through an African led coalition that the UN declared a ban on FGM in 2012
- Mali, Gambia and Liberia still continue with FGM
- enrollment of Girls in School.
- 1.5 for Girls joining university.
- Maputo Protocol/ African Charter on the rights of women regarded as one of the most progressive instruments on Women in the world, Botswana, Eritrea, Egypt and Tunisia have not ratified.
- Marital Age in Malawi is still 15
- Zimbabwe forced marriages
- Women don't own land.

2. Resource allocation or appropriation of the budget.

Women involvement in leadership leads to more equal allocation of public financial resources and it's been proved that women leaders focus more on service delivery such as education, health care, water and sanitation among others which all all a priority in Agenda 2063.

- Gender sensitive budgets
- Uganda MPs while considering the Budget of Financial Year 2014/2015 refused to approve the budget without increasing the allocation to health.
- Resource mobilization for effective Programmes
- discussion and voting of the funds required for implementation and administrative initiatives.
- in 2014 45% of African youth were unemployed.

3. Through oversight and parliamentary scrutiny of the work or actions of the executive. This will help in accelerating the achievement of the Agenda and that ensures that adequate implementations mechanisms are put in place for the realization of these global goals at all levels of society.

Existing oversight mechanisms need to be strengthened and expanded to including availability of timely, reliable and quality data and information on progress, mechanisms to disseminate and share information, and multi-stakeholder engagement to discuss outcomes and development strategies to improve delivery.

- Support citizen feedback mechanisms including engagement between women Leaders and civil society and citizens
- review of progress reports since issues of Women fall under all the Aspirations

4. To enhance monitoring and accountability of interventions in development through promoting democratic norms, people centred governance and development in Africa. hold governments to

account to citizens on progress or lack of it, in achievement of the aspirations by holding governments to account to citizens on progress or lack of it in achievement of the Aspirations.

- Ensure political commitment
- Take accountability over resources.
- condemn Corruption
- Empower the citizenry to hold leaders accountable.
- consolidating progress in promotion of gender equality, women empowerment and closing of the Gaps that still exist.

5. Women leaders must raise a network of female and male policy makers that are committed to apply approaches that promote gender Equality and Women empowerment

- Challenge Violence against women
- providing institutional support to Regional and national parliaments to ensure The AU Agenda 2063 focus for accelerated achievement of the aspirations and taking a continental lead in actualizing them.

6. effective representation.

Women Leaders are key in the fight against poverty and inequality and the achievement of the Agenda through our roles in representing the interest of the poor and marginalized. Decision-making power among women ensures that most of the needs and interests of women are promoted and defended at all time especially issues to do with Gender inequality.

- provide Visionary leadership and political commitment in Politics, Business, Religion, Science, Education
- Involvement in parliament, political parties, Government.
- In recent Focus groups convened by NDI (national Democratic Institute) in Kenya, women MPs were rated higher than male MPs in Constituency Representation.
- can work across party lines.
- Serbian Gender law 2009 had failed twice due to lack of solidarity among women.
- post apartheid Parliament in SA Evening and night time session rejected by Women
- 30% of the world's poor are in Africa and mainly women
- participation in decision making

7. advocacy. To ensure early buy-in, ownership and effective implementation of the new agenda People centeredness.

- Advocate for African Unity and solidarity in the face of Continental external influence and undue pressures.
- fuel public debate and inform public opinion and the media which influence them in turn
- Furthermore, Women Leaders as legitimate representatives of people provide forum for public debate and engagement with stakeholders.

8. Awareness creation amongst Leaders at different levels and popularise the Agenda. engagement with citizens and civil society to gather support for the Agenda relating them to national development priorities. Information sharing development of procedures and systems within Parliament, engagement with other arms of government; the Executive and Judiciary, and engagement with citizens, civil society and other stakeholders

- NDI organized a study tour of Somali Women Parliamentarians to Uganda
- Participation and inclusion of all stakeholders from Inception, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation eg AFRICAN citizenry, RECs, member states,, civil society, AU and it's Organs.
- educate the Electorate to make informed choices

9. Mentor fellow women to carry on the mantle and network with former women leaders in ensuring progressive outcomes for the Agenda and its associated aspirations at the national and regional levels.

- affirmative action to join parliament in Uganda.

10. Women leaders need to be adequately prepared to not only ensure domestication and ownership of the agenda by everyone but also that means of implementation to ensure realization of the agenda are properly addressed.

- Borrow best practices. Rwanda has 64% of Women representation in the Chamber of deputies, the highest women representation in the world.

11. Women leaders have a vital role to play in enhancing planning and implementation of interventions in development of Africa.

- Women should not be used as warfare tools eg Rape in Congo, abduction of Girls by Boko Haram rebels in Nigeria, C.A.R

12. ensuring that strategies and activities in support of The implementation of the Agenda are translated down to the Continental regional and national level.

- Identify approaches and actions to influence the positions of national governments on the AU agenda including participation and or inputting into inter-governmental negotiations, parliamentary review and debate of draft outcomes documents and providing feed back to the executive to inform their national positions and or reactions to drafts
- national plan of action on implementation of the commitments.