

African Governance: Pressing for Transparency, Reaching for Change

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- As international transparency initiatives shine spotlights on corruption, African civil society must demand accountability of national leaders
- Economic diversification helps lessen corruption by enrichment in ways other than political power
- For more information about the World Economic Forum on Africa, please visit: <http://wef.ch/africa13>

Cape Town, South Africa, 9 May 2013 – In a lively discussion at the World Economic Forum on Africa about the role of business and civil society in governance, leaders challenged African state and non-state actors to use newfound transparency initiatives to change, rather than accept, bad behaviour. “Our people are more and more educated, more demanding,” said **Joaquim Chissano**, President of Mozambique (1986-2005). “This requires a change in the attitude of leadership.”

Chissano hailed the greater degree of interest on the part of citizens in government, and pressed for this to lead to greater participation in democracy. “I’m happy to notice that, in Africa, there is more and more awareness about the value of governance, democracy and leadership,” he said. “The world is changing, and Africa is changing.”

“People are better connected now, so there’s more transparency,” said **Mo Ibrahim**, Chairman, Mo Ibrahim Foundation, United Kingdom; Co-Chair of the World Economic Forum on Africa. “The leakage of information means you’re going to be able to read everybody’s e-mail.” Ibrahim hailed the United States for their active enforcement of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010, along with the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act as a means “to force transparency”. The Chinese and others need to enact similar legislation to match European and US initiatives, he suggested. “We need to keep pressure on our own governments to force more and more transparency.”

Robert Greenhill, Managing Director and Chief Business Officer, World Economic Forum, added: “Communities are also being challenged because of the role of young people – enabled by technology – demanding transparency.” **Ian Shapiro**, Sterling Professor of Political Science and Director, MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies, Yale University, USA, added that changing the rules will not be enough, as “many of the necessary changes are rooted in the economy.”

“The level of awareness has increased, and when you get towards that level of awareness, do you go towards acceptance? Or do you go towards change?” asked **Akere T. Muna**, Vice-Chair, Transparency International, Germany. “I worry that, in Africa, we are headed towards acceptance.” Muna also called for greater accountability for banks and others who shelter ill-gotten gains. “The guy who holds the money is equally as guilty as the guy who put the money there,” he said.

Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director, Oxfam International, United Kingdom, spoke of her organization's ranking of chocolate companies based on labour conditions in their supply chains as a means of harnessing "the power of the people". She called for greater protection of human rights, as well as "frameworks that protect the environment, and frameworks that promote accountability." **Raenette Taljaard**, Senior Lecturer, Public Policy, University of Cape Town, South Africa, concluded: "There is clearly a whole new nature of the discourse between government and the citizens."

With the support of the Government of South Africa, the World Economic Forum on Africa is being held in Cape Town, South Africa, from 8 to 10 May. Over 1,000 participants from more than 80 countries are taking part. Under the theme *Delivering on Africa's Promise*, the meeting's agenda will integrate three pillars: Accelerating Economic Diversification; Boosting Strategic Infrastructure; and Unlocking Africa's Talent.

The Co-Chairs of the World Economic Forum on Africa are Frans van Houten, Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board of Management and the Executive Committee, Royal Philips Electronics, Netherland; Mo Ibrahim, Chairman, Mo Ibrahim Foundation, United Kingdom; Mustafa Vehbi Koç, Chairman of the Board, Koç Holding, Turkey; Frannie Léautier, Executive Secretary, The African Capacity Building Foundation, Zimbabwe; and Arif M. Naqvi, Founder and Group Chief Executive, Abraaj Group, United Arab Emirates.

Notes to Editors

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