

**November 11 – 14, 2007, Tanzania**

**Theme: Positioning Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Whereas other continents have seen their living standards improve in spite of enormous challenges, Africa, on the contrary, has experienced stagnation or retrogression. After more than 50 years of externally generated panaceas from donor agencies and the international community, Africa continues to plunge further into poverty. Optimistic that Africa, christened by Tony Blair as ‘the scourge on the conscience of the world’ has immense potential to be the pace setter in the world; business executives, scholars, thinkers and government representatives converged at the 5<sup>th</sup> Africa Resource Bank (ARB) meeting in Tanzania on November 11-14, 2007 to brainstorm on ‘*Positioning Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Seventy four participants from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, Malawi, Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Jordan, France, United Kingdom, United States of America, Germany, Italy and Brazil analyzed factors that have contributed towards the success of the West and emerging Eastern Economies. The delegates also charted possible ways to put Africa on the wealth creation, development and self esteem trajectory. The participants concurred that:

**African History**

- Africans must assert their individual rights and embrace a culture of independence that colonialists suppressed.
- Africans must rid themselves of the crippling ‘can’t do’ attitude and exercise free trade which they always did before colonialism.
- African states ought to be decentralized by allowing larger involvement of the community into decision making.
- Overall, to advance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Africans need to do a (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of their status quo with a view of understanding where they came from, where they are, where they want to be and how to get there.

**African Public Policy**

- Africans must pay taxes and in turn demand accountability and value for taxes remitted.
- A recall clause for elected leaders must be included in African constitutions to hold legislators accountable to their electorate.
- The media must be unfettered.

- The role of government in Africa must be clearly spelt out and its size shrank to allow individuals and the private sector to run the economy.

### **Africa and Trade**

- Africans should look at the world (trade) as segmented ‘geographically’ i.e. East, West, European Union etc and keep its options open.
- Stakeholders must be involved in harmonizing trade policies. Trade agreements e.g. African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), World Trade Organization (WTO), East Africa Community (EAC), Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) among others should be evaluated for impact.
- Africa must set up a common trans-African media highway to market the continent.
- Africa needs to take custody of her destiny by understanding that creativity drives trade
- Africa must abolish all manner of intra-Africa trade barriers to facilitate free flow of knowledge and hence develop a knowledge-based industry, as well as allow voluntary exchange.
- Africa must put in place a key trade driver

### **Africa and Technology**

- Embracing technological changes is the key to increased efficiency and productivity.
- Key players in the technology arena are the government and the private sector. The government needs to create a favorable policy environment that will enable technological diffusion, innovation and growth.
- Africa must add value to its commodities through technology transfer with foreign partners

We welcome further discussion and contributions on this subject. Feel free to send your views to [editor@africanexecutive.com](mailto:editor@africanexecutive.com). Please indicate permission to publish your views in *The African Executive* [www.africanexecutive.com](http://www.africanexecutive.com).

## Mark Your Calendar

The 6<sup>th</sup> Africa Resource Bank Meeting will be held on 9-12 November 2008, under the theme '***Commercializing Africa's Resources to Promote Prosperity***'. The meeting will provide a forum for discussion between industry players, policy makers and think tanks.

Topics of discussion include surface and subsurface wealth exploitation in Africa, policy environment for resource exploitation in Africa, water in Africa and the African human resource.

For details on participation criteria, paper presentation and sponsorship of panels please email [events@irenkenya.com](mailto:events@irenkenya.com)

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