

**EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

**BEING PAPER DELIVERED AT THE 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL PUBLIC SERVICE  
LECTURE OF MOSES INAOLAJI ABOABA TRUST FOUNDATION (MIATF)**

**BY PROFESSOR OLADAPO A. AFOLABI, OON, CFR**

**FEBRUARY 3, 2023.**

## **Introduction**

I feel highly privileged to have been invited to give this lecture at this gathering to honour an illustrious Nigerian, who has a record of successful public service at peak positions, both at the sub-national and national levels and a respected leader and exemplary citizen in his community. My appreciation goes specially to the Trustees of the Chief Moses Inaolaji Aboaba Trust Foundation, who have thought me worthy to author and deliver this 5<sup>th</sup> Lecture of the Foundation.

This topic that I have been assigned to address is both relevant and timely, especially in this season when the nation is grappling with enormous challenges in various critical fronts, some of which even raise fundamental questions, such as leadership capability, the continued existence of the country as is and the trajectory for the future. Also, it is a time when an opportunity for positive change in fortune of the country is beckoning, in the form of an impending general election.

However, whereas problems, concepts and ideas which I shall discuss in this lecture would appear to relate largely to political leadership and public administration, I want to caution against the temptation to assume that all is about the critique of the political leaders and prescriptions for their change of membership, psyche and operational paradigm. A recent public slogan of the Federal Government says, “Change begins with me.” So, it should be noted that the key concepts of leadership, governance, administration, transparency, accountability, etc., are intrinsic to wellbeing of the family, community, business entities, religious groups professional bodies., ethnic associations, sub-national governments, the national government and, of course, the departments and units of various organizations. Furthermore, while considering the issues of leadership there is also the question of the role of the followership.

*In speaking to this topic, the thrust of my intervention is woven round a three-cord issues that need to be critically addressed. These issues that call for critical dissections are the concepts of leadership – effective or ineffective – governance and administration. I will dwell on theoretical explanations of the three concepts, as well as look at the connect between them. Finally, I will look at the applicability of the three concepts to Nigeria and the nexus they have to the peculiar Nigerian situation and our quest for development. Critical questions that needed to be answered are: How does leadership evolve and does the evolvement of effective leadership have any bearing on good governance and administration of society and the country at large? How urgent and empirically persuasive is the need for good governance at this time in the situation of Nigeria? Does electoral politics and quest for sanity at the polls have anything to do with good governance?*

## **Leadership, governance and administration: A nexus**

The concept of leadership has been a major topic of discussion in development studies. How do underdeveloped societies of the world move forward and attain socio-economic development? Is the attainment of a leadership that caters for the people's development a sine qua non to the progress of society?

There has thus been a variety of studies on the concept of leadership. Indeed, leadership has been dimensioned variously, with the hope of finding out its various mutations and varied nuances. The word "Leadership" has drawn several attentions to it due to its usefulness and capability to jumpstart society. While earlier academic focus, attention and engagements were disproportionately concentrated on the concept of leadership, not long after, the focus shifted from mere leadership to effective leadership. Scholarship of leadership then found out that while leadership is desirable, the attainment of effective leadership is the irreducible minimum that any society desirous of development must aim at.

But what, in the true sense of it, is leadership? Though the concept has various connotations, leadership's main definitional thrust in academic usages is that it is a term which is used to describe the act of influencing, inspiring, guiding and encouraging members of an organization, with the aim of accomplishing determined goals and aspirations. Flowing from this, Prentice defines leadership as "the accomplishment of a goal through the direction of human assistants." In defining who a successful leader is, he said he is one "who can understand people's motivations and enlist employee participation in a way that marries individual needs and interests to the group's purpose." While expanding the frontiers of this brand of leadership, Prentice called for what he termed "democratic leadership" which he said "gives employees (people and the led) opportunities to learn and grow—without creating anarchy."

Leadership is perceived to have meaning only when it is mirrored against the level of satisfaction the people has in their leader. This is why Ademolekun (1986) defines leadership as the activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group objectives. Furthermore, he describes leadership as "an interpersonal influence exercised in a situation and directed through communication process toward the attainment of desired goals." Effective leadership can then be seen as the ability to persuade others to seek defined objectives enthusiastically and efficiently.

However, as earlier indicated, focus has since shifted from mere leadership to effective leadership. The *Harvard Business Review*, while analyzing the concept of leadership, says that Leadership is the accomplishment of a goal through the direction of human assistants. According to the *Review*, the man who successfully marshals his/her human

collaborators to achieve particular ends is a leader while a great leader is one who can do so, day after day, year after year, in a wide variety of circumstances.

At some point in the literature of leadership, the debate shifted to whether leaders were made or born. Its literature, in no long a time, shifted from this biological component of leadership into more robust arguments and thus concentration shifted to how leadership qualities necessary for governance are developed. Kouzes and Posner then developed those leadership qualities which they listed as: “honesty; forward-looking; competence; inspiring; and intelligence.” With this characterization of theirs, it then becomes apposite that in defining leadership, emphasis should be placed on the ability to lead and influence others to achieve group objectives.

It flows from the above that leadership is the art of leading and this art is entrusted to and performed by a person who has been authorized to do so through appointment or election into an office.

Apart from leadership and effective leadership, governance is another concept which, though looks straight forward, has some complex narratives that needed to be broken into its granular form. According to Rhodes, governance refers to: a new process of governing or a changed condition of ordered rule; or the new method by which society is administered and governed. It is the method by which an administration of people or society is done. In another definitional conception that is different from the above, governance is broken down to mean a ‘radical’ function whose major goal in power is to seek to challenge the root assumptions of leadership. What this definition does for us is to provide a link between leadership and governance and how the two concepts combine to function in society.

The ability of a people or organization to consistently bring about development and performance and economic growth and development depends on good governance. This good governance will be vague and effete unless it is embedded in well-structured and diligently implemented public policies.

Thus, by way of another definition of the concept, governance has been identified as having as a foundation; that it is a well-defined system of justice, equity, protection of life and property, as well as enhanced participation of citizens in the process of determination of their lives. To be considered as providing good governance, there must be present in the policy of an organization or government some globally held indices. These are: respect for the rule of law and provision of improved living standard for the people.

In its conception, good governance is a process of achieving the noble end of the state, the art of leading a people within a given territory or a state. According to the Farm House Dialogue, (2000) good governance is the exercise of political, economic and social authority to regulate human interaction for the well-being of the society. Going further,

Dialogue says that whereas good governance is a state of satisfactory fulfillment of expectations and the achievement of societal well-being by the mandated authority, the opposite of good governance is bad governance.

It is in this regard that the World Bank (2002) viewed governance as, “the manner in which power is exercised.” Thus, three key aspects of governance are built into the process of attaining good governance. These are, the form of a political regime; the process by which authority is designed, the formulation and implementation of policies and discharge of functions of a government. With the above, good governance is regarded as the process of authoritative management of a country’s resources through a well-designed, formulated and implemented policies for the welfare of the people. Formulating and implementing workable welfarist policies for the people involves and encompasses institutional and structural arrangements, decision-making processes, policy formulation and implementation, capacity development, information flows and the nature and style of leadership within a political system. This is because governance is largely about problem identification and solving; and the extent to which the society’s problems are solved or not depends on how good or bad the governance is.

In the estimation of the World Bank (1992) bad governance is the opposite of good governance and that bad governance has many features, among which are: failure to make a clear separation between what is public and what is private, hence a tendency to divert public resources for private gain; failure to establish a predictable framework for law and in government’s behavior, in a manner that is conducive to development, or arbitrariness in the application of rules and laws; excessive rules, regulations, licensing requirements, etc, which impede the functioning of markets and encourage rent-seeking; priorities that are inconsistent with development, thus, resulting in a misallocation of resources and excessively non-transparencies in decision-making.

When the above features occur together, they create an environment that is hostile to development hence the essence of good governance is to engender development. In such circumstances of bad governance, the authority of governments over their peoples tends to be progressively eroded; and as such, bad governance, represented by corruption and lack of accountability and transparency, provides opportunities for usage of resources at the expense of the masses.

In the words of Obadan, (1998) cited in Ogundiya (2010), bad governance is contrapuntal to a nation’s socio-economic and political development and attainment of good governance requires accountability, transparency, rule of law and human rights, responsiveness, a strong civil society, free press, social sanction and reward system, popular participation, efficient systems and structures.

With this, governance is expected to address matters of development in a society which were hitherto taken for granted. Those saddled with this task are expected to generate

alternative visions or scenarios and testing, which comparatively are considered to be far more robust and resilient than what is currently in operation. Leadership in this wise is saddled with the task of asking some rhetorical questions, the ‘what if?’ questions and answering them with ideas. Such leadership must also accept and be ready to accommodate diverse and multiplicity of views.

When the above is put in place, governance can now be escalated into what is called good governance. Indeed, the World Bank is a major canvasser for good governance, not only in the world at large, but in developing economies specifically. What that means is that governance, in the lexicon of leadership, is just the vehicle while the destination is good governance. Good governance is also expected to give birth to some social goals, in the interest of society. Such goals are good social outcomes because the two – good governance and good social goals are mutually reinforcing. It is the same way that poor governance and poor social outcomes are like Siamese twins, reinforcing each other.

Good governance has a social outcome that is desirable and as such it is the reason why it is expected to be embraced by every leadership. Its destination is celebrated because good governance, for the governed, the people, leads to social increases in income, it leads to decreases in poverty, improvements in social indicators such as literacy, infant mortality, health, education and even infrastructure.

When there are good social outcomes from a leadership, good governance then becomes the ideal for society. There is indeed causality between good or bad governance, for what eventually befalls society in the form of the social outcomes of their performances. For instance, a leadership that does not birth good governance but, on the reverse, brings about bad governance, has invariably ensured low levels of education and high level of inequality and unemployment, which are the social outcomes of bad governance. These in turn lead to and contribute to the level of lawlessness in society, which is invariably the destination of poor governance.

There is also mutual causality which exists between good governance and social justice. Both give rise to reinforcing circles or what is called the virtuous circles. When a leadership makes appreciable progress in the social outcomes of governance, this in turn reinforces and contributes in no small measure to good governance. For the people who are the ultimate recipients of this leadership’s good governance, what they harvest from a leadership that gives them good governance is a creation of a good environment for their households and companies, while giving them a robust economy. Invariably, this allows businesses to blossom while the people can save and invest.

Virtuous circle of good governance leads further to some other social gains, one of which is escalation of the wealth of society. Virtuous circle’s end is one that no one can foresee its positive implications. Contrariwise, bad governance is a vicious circle because the poor social outcomes of its product of governance contribute to weak rule of law and

ineffective governance. The social outcomes of bad governance are such that no one can predict but in the foreseeable results, such governance creates a poor environment for savings and investment for the people. When this happens, there is social stagnation or what is called social backtracking of the lives of the people because their incomes and social indicators become low and ineffective.

Recent researches have established the mutual causality between governance and social outcomes, as well as one between social outcomes and governance. Countries where good governance has become their key performing indices have witnessed a development of governmental measures of different aspects of their governance apparatus. Furthermore, it has also been established that in such countries, governance and social justice have become mutually exclusive.

In conducting assessments of countries' strengths and weaknesses in governance, social justice is a key index of performance. Countries caught in a vicious circle of bad governance exhibit social outcomes like unemployment, inequality, poverty and poor education. These in turn reinforce the high incidences of lawlessness and violence in such countries. Where these exist, it is difficult and almost an impossibility for their economies to grow while creation of jobs suffers. When the latter is the outcome, acute unemployment and inequality will confront the people.

Even if such administration struggles to free itself of its enmeshment in undesirable social outcomes, it sinks further into worse ones. On the converse, a good governance model leads to desirable points of intervention and thus, positive social outcomes which includes institutional reforms, social re-engineering, human rights and general improvement in the well-being of the people.

When such good governance model brings about investment in social infrastructure, the system will reduce inequality and spur broad participation of the generality of the people in the process of governance itself.

Virtuous circle is an unintended but positive outcome of good governance. This is why multinational organizations are attracted to countries that have imbibed or are imbibing the concepts of good governance. The outcome of bad governance is high level of inequality low level of foreign investment, unemployment and curtailment of social benefits of development from reaching the broad mass of the people.

Administration, on the other hand, is defined as the art of directing people towards accomplishing a goal. Perhaps one of the most authoritative works on administration is a paper written by Norton Long, a Professor of Political Science at the Western Reserve University, entitled ***Power and administration***. Not only did Long underscore the power of administration for development of society, he unabashedly submitted that the lifeblood of administration is power. The study of the theory and practice of administration should

not neglect the nexus it and the exercise of power. This is due to the fact that disorderliness of political life and the society at large can be traced to bad administration or poor governance.

Leadership therefore does not exist or function in a vacuum or in isolation. Leadership and good governance are two sides of a coin. The people that are being led also constitutes a part the good governance equation. Whereas much of the success of the leadership may depend on the character and methods of the leader(s), the nature and disposition of the led can also impact on the extent of success. This is particularly the case of Nigeria, some of whose citizens may not be as enlightened and patriotic as their counterparts in other countries.

### **Political Leadership**

The leadership phenomenon in Nigeria can be categorized into method by which leaders acquire their position of authority which can be broadly identified as follows:

(a) The Elected Executives of Government:

- The President
- The Vice President
- The Governors
- The Deputy Governors
- The Chairmen of local government councils etc

(b) The Appointed Cabinet-rank Functionaries:

- Ministers
- State Commissioners

These are in charge of assigned government portfolios and have powers of approval and execution of major policies and oversee departments and agencies

(c) Heads of Extra-ministerial Departments:

- (d) They have bestowed powers to implement policies and programmes in their areas of remit that impact directly on the welfare and well-being of the general populace.

(e) Members of the Legislature:

The National Assembly and the State Houses of Assembly

These have powers to make laws and appropriate funds, which are key complements to the powers of executive office holders.

(f) The Judiciary: They are empowered to uphold justice and ensure constitutionality of the acts of the government.

Below each of these groups' leadership types are other levels of leaders whose actions also have direct bearing on governance and administration in general. Of paramount importance in governance and administration is the ubiquitous public service. The public service which includes the core civil service and other public office holders as well as the armed forces, the police and all other para-military organizations put together shape the governance system of any country.

### **The Role of the Public Service in Governance**

The public service is the corps of career personnel who constitute the permanent machinery that supports government in administration and service delivery to the citizenry. Its roles include:

- Assistance to government in the formulation of policies and effective implementation of same;
- Administration of law and order;
- Defence of the country's territorial integrity – from both external and internal sources;
- Collection of government revenue and administration of financial services;
- Rendition of technical advice and administering projects;
- Management of the economy and facilitation of development;
- Rendition of regulatory services;
- Rendition of social services;
- Assurance of continuity and integrity in government and systems.

At the Federal levels, the public service system is quite complex and is viewed as composed of the following:

(a) The Civil Service:

Personnel of the Presidency, the Ministries and Extra-ministerial

Departments;

(b) The Armed Forces:

The Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the joint services;

(c) The Police and other Security and Para-military services;

(d) The Parastatals.

Of all these components, the Civil Service, pejoratively called the bureaucracy, is the closest to government, especially in roles such as policy formulation and implementation, economic and financial management, rendition of technical advice and assurance of continuity in government. It is also the host of most of the principal elements of the governance system (that is going by the strict meaning of the concept of 'governance') as well as the repository of institutional memory.

For the success of government, therefore, the interdependence of the political leadership and the civil service is imperative. However, the point should be made clear that the former is the superior party in the relationship, being the possessor of the mandate of the people. The bureaucracy is expected to play its role with loyalty, devotion, respect and yet anonymity. Nonetheless, where there is the tendency or temptation of a member of the political leadership to go against policy or the law, the bureaucracy is expected to maintain institutional integrity by firmly but courteously giving advice and even insisting on the policy. This is the essence of the role of the accounting-officer otherwise known as the Permanent Secretary. Moreover, the civil service system provides the best job security framework for officers, of all classes of employees in the country.

This responsibility therefore makes it untenable for civil servants to plead pressure from the political leadership for infractions against policy and rules, including cases of aiding and abetting of corrupt practices or other form of malfeasance. On the other hand, the civil servant is not expected to constitute an obstacle in the way of an innovative or dynamic political leader, through unnecessary dogmatism or fabianism. He should be a proactive and eager change manager once the political leader has declared his intention to execute a policy or institute reforms.

### **State of Governance in Nigeria**

Governance system in general is aimed at ensuring strategic decision-making processes and operations, through rules and regulations, management of resources, monitoring of government projects and programmes and instituting transparency, accountability and probity.

In Nigeria, the governance architecture consists of various organs and departments of government including but not limited to:

- The National Planning Office – for strategic planning and monitoring of programmes;
- The Office of the Secretary to the Government - for guidance on cabinet activities, record of cabinet decision-making and follow-up on implementation of such decisions;
- The Office of the Head of the Civil Service – for rules and regulations on personnel management as well as matters of proper structures and procedures in the Service;
- The Ministry of Finance and the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation – for control and coordination of financial operations of government;
- Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission and the Fiscal Responsibility Commission – for guidance on the adherence to the Fiscal Responsibility Act on government financial management, and determination of the remuneration of political and judicial office holders;
- Public Procurement Office – for regulation of procurement practices in government;
- National Salaries Incomes & Wages Commission – for regulation of remuneration in the public service;
- Auditor-General – for auditing all financial operations of government;
- The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Corrupt Practices and Other related Offences Commission (ICPC) – for checking corrupt practices;
- The National Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) – for monitoring and checking illegal financial transactions in the country and the government;
- Ministry of Information – for facilitating openness in government through the Freedom of Information Act;
- The Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) – for monitoring and ensuring transparency in the mineral and allied industries;
- National Assembly – for financial appropriation, oversight of all MDAs and consideration and taking forward the auditor-general’s report.

There are other institutions whose remit include governance functions, but these are the

principal institutions. Since the return to democracy in 1999 there have been profound developments in instituting governance systems, especially in the Federal Government, which many States have domesticated.

An effective leader will institute a governance system that demonstrate in clear terms, efficiency, rule of law, performance, discipline, transparency and accountability in government. This will, in turn, engender an orderly and prosperous society built on the principle of fairness, social justice. Evidence of effective leadership committed to good governance will exhibit such characteristics as:

- Observance of the rule of law, thus assuring justice and the right of the citizenry regardless of status;
- Equal opportunity for all in the access to public service and benefits, based on policy;
- Transparency and accountability in government activities;
- Equal mandate on citizens to perform their public obligations, such as obedience of the law, payment of taxes and rendition of other obligatory services;
- Prevalence of law and order and public security, including effective and assured penalty for offenders and a credible judiciary;
- Development and provision of public infrastructure;
- Consistent and quality public service delivery, especially services that have no viable alternative than government or its agents;
- Prompt intervention in cases of failure in essential services rendered to the public by private concerns;
- Social security, especially for the weakest people whose appalling condition may cause inconvenience or embarrassment to society;
- Prudent management of public resources;
- Effective management of the economy and economic development;
- Provision of enabling environment for investment and business;
- Effective management of public emergencies and disasters.

A critical examination of the state of governance in Nigeria shows that we are still struggling with many of the ingredients of good governance. The challenges are certainly surmountable but empirical evidence points to the need of a heavy dose of good

leadership. While we are at it and shaping our various institutions that will midwife and ensure good governance, we must find a good driver in the form of a good, charismatic and acceptable leader who is above board and ready to lead by example. As at today, the country is beset by challenges that require all citizens to wake up to address such as:

- (i) Increasing loss of faith in the unity of the country, characterized by agitations for ‘restructuring’ and even separatist moves;
- (ii) Insecurity exacerbated by insurgency, banditry, wanton attacks and displacement of communities, ritual killings, kidnapping and other acts of violent criminality;
- (iii) Weak economy, including high incidence of poverty, burgeoning rate of unemployment, worsening inflation rate, rapid depreciation of the Naira, consistently high government budget deficit, humongous public debt, etc.;
- (iv) Poor state of infrastructure, especially the roads, electricity, water etc;
- (v) Endemic corruption;
- (vi) Collapsing social services, especially in the areas of education and healthcare.

Judging from the foregoing, there is no doubting the fact that an actionable nexus exists between the attainment of good governance and effective leadership. Indeed scholars, in trying to assert this connect, have submitted that the attainment of organizational or national goals would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, without putting in place some specific individuals who are charged with the task, authority and responsibility “to plan, organize, coordinate, lead and control activities.” It is what draws out the inviolability of the link between them.

In all the systems of government that have been put in place in Nigeria since pre-colonial days, what the forefathers and current administrators of Nigeria seek is good governance. Their targets had always been that, with the vast resources and huge potentialities that nature has blessed Nigeria with, the country should be able to put in place what we earlier referred to as the virtuous circles of governance. However, it is an accepted fact that Nigeria has remained ever since grossly undeveloped. There is a perennial abject poverty in the midst of the plenty that we have, a bludgeoning orgy of acute youth unemployment, rising crime rate and insecurity, poor health prospects and widespread manifestations of under-development as well as inequitable and unfair allocation of resources.

In view of all these, there is no doubting the fact that a fundamental missing gap in governance and government in Nigeria exists and it is the absence of strong institutions in governance in the country. We all know that when strong institutions are absent in governance, what is present is “bad.” Since, all over the world, it has been identified that

without strong institutions, there will be a welter of instability, stunted growth of the economy, health sector crises and a dysfunctional economy - little wonder then why all these are befalling our dear country. Doubtless also is the reality that without the attainment of strong institutions and all that is strewn round it, Nigeria will continue to hover about on the same spot – motion without movement.

What is also not in doubt, as already identified, is that good governance will help in no small way in bringing Nigeria on the path of order and take away the acute chaos that manifests in virtually all sectors of the economy. For individual Nigerians to also maximize their God-given potentials and tap into the varied and abundant resources of the country, Nigeria must be organized round a good governance model that is people-centric and which has a process of decision-making built into it. That process is one by which decisions are implemented and which will be managed and conducted with utmost purity of purpose.

The way and manner public persons encounter and deal with Nigerian public institutions, conduct public affairs, manage public resources, are questionable. It must be targeted at a goal of improvement for the general welfare of the Nigerian people, as well as an even development of all parts of the country.

Since effective leadership will not come from Mars or Saturn, Nigerians must be ready for that effective leadership and good governance model, in all its ramifications. One of the things to do is for Nigerians to up their appetite in deed and action for good leadership. What this entails is that the Nigerian people must be dogged and more purposeful in desiring for leaders who will change their political, social and economic fortunes. My reckoning is that leaders assume that Nigerians pay lip-service to good leadership and do not appear desperate for it.

Second and I dare say, the most important, is that Nigerians must take elections seriously. Gone are the days when we could hope that a crop of military desperadoes would violently take over power and change the status quo. Military rule, as we all know, has gone out of fashion in the whole world and Nigeria is not an exception. What that means is that our hope and salvation lie in the barrel of ballot papers and not of the gun.

In taking the electoral system seriously, we would realize that it is only through it that we can get good administration, effective leadership and good governance combined. We must painstakingly and carefully elect leaders and administrators who can bring about the change we desire. We must not go to the polling booth with the same I-don't-care mentality that we have always had. The situation is very dire for us at the moment. If we must transit from where we are – deplorable socio-economic indices begotten by bad leadership – into that Eldorado of virtuous circle, the time to change our mindsets, attitudes and disposition to leadership and power, is now. This must be approached with all seriousness at our disposal.

As could be observed, there have been failings on almost all counts of the above indices of government performance in Nigeria. The failings are largely attributable to the lack of capacity and the right disposition for leadership, especially among the political ruling class. The basic problem is that the process of emergence of the leadership class is so corrupt and hazardous that the people with the best potential in terms of enlightenment, motive, orientation and capacity are repelled while those with questionable characters invade much of the political space. Many of such people often see politics primarily as an opportunity to amass power and wealth rather than service and leave a legacy of good governance.

I do hope, however, that with the current innovations in the electoral process some sanity will be progressively injected into the system, thus creating a conducive environment that will attract the right people into political leadership.

With regard to the administrative leadership, when we were in the Federal Service we observed that the orientation and capacity of civil servants left much to be desired, relative to the standards in other countries of comparable status as well as the reputation in the heyday of the service of the late 1950s to the 1970s. Even the Regions, in the latter part of the colonial regime up to the First Republic, had civil services of formidable quality on most counts – headed by Simeon Adebo in the West, Jerome Udoji in the East and Ali Akilu in the North. Civil servants are less proactive in advising government; competence is less prevalent; officers are more prone to corruption and abuse of office and morale is comparatively very low.

Among the causative factors for the state of affairs have been the corrupt recruitment process, which does not enable the intake of the best qualified and suitable candidates from across the country; low priority for training and development; retention of outmoded ideas and operational systems; and relatively poor remuneration.

In the tenure of President Obasanjo in the mid-2000s, reforms were initiated to address some of these problems. Later in my time as Head of Service, we took forward the reforms, with initiatives such as the performance management system, competency tests to identify unsuitable personnel and take appropriate measures, targeted training programmes, performance contracting, process re-engineering of key operational systems, etc. All these and other initiatives introduced by successive heads of service are still work-in-progress, which require persistence and sometimes political will, to come to full fruition.

### **Recommendations toward Leadership Turnaround of the Nation**

At this moment, the ultimate sovereign of the nation, namely the electorate, is being presented with an opportunity within the next one month to choose a set of leaders, to steer the affairs of the country out of the unprecedented state of virtual failure of government. It is my utmost hope that the coming cohort of leaders will move the country

to a much better state of security, law and order, transparency, accountability, development, socio-economic wellbeing, patriotism, justice, unity and hope.

The realization of these lofty goals depends on the choices made at the polls, which will in turn depend on the extent of enlightenment, mindset change, and will of the people. Since the vast majority of the citizenry is unenlightened, the role of the elite, opinion leaders and civil society is key in this regard – assuming that the latter are themselves properly enlightened and inspired for change.

Nigeria's governance system is in dire need of effective leaders to reverse the country from its sinister trajectory and redirect her toward the national goal of becoming one of the 20 biggest economies of the world and one of the best governed countries, with positive indices. In choosing the leaders, I have a number of tit-bits here to guide the people:

- Background of candidates as persons of success and absolute integrity in their past endeavours;
- Strong patriotic mindset;
- Profound grasp of public and national issues and realistic ideas for solution;
- Ability to attract and mentor effective leaders, managers and operators (including the youth), some of whom may be more talented and skilled than him;
- Concern for long-term visions and plans;
- Profound knowledge of macro-economics and strategies for development and management of the economy;
- Courage to take hard and unpopular decisions necessary for turnaround;
- Persons without encumbrances in relating with peers and people of other regions, religions or class identity.

Among these conditions, I wish to specially emphasize the courage to take hard decisions, because many of the nation's daunting problems have festered due to leaders' failure or shyness to confront them, in spite of the availability of common-sense solutions and lessons from other climes. I highlight here just a few of such questions at national level, which even most of the leading presidential candidates have parried in their campaign, probably due to fear of electoral backlash:

- Removal of fuel subsidy;
- Review of electricity tariffs to profitable and sustained levels;
- Control of the country's population growth;

- Freeing of public tertiary educational institutions to charge tuition fees as their principal source of funding and as in other countries;
- Disposal of non-performing or wasteful government assets, such as the oil refineries, Ajaokuta Steel Plant, etc.;
- Change of the current system of cattle farming, characterized by open grazing and nomadism and the concomitant inter-communal conflict and violence;
- Reform of the public service for appropriateness of work force that can efficiently, and cost effectively conduct the business of governments.

### **Conclusion**

This is indeed a broad and deep subject, which will require lengthy and inundating expositions to fully address. It is, however, my hope that my modest effort has produced the essential information on which further discussion and research could be built.

Once again, I feel honoured to have been given this opportunity to share my thoughts and wish to express my profound gratitude to the Trustees of the Chief Moses Inaolaji Aboaba Trust Foundation. I pray that the Foundation will continue to fulfil the objectives for which it was founded.

Thank you.

### **Postscript.**

**I will like to leave you with the following food for thought:**

**Is it not high time to find effective strategy to:**

- ✓ **Actualize devolution of power to enable self-determination and healthy competition within the Federation?;**
- ✓ **Actualize judiciability of Human Rights entrenched in the Constitution?**
- ✓ **Are we sure the Presidential system in its present form is sustainable?**
- ✓ **How do we return to the era of fear of God, Honesty, Love for one another, rejection of avarice?; etc. in governance.**

**Thank you for listening.**

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Achebe, Chinua (1983), *The Trouble with Nigeria*, London: Heinemann.
- Adamolekun, Ladipo (2008), *The Governors and the Governed: Towards Improved Accountability for Achieving Good Development Performance* (Nigerian National Merit Award Winners Lecture, 3 December 2008).
- Adamolekun, Ladipo (2011), *Public Administration in Africa: Main Issues and Selected Country Studies* (2nd Ed), Ibadan: Evans Brothers.
- Adebayo, Augustus (2000), *Principles and Practice of Public Administration in Nigeria* (2nd Ed), Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
- Adebo, Simeon (1983), *Our Unforgettable Years*, Ibadan: Macmillan.
- Ahmed, Mahmud Yayale (2005), "Support for Innovation, Modernisation and Change in the Civil Service: The Nigerian Experience", A Text of an Anniversary Lecture Delivered in Commemoration of the Civil Service Week of the Republic of Ghana and African Day of Administration.
- Akinkugbe, Oladapo et al (Ed) (2008), *Olusegun Obasanjo: The Presidential Legacy, 1999 -2007*, Ibadan: Bookcraft.
- Anderson, James E. (1997), *Public Policymaking: An Introduction* (3rd Ed), Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.
- Association of Retired Heads of Service and Permanent Secretaries of Oyo and Osun States of Nigeria (2013), *We Served Our Generation: Perspectives and Reflections on Western Nigeria Civil Service*, Ibadan: HEBN Publishers.
- Balogun, M.J. (1983), *Public Administration in Nigeria: A Development Approach*, Ibadan: Macmillan.
- Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (With First, Second and Third

Alterations), Produced by the Federal Ministry of Justice, Abuja.  
Okonjo-Iweala, Ngozi (2012), *Reforming the Unreformable: Lessons from Nigeria*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.  
Olaopa, Tunji (2012), *Public Administration & Civil Service Reforms in Nigeria*, Ibadan: Bookcraft.  
*Public Service Reforms in Nigeria, 1999-2014: A Comprehensive Review (2015)*, Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Abuja.  
Usman, Bukar (2017), *Public Policy Formulation in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects*, Abuja: Klamidas Communications.  
Usman, Bukar (2019), *Restructuring Nigeria: An Overview*, Abuja: Klamidas Communications.  
Wey, S.O. (Feb. 1971), "The Structure and Organisation of the Public Service", Lagos: Cabinet Office.  
World Bank (1992), *Governance and Development*, Washington DC.

#### Internet Consultations

Definition of Leadership by Different Authors: 17 Definitions of Leadership  
At: <https://www.expertreview.com/Definitions-of-leadership-by-different-authors-17-definitions-of-leadership/> (Sighted 13/01/23).

On Leadership by John C. Maxwell  
At: <https://www-lead2xl.com/john-c-maxwell-leadership> (Sighted 13/01/23).

On What is the difference between Leadership and Management? By John C. Maxwell  
At: [linkedin.com/pulse/what-difference-between-leadership-management-genesis-eakes?trk=public\\_profile\\_article\\_view](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/what-difference-between-leadership-management-genesis-eakes?trk=public_profile_article_view) (Sighted 13/01/23).

Definition of Governance by Governance Today  
At: [governancetoday.com/GT/Material/Governance\\_what-is-it-and-why-is-it-important](https://www.governancetoday.com/GT/Material/Governance_what-is-it-and-why-is-it-important) (Sighted 15/01/23).

Wikipedia on Governance  
At: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Good\\_governance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Good_governance) (Sighted 15/01/23).