

AFRICAN LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Leadership in Africa

The Mombasa Declaration

20 March 2004

Good leaders globally guide governments of nation-states to perform effectively for their citizens. They deliver high security for the state and the person; a functioning rule of law; education; health; and a framework conducive to economic growth. They ensure effective arteries of commerce and enshrine personal and human freedoms. They empower civil society and protect the environmental commons. Crucially, good leaders also provide their citizens with a sense of belonging to a national enterprise of which everyone can be proud. They knit rather than unravel their nations and seek to be remembered for how they have bettered the real lives of the governed rather than the fortunes of the few.

Less benevolent, even malevolent, leaders deliver far less by way of performance. Under their stewardship, roads fall into disrepair, currencies depreciate and real prices inflate, health services weaken, life expectancies slump, people go hungry, schooling standards fall, civil society becomes more beleaguered, the quest for personal and national prosperity slows, crime rates accelerate, and overall security becomes more tenuous. Corruption grows. Funds flow out of the country into hidden bank accounts. Discrimination against minorities (and occasionally majorities) becomes prevalent. Civil wars begin.

It is easy in theory and in practice to distinguish among good, less good, bad, and disappointing leaders everywhere. Positive leaders in Africa stand out because of their adherence to participatory democratic principles and their clear-minded strength of character. Transformational leaders improve the lives of their followers and make those followers proud of being a part of a new vision. Good leaders produce results, whether in

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terms of enhanced standards of living, basic development indicators, abundant new sources of personal opportunity, enriched schooling, skilled medical care, freedom from crime, or strengthened infrastructures. Bad and dangerous leaders tear down the social and economic fabric of the countries; they immiserate their increasingly downtrodden citizens. Despotic rulers, particularly, oppress their own fellow nationals, depriving them of liberty, prosperity, and happiness.

Africa seeks only the best and the most uplifting leadership. We recognize that leadership, especially in Africa, is difficult. There are many challenges, particularly of political culture, poverty, illiteracy, and disunity. Yet, we have come together in Mombasa (and earlier in Gaborone) to maximize and affirm the potential for positive leadership on our continent. We are not daunted by the unfortunate examples of Idi Amin, Jean-Bedel Bokassa, and Mobutu Sese Seko, and we certainly do not wish to repeat those terrible mistakes, nor to create conditions under which such bad leadership may arise or be sustained.

We assert that good leadership can flourish on the African continent. In order to strengthen the prospect of good leadership we have produced a detailed Code of African Leadership. It specifies the contours of good leadership. We want it to be the twenty-two commandments of leadership, and we ask the African Union, our national and continental leaders, and civil society to take note and expect each of the commandments to be fulfilled by our heads of state, heads of government, and other high-level officials.

We are also prepared individually and collectively, if requested, to assist countries and leaders to understand and live up to the letter and the spirit of the Code of African Leadership. We are prepared to help accentuate positive leadership. To that end we have formed ourselves into an African Leadership Council, with a clear mission to help translate the challenges faced by leaders into opportunities for positive performance.

We also believe strongly that future young African elected leaders should be initiated into the arts of leadership, not simply be given ministerial portfolios without the prior building of sufficient capacity. We have therefore endorsed a curriculum and a broad-based training initiative. We hope to recruit young elected leaders to attend a series of capacity building seminars regularly over the next decade.

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Leadership is essential to improved governance. We firmly believe in that maxim, and trust that the peoples and leaders of Africa will welcome our efforts and support the continuing work of the Council of African Leadership.

H.E. Sir Ketumile Masire

H.E. Gen. Yakubu Gowon

H.E. Moody Awori

Hon. Peter Anyang' Nyong'o

Hon. Najib Balala

Hon. Matthews Chikaonda

Hon. Ali Khalif Galaydh

Hon. Hage Geingob

Hon. James Jonah

Hon. Abdulrahman Kinana

Mombasa, 20 March 2004

The meeting was facilitated by Robert I. Rotberg, Director, Program on Intrastate Conflict, Belfer Center, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University; and President, World Peace Foundation.