THE 5TH

AFRICAN UNITY

FOR RENAISSANCE

CONFERENCE AND

AFRICA DAY EXPO

CONCEPT NOTE

CONCEPT NOTE FOR 2015 AFRICAN UNITY FOR RENAISSANCE CONFERENCE

2015 and beyond: Harnessing synergies towards the Africa we want in 2063

Organised by

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The Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) is an institute in the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). The Institute will hold its 5th African Unity for Renaissance conference and Africa Day celebrations from 22nd to 25th May 2015 in Pretoria, South Africa. The African Unity for Renaissance conference and Africa Day are flagship events of AISA and have over the years been important annual gathering of African scholars to explore and propose ideas for a peaceful and prosperous Africa. Unlike previous events, the 2015 conference will be held on a smaller scale, but will be more tightly focused on specific sub-themes. This is intended to further develop the research programme of AISA in the HSRC.

Since the year 2000, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which form part of the Millennium Summit Declaration, have been a key yardstick through which global development initiatives have been measured. Though 2015 is the target year for the achievement of the MDGs, the progress and transformation that has been achieved has been overshadowed by recent economic and security setbacks in various parts of the world as well as conflicts occurring in parts of Africa.

In addition, the disappointing reality that many African countries will not achieve their MDG targets is a worrying prospect for the development of the continent and necessitates a rethink of African continental and international frameworks to better inform the post 2015 envisaged frameworks. Fifteen years after the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, many African countries are still battling to put in place strategies that will address the MDGs targets which will go a long way in alleviating the plight and living conditions of its people. One of the key problems constraining Africa from achieving these goals isthe way in which African governance institutions, at various levels are constituted, structured and managed. This inhibits the ability of these structures to mobilise Africa's human resources. For instance there is a view that the African Union (AU) is an elitist and statist framework whose roles and functions as a development institution that has articulated a 50 year vision for the continent (Agenda 2063) needs to be re-thought.

In the build up to 2015, the High Level Panel (HLP) set up by the United Nations Secretary General released its report entitled 'A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development'. In the report, the HLP sets out a universal agenda to eradicate extreme poverty from the face of the earth by 2030, and deliver on the promise of sustainable development. The report calls upon the world to rally around a new Global Partnership that offers hope and a role to every person in the world. In the report, the Panel calls for the new post-2015 goals to drive five big transformative shifts which include: (1) Leave No One Behind (2) Put Sustainable Development at the Core (3) Transform Economies for Jobs and Inclusive Growth (4) Build Peace and Effective, Open and Accountable Institutions for All and (5) Forge a New Global Partnership.

This new partnership should be based on a common understanding of our shared humanity, based on mutual respect and mutual benefit. The over-riding objective is for such

partnerships to be centered on people, including those affected by poverty and exclusion, women, youth, the aged, disabled persons, and indigenous peoples. Mobilising Africa's human capital will require partnerships that include civil society organisations, multilateral institutions, local and national governments, the scientific and academic community, businesses, organised labour, individual leaders and private entreprises.

The fundamental question is how any new global and continental coalition will help the AU achieve the vision and goals articulated in Agenda 2063. Agenda 2063 is premised on the following seven aspirations[i]:

1. A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development;
2. An integrated continent, politically united, and based on the ideals of Pan Africanism;
3. An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law;
4. A peaceful and secure Africa;
5. An Africa with a strong cultural identity, values and ethics;
6. An Africa where development is people-driven, relying particularly on the potential of women and youth; and
7. Africa as a strong and influential global player and partner.

A critical challenge is the dovetailing of the AU's aspirations with the five big transformative shifts articulated by the UN High Level Panel for the post 2015 agenda.

The 2014 report on the MDGs reaffirms that the MDGs have made a profound difference in people's lives. Global poverty has been halved five years ahead of the 2015 timeframe, although this achievement has been unevenly accomplished. Ninety percent of children in developing regions now enjoy primary education, and disparities between boys and girls in enrolment have narrowed. Remarkable gains have also been made in the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, along with improvements in most health indicators. These concerted efforts of national governments, the international community, civil society and the private sector have helped expand hope and opportunity for people around the world. But more needs to be done to accelerate progress and African governments in particular still need to redouble their efforts in order to ensure that the post-2015 agenda addresses the fundamental challenges of health, governance, security, and unemployment.

On the whole, emphasis should be on the entire Millennium Declaration and not just on the MDGs. In order to have a holistic approach in the post-2015 framework, three important issues need to be assessed:

1. The adoption of appropriate and effective principles and processes (human rights and good governance) in order to enable achievement of desired outcomes;
2. Addressing all aspects of economic, social and environmental sustainability; and
3. Ensuring that aggregate indicators are decentralised to the appropriate level, so that for instance urban areas can be distinguished from rural and peripheral areas.

The deliberations of the 65th Annual United Nations Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organisation (UN DPI/NGO) Conference, held in August 2014, entitled '2015 and Beyond: Our Action Agenda'; and the deliberations of the 69th session of the United Nations General Assembly, held in September 2014, provide useful frameworks that highlight the areas of consensus and contention that are the focus of policy debate and activism.

The 5th African Unity for Renaissance conference entitled "2015 and beyond: Harnessing synergies towards the Africa we want in 2063", aims to augment these policy debates and activism with research-based scholarly reflection and trans-disciplinary conversations.

The conference organisers invite paper abstracts and panel proposals on pertinent aspects of the post-2015 global development agenda that speak to the seven aspirations in the African Union's Agenda 2063. The conference programme will be organised around the following eight sub-themes:

1. Pan-Africanism, culture, identity, values and ethics;

2. The study of Africa and communicating Africa to the world;

3. Governance, human rights, the rule of law and peace-building;

4. Entrepreneurship, the private sector, growth and development;

5. Youth development, job creation and people-centred development;

6. Gender, leadership institutions and access to land and finance;

7. Civil society activism and coalitions in public affairs; and

8. Africa's future: contestations and mobilizations around Agenda 2063.

Please specify for which sub-theme you would like your abstract or panel proposal to be considered. Abstracts or panel proposals should not be longer than 300 words and should include full details (name/s, title, institutional affiliation, position, e-mail, and telephone number) of the authors, presenters, or panel organisers as appropriate.

Abstracts that report research findings should contain the following concise statements:
Background   :   The description of the problem/hypothesis/objectives.
Methods   :   Study methods used or approaches taken.
Results   :   Specific results in summarised form.
Conclusions   :   Statement about the main outcomes.

Abstracts for reporting on strategies/projects should contain the following concise statements:
Back ground   :   Short statement summarising the issue(s) addressed by the abstract.
Methods   :   A brief description of the project, experience, program, or research.
Results   :   A brief description of the results or lessons learned.
Conclusions   :   A brief statement of next steps/recommendations.

Abstracts that speak to scholarly reflections and/or policy engagements should contain concise statements of:
Issues   :   A summary of the issue(s) addressed by the abstract.
Description   :   A description of the actors, options, experiences and/or advocacy.
Lessons   :   Outcomes and implications.
Call to action :   Possible next steps or recommendations.

Abstracts will be assessed against the criteria of originality, quality, relevance and potential impact. In order to enable adequate space for discussions, engagements and networking, only a limited number of abstracts will be selected for presentation.

The deadline for submission of abstracts and panel proposals is 31st January 2014. Authors of selected abstracts and panels will be notified by 28 February 2015. The deadline for submission of final papers is 31st March 2015.

Abstracts should be submitted via e-mail in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) to: AUFRconference2015@hsrc.ac.za

Notes and References

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[i] http://agenda2063.au.int/en/sites/default/files/agenda2063_popular_version_05092014_EN.pdf