



Impact Africa Summit: Ghana on the Sustainable Development Goals

Tang Palace Hotel • Accra • 7th July, 2016

Highlights



IMPACT
AFRICA
SUMMIT
2016

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

TRANSFORMING THE FUTURE OF AFRICA: SDGs.

By: Professor Martin Oteng-Ababio, Senior Lecturer, University of Ghana.

Before I proceed, kindly permit me to express my sincerest appreciation to Diplomatic Call for inviting me to be part of this summit. I am particularly grateful to Mr. Seth Owusu Mante, the Summit Coordinator whose singular efforts dedication and commitment, have made this day a reality; the text messages, repeated phone calls and sometimes visits to my office at Legon made me felt obliged not to disappoint him or the organizers. I am most grateful Seth.

“Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity, it is an act of justice”
Nelson Mandela, 3rd February, 2005

Introduction

Ghana's economy has, in recent times, shown great signs of recovery, albeit some sectors characteristically need more attention than others. So the thrust of my lecture today, will highlight the key features of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the new opportunities available as well as some challenges that may frustrate the attainment of the SDGs' agenda. I will also try to suggest how the challenges identified may be overcome.

From Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals.

We are all aware that in the year 2000, the UN entered into one its most ambitious anti-poverty drives which translated into eight inspiring Millennium Development Goals that ended 2015. In the same spirit, during the 'Rio+20 Summit in 2012, the UN member states, mindful that the MDGs were due to 'expire' by 2015, and without significant improvement in the living conditions of the world's poorest populations, committed to developing a new set of goals to build on the successes of the MDGs and extend these to the whole global population. So when in September, 2015, 193 UN member states consented to 17 Sustainable Development Goals in New York, it become an important milestone in the UNs history.

In hindsight, most Sub-Saharan Africa countries, without doubt, missed most of the MDGs, but the framework was not without its merits. It had, at least for the first time defined and integrated set of deadline - bound quantitative targets that gave operational meanings to some of the basic dimensions of human development, and it strengthened the global partnership for development. Nonetheless, the framework was fraught with weaknesses. Fundamentally, its main weakness was that it was developed by a small group of experts, with developing countries in mind. In the words of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia: “At the time of crafting of the MDG agenda, people's voices were not taken into account, with local realities ignored.”

It was against this background that the post - 2015 sustainable development agenda, titled the World We Want, was crafted and passed. This agenda is a single global development framework with a comprehensive set of 17 goals, 169 target and 232 indicators. The main objective of the SDGs is to harmonize three core element (1) economic growth, (2) social inclusion and (3) environmental protection. The framework also has 3 key characteristics: it is Universal, Indivisible, and Transformative.

For the success of the SDG Framework, there is a need to domesticate these goals, taking into consideration each individual country's opportunities and impediments. This process entails three critical aspects, one of which is to create a national awareness and ownership of the global agenda. And to quote President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf once more: "This time this [SDGs] agenda included everybody and we must work to have them achieved. We are leaving no one behind" This is the task the world has set for itself from 2015 to 2030; it is a roadmap to the Promised Land - the World We Want.

Unraveling some of the new opportunities.

In my introductory remarks, I alluded to the fact that the Ghanaian economy is showing signs of significant prosperity. On the other hand, clearly, all is not that well yet. Typically, the sustained economic growth being observed also increases the need for several actions that only the government can perform. So far these actions, which I will divide into two groups, have not been forthcoming or have been very slow in appearing. These two groups are (1) Managing the future, and (2) Delivering services.

First, Ghana's greatest economic opportunity to manage its future remains the exploitation of its natural resources. Indeed, the new oil discoveries make this a far bigger opportunity than it has ever been. Yet resource exploitation for future economic development requires a more active role from government than other development paradigms such as industrialization or the commercialization of agriculture.

The reason is simple. Natural resources are special because, as noted by Paul Collier, they generate (1) economic rents and (2) they are also finite. Explaining the issue of rent, Collier noted that it costs around \$10 to cover all the costs of getting a barrel of oil out of the ground, at which point it is currently worth around \$50. The surplus \$40 is the rent, which in principle, belongs to the country but is initially under the control of the company that extracts the oil.

Usually, the transfer from company to country is achieved through taxation. However, a few resource-rich OECD countries, notably the USA and Australia have largely left the rents with the companies. Unfortunately, such a strategy is inappropriate for Ghana. This is because in the USA and Australia, the rents accruing to the companies are distributed to share holders who are predominantly citizen, or are captured by skilled workers who are also citizens. In the case of Ghana, both the shareholders and the skilled workers are overwhelmingly foreign. Consequently, if we are to adequately benefit from our resource extraction, then the rents have to be appropriately taxed. This then will provide us the opportunity to invest in Ghana's future.

In addition, we must appreciate the fact that high investment is also imperative, because extraction obviously depletes natural assets. Thus, responsible economic management must seize this opportunity to convert unproductive natural assets into productive invested assets such as infrastructure. This is an opportunity we have so far failed to seize to build the future. It is an open secret that from the onset of the flow of oil revenues in Ghana in 2011, the share of public investment in GDP, dropped significantly while public sector wages rose by around 50%. Within the African continent, evidence abounds indicating that well managed natural resource exploitation can build the future, as it has done in Botswana. It is also a fact that contested ownership, as in Sierra Leone and Nigeria, can tear a society apart.

A second major opportunity we have for managing the future is urbanization. Africa is the least urbanized but one of the fastest urbanizing regions worldwide. Approximately 40% of Africa's population currently lives in cities and towns. The urban population has grown 14-fold from 32 million in 1950 to over 450 million in 2014 and it is expected to triple to over 1.3 billion by 2050. Ghana is no exception to this trend, as its urban population has more than tripled from 4 million in 1984 to nearly 14 million in 2010.

This is a huge opportunity for our economic progress and prosperity: no country has ever developed without urbanization. However, in order to reap the benefits of urbanization; we need an active public policy; a policy that plans with the people and not for the people; a policy that ensures that cities are modeled for people and not people for cities. Infrastructure, for example must be planned and built in advance, and density must be enforced using appropriate regulations. Yet to date, our urbanization has been typified by sprawling slums- or what Pieterse described as rogue urbanism. These emerging settlements offer neither decent place to live nor productive places to work. Again, we are not seizing the opportunity to build the future.

Regarding the second group of actions, I mentioned that only government can perform the - delivery of services - one important service governments are expected to provide as direct response to sustained economic growth is security. Indeed, security is perhaps the easiest public service to provide because the role of defending a country from threat is usually highly motivating for the young men on whom security services depend. However, when poorly recruited and motivated, the results can be disastrous and this appears to be the bane of most Africa security services- arguably, most, of them are still not working effectively.

It is no secret that when terrorists took over a Kenyan shopping mall, the soldiers who were detailed to fight the terrorists used the opportunity to loot the shops. Similarly, when 800 of Gaddafi's mercenaries invaded Mali, the national army disintegrated, yet security was rapidly restored once French troops arrived. In Northern Nigeria, a large and well funded national army has proved unable to defeat Boko Haram. Evidently, our governments have not been able to motivate the men-in-uniform well enough to effectively discharge their constitutional duties.

Unpacking the old impediments.

My comments thus far may be upsetting and appear to paint a gloomy picture, but I am convinced that they are not particularly controversial. They are simply matters of fact. Please allow me to highlight two old impediments that can impede our quest for the World We Want. The first impediment relates to the need for well established sources of public and private data where data collection is transparent, accountable and consistent enough to enable accurate measurement over time. Indeed, the UN Secretary-General's Independent Expert Advisory Group (IEAG) has called for a data revolution through which statistical systems are strengthened at local, national, and international levels.

The challenge in Ghana is not only that it is difficult to get the right data at the right time, but there is also lack of disaggregated data to help examine intra - community inequalities and track any changes. Lack of such nuanced disaggregated data can yield misleading information and, untimely, inadequately informed or even badly misinformed policy prescriptions.



The second impediment relates to the need to build the capacities of our institutions. Essentially, this call resonates with President Obama's admonition: "African doesn't need strongmen; it needs strong institutions". Arguably, in Ghana, strong institutions do not necessarily work, as most institutions tend to rest upon the beliefs that are prevalent in a particular society. A critical examination of these beliefs unpacks people's identities and how these identities interpret how the society works. Most Ghanaians today hold both local and national identities, and the relative potency of these two identities is distinctive: local identities are stronger than a national identity.

When examined critically, the governance of the country since our independence in 1957 can largely be seen as a series of ethnic autocracies, run by and for particular groups. The animosity between the CPP and UP traditions just after independence resonates and (I dare say) pales into insignificance compared with the current so-called multiparty democracies, in which parties are openly organized on tribal lines, disseminating divisive, tension-packed narratives of vilification of opposing parties. This stands in stark contrast to the scenario in Western countries, where by and large there is a virtual absence of interstate warfare, happily precluding the violent means by which they built their identities in the past. These tribal divisions are often connected with the history of the formation of African countries; with borders having been artificially imposed by external colonial powers. Nevertheless we must work with conditions as they are now and find ways to make the Ghana we live in work as a unified entity, overcoming our individual differences. The future in an increasingly globalised world calls us to greater fellowship, an understanding of our mutual dependence and possibilities beyond tribal and ethnic divisions.

Addressing this observation is critical for the success of the SDGs, because government is better able to be effective, when the structure of identities matches the structure of political power. Power is more likely to turn into authority and win the acceptance of the citizenry, if these citizens see themselves as sharing a common identity with their leaders. Similarly, public employees are more likely to internalize their work as a mission if they see their employers and their service users as having a common identity with themselves. Unfortunately in Ghana today, there is a radical mismatch between power and identity. We have a situation, where power is usually concentrated at the national level while identity is unusually concentrated at the local levels. Indeed, local identities are strong (and justifiably so) because tribes are far older than nations.

This state of affairs cannot take us to the promise land by 2030- and therefore we must change. For any effective governance, power must be at a higher level than identity. The question is; HOW can this be achieved?. Collier suggests two approaches: either power can be shifted to identity, or identity can be shifted to power. I support the position that these two approaches need not be alternatives, they can be pursued together. However, since identities are slow-changing, it may be faster to shift power to identity by means of decentralization. I am referring to effective decentralization and not just those cosmetic actions (Akwasi ka na ogyina nkwantia). This is the approach that has been taken in Ethiopia and Nigeria, currently in Kenya.

Concluding remarks: building the future we want.

I have so far tried to outline some internal impediments that can thwart our quest for the World We Want. Let me use my concluding remarks to also highlight one exogenous factor that inadvertently speeds up these endogenous challenges. As our experience with the MDGs revealed; the tendency of some development partners to promote their own model of political design as the template for all to follow does not always work. Typically, the core of their model, which is sometimes used as a condition for development aid, is democratic accountability of government to citizen's through periodic multi-party elections.



Regrettably, recent development, including what Wrong in 2009 describes as the “it’s Our Turn to Eat” syndrome have interfered with the efficacy of this model, particularly when our identities are ethnic-centered, with parties organized along ethnic lines and thereby impeding inclusive nationalism. The result has been high-stakes, “winner-take-all”, divisive ethnic contests, disastrously exemplified by the Kenya experience in 2008. Perhaps, the mistake of our development partners has been their being too much outcome-focused or over-concentrating on how power is acquired, rather than on how that power is used. I submit that to achieve the SDG agenda, how power is acquired and used is equally important and must be handled pragmatically.

Admittedly, our approach may not necessarily be familiar to the West. But they may also probably be more effective than the tick-box institutional isomorphic mimicry that Western pressure creates. I am not in any way, suggesting that we abandon the Western agenda. But I think we need to acknowledge the limitations inherent in some of these models as they travel from the developed to developing countries.

Africa requires its own solutions, based on local conditions and local knowledge and traditions. Solutions cooked up in distant, unrelated societies and Western economics departments can, at best, provide guidelines and ideas. But for solutions to actually work, Africans must feel that they own these solutions, that they have a major input in crafting them, and that the solutions originate from their best understanding and wishes for their future.

I am perhaps re-echoing the words of President Obama to Ghana's Parliament regarding the peculiarities of African politics:

“Repression takes many forms, and too many nations are plagued by problems that condemn their people to poverty. No country is going to create wealth if its leaders exploit the economy to enrich themselves, or police can be bought off by drug traffickers. No business wants to invest in a place where the government skims 20% off the top, or the head of the Port Authority is corrupt. No person wants to live in a society where the rule of law gives way to the rule of brutality and bribery”.

In conclusion, I am absolutely hopeful that the country can substantially achieve the SDGs targets. However as a nation, we need to imbibe an ideology of inclusive nationalism, diffused power, generational sacrifice, and frugal leadership. Most remarkably, these are the very principles that have made President Kagame in post-genocide Rwanda, succeed in reducing poverty more rapidly than ever achieved on the African continent. We need to avoid unbridled conservatism but our quest for modernity and technology must necessarily seek our tradition. We should recognize that less orthodox political approaches may be viable as routes to create the effective framework we need in order to harness our new opportunities to build the World We Want by 2030.

Thank you for your attention.

GOVERNMENT'S REMARKS

BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT & GHANA'S SDGs.

By: Hon. Mona Quartey, Deputy Minister of Finance.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the High Table, Colleague Panelists; Distinguished guests, Friends of the media; Ladies and Gentlemen:

1. It is an honor for me to join you this morning for the Impact Africa Summit on the theme, "TRANSFORMING THE FUTURE OF AFRICA - SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS". I have been asked to speak on the topic Business, Government and Ghana's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Let me take the opportunity to thank the organizers for selecting the topic, especially at a time when Ghana is making efforts to incorporate the SDGs into our long-term development framework. I also wish to thank you for inviting us to be part of this very important summit.

2. Mr. Chairman, this summit provides another opportunity to continue our discussion on the pragmatic implementation of the SDGs, following the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) on how to mobilize resources to promote accelerated growth and development in the midst of the dwindling traditional sources of funding, particularly, donor supports and declining commodity prices.

3. Ghana in November, 2010, suddenly found itself catapulted into the Lower Middle Income status ahead of the country's own schedule of becoming a middle income country first in 2020 (Vision 2020) and later 2015 as a result of a technical statistical adjustment. In fact, as some analysts put it, "Ghanaians suddenly became the newest African LMIC (on 6th November, 2010) even though the probably felt no wealthier or less-debt burdened"

4. The question, Ladies and Gentlemen is "Are there lessons from these developments?" Currently there is no blue print for LMICs transitioning into MICs. There is the need for such a blue print to be developed to guide growth and development strategies for such countries.

5. Ghana's new LMIC status has some real consequences for the country's ability to mobilize resources through concessional financing. Ghana is no longer able to borrow on IDA-only terms from the World Bank nor is it able to borrow on Africa Development Fund (AfDf) terms from the African Development Bank. For example, World Bank credit which we could access at 0.75 percent service charge and 40 years of maturity is now accessed with a service charge of 1.25 percent and a maturity of 25 years. In addition other donors are reducing their support to LMICs and tiling their Aid more towards LICs.

The biggest lesson here for Ghana is to look for more sustainable and alternative ways of financing development to meet her medium-to-long term development goals. Emphasis would be placed more on domestic resource mobilization and devising more market-oriented and innovative ways of raising funds for implementing development projects. Government has also made significant progress in the restoration of macroeconomic stability and investor confidence in our economy.

Mr. Chairman, permit me to mention a few innovative financing mechanisms being implemented to enhance domestic resource mobilization for accelerated growth and development.

a. **Financing infrastructure and development:** We have passed a law and set up the Ghana Infrastructure Investment Fund (GIIF) from a share of petroleum revenues (and 2.5% of VAT) to leverage the markets for more efficient borrowing to finance our infrastructure. This is to stop the practice of financing the budget deficit. This initiative will help create an enabling business environment for business to thrive.

b. **Export-led growth, trade finance and guarantees:** Many developing and transition economies are heavily dependent on imports for raw materials, semi-finished products and consumables. Lately, they have also become targets for several EXIM Banks that aggravate this dependency and lead to Balance of Payment (BOP) and current account crisis. The export-led strategies for African countries must include financial tools such as export credits and guarantees, especially for SMEs. These are necessary for taking advantage of policies such as AGOA and EPA. It is in this context that the Ghana Export /Import Bank (EXIM) Bill was passed into law to set up the Ghana EXIM bank to promote its non-traditional exports.

The Bank which will be a quasi-government institution will act as an intermediary between national governments and exporters to issue export financing. It is envisaged that the bank will be a non-deposit-taking institution, which will assist exporters to compete internationally by providing insurance and finance facilities to support their overseas activities. It will also aim at promoting the acceleration of Ghana's drive towards achieving a more diversified economy to help the country become resilient to external shocks and improve the capacity of the country to produce goods and services in the competitive global marketplace.

c. **Developing the capital markets:** As part of the measures to develop the capital market, Government has established the Ghana Fixed Income Market (GFIM) to enhance the secondary trading of fixed assets. It is our expectation that the market will ensure efficiency, better price discovery, increased liquidity and greater transparency. Also as a means of assisting SMEs to raise capital from the public, the Ghana Stock Exchange with the support of GoG has developed an Alternative Market to facilitate the raising of long term capital by SMEs.

d. **Public Private Partnerships:** Government in its quest to harness the potential of the private sector in its development agenda continues to partner with the private sector through its PPP approach to finance infrastructure development. To this end a PPP bill has been developed pending Parliamentary approval. The policy document and legislative framework will complement other institutional and operational framework to address constraints in the current enabling environment for PPP in Ghana.

e. **Social Intervention Programs:** Mr. Chairman, to ensure that our growth and development is broad-based and that no one is left behind, government is also vigorously implementing a number of social protection programs in health, education and SME development. There is also the policy direction of refocusing statutory/earmarked funds to sustain the SDGs to support the redistribution of income. All these measures are to ensure an all inclusive growth which is a critical part of our development agenda for the medium term.

6. Mr. Chairman, Government is working assiduously to restore macroeconomics stability and create conducive environment for the private sector. As you recall, government is currently implementing a three-year Extended Credit Facility (ECF) program with the IMF. The program has gone through three reviews so far and the conclusions have been broadly satisfactory.

7. Mr. Chairman, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide an ambitious framework for eradicating extreme poverty and shifting the world especially the developing world onto a sustainable growth path. It will require everyone working together and creating necessary synergies with orderly monitoring and timeless assessment of implementation progress. We have already taken a bold step to incorporate these goals into our medium to long term development framework.

8. Mr. Chairman, thank you for your kind attention.

FOSTERING DEVELOPMENT ACROSS AFRICA: SDGs.

By: Dr. Sam Ankrah, Founder, NAM Fund.

Today we are here to recognise, celebrate and award the "New African personalities" whose ideas, initiatives and efforts have created an "Impact" on the country in various fields. This act also calls for us to take a conscientious and efficacious effort in creating an enabling environment for businesses to thrive which will help alleviate poverty in our country and continent at large. Which means the less able people of our country are considered as valued citizens. Ghana as it stands today, has 25% of the demographic lives below the national poverty line. They typically live and work in the informal economy, not by choice, but by necessity—often in multi-generational, multi-occupational households. They are vulnerable people and have no margin for error.

The great Madiba said and I quote "Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice. Like Slavery and Apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. Sometimes it falls on a generation to be great. YOU can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom" unquote. In this light, where our intended purposes is to let our individual greatness blossom, we have to take a genuine and honest look at the key issues confronting us as human beings first of, as a nation and as a continent.

Our objective in doing business should be, to contribute in eradicating poverty, which means or requires us to align our investments as business people towards upward mobility across our country and the continent as a whole. Upward mobility can be defined as the social and economic uplifting of the poor and vulnerable through the creation of jobs and incomes to enable them access basic necessities and improve quality of life. Which requires that, we should focus on supporting development opportunities, enhancing economic opportunities by reducing vulnerability of the poor along with providing a consistent long term return to our investments. In pushing towards our agenda to transform the future of our country and Africa as a whole, therefore fostering development across. We all know there many other areas to consider in this quest. However one key area which has build and continue to build all other continents is still missing here and not promoted in all our endeavors.

Without any equivocation, Trade and the financing that goes with it, is a core driver of economic growth. Nowhere is this more relevant than on the Great African landscape, which has the world's highest proportion of low income countries and accounts for only 3.3 per cent of global trade. The continent has been bereaved of this essential prosperity as she has not been able to benefit from new opportunities offered by the evolving global economic landscape. This got worse by the financial crisis of 2008-09 and its aftermath drained the international financial markets of demand and liquidity, the basic tenets of global trade. Monetary policies adapted by the G7 nations along with fiscal prudence has not only placated this deficiency but perpetuated new demand and need for liquidity.

Export growth in most African economies plus a rebalancing of the global economy, are changing the face of African trade. Low levels of growth, high unemployment and economic uncertainty persist across the European Union, while other developed markets have struggled to return to their pre-crisis highs. The relative decline of Africa's traditional export partners in the industrialized world has been speeded up by continued strong growth in much of Asia. This has fostered rapidly rising trade volumes between Asia and Africa, plus much greater Asian investment in Africa.

The value of Sino-African trade grew by an average rate of 14% a year between 2000 and 2012, while Indian, Malaysian, Singaporean and Thai companies are also making major investments. New sources of trade are not restricted to the Far East, as Brazilian and Turkish companies are becoming much more heavily involved in the continent.

Perhaps more importantly, buoyed by internal dynamics, its urbanizing, growing population and improving political stability – Africa itself is becoming a driver of economic growth.

However, many African countries have not fully capitalized on their neighbours' growth. While trade with Asian markets has increased rapidly, intra-African trade remains a relatively small proportion of total African trade – around 13.5 percent according to WTO figures. For years intra-African trade has been constrained by the historical configuration of infrastructure, by the political hangovers of the Cold War era and by the failure of many African economies to move from primary commodity production to manufacturing, and in particular to the manufacturing of products tailored for African markets.

The alchemy for social investment are to deploy resources where both the need and potential impact is greatest whilst generating credible returns. There is an imminent requirement to provide liquidity into the global trade. That's why the creation of EXIM Bank by the government is a laudable project which needs to be applauded by us all. However we can only hope and pray the purpose of which it was set up will be maintained and not deviate from its core values/purposes and also become a benefit to only "certain people". The faith which has befall the setting up of other similar organization.

The Rationale for such an initiative which is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals are:

We placing a strong emphasis on private sector development, which is seen as vital to economic and social progress, promoting upward mobility. Trade facilitation is an essential part of social development. Having direct investments, financing in socially progressive businesses improve the macroeconomic resilience of countries by protecting their important export industries against external failures in liquidity and confidence.

Where the primary sources of the exports being facilitated are in fragile states or low income countries, interventions in mobilising trade, improving supply chain and proficiency of the people directly impact poverty reduction, while trade and finance in healthcare, energy and food has significant influence on development outcomes. There is an astronomical funding gap in Africa that inhibits social development. Around a third of African countries have interest rates in excess of 11% on loans offered on a non-sovereign basis and cash collateral requirements of up to sometimes 50 percent of the value of the loans. These prohibitive terms are serious impediments to the development of Africa and it's people.

Emphasis should be on supporting private enterprises with prudent public assistance to meet their investment and working capital needs and to prevent supply shortages. While some of the external conditions that led to the original shortages in supporting this narrative have now moderated, most of the protagonists active in the space have found that demand for their services has remained high in developing countries. Many of the financial institutions that, pre-crisis, who were active particularly in trade finance and financing in general are still facing serious problems in their home markets and may struggle to return to funding African businesses for years.

So what do we do as Africans.....?This will require us to be innovative, creative, initiate and implement policies which will foster this development. The SDGs makes a strong case for engaging businesses not Governments even though the latter remains a key stakeholder in the delivery of its goals and why getting involved makes sense for businesses too. The UN General Assembly has endorsed a framework for financing development by providing 'a strong foundation to support implementation of the post 2015 development agenda. It include a new global framework for financing sustainable development by aligning all financing flows and policies with economic, social and environmental priorities' The following points are particularly relevant to the role of businesses as envisaged:

Unlocking the transformative potential of the private sector:

Inviting businesses to apply their creativity and innovation toward solving sustainable development challenges and to engage as partners in the development process, Placing emphasis on country-level leadership to build ownership and ensure prioritisation of goals and targets for local context.

There is a renewed emphasis on domestic, alongside international resource mobilisation. For businesses, the tangible opportunities for partnership will be at country level and it is estimated that achieving the SDGs will require trillions of dollars annually. It is believed that global public and private investment would be sufficient to address them but only if financial resources are invested in and aligned with sustainable development.

We need to move from our myriads of excuses and challenges and take up bold steps and tackle the issues head on. As Winston Churchill said and I quote " You will never reach your destination if you stop and throw stones at every dog that barks" unquote.

If we dedicate ourselves, stay focused, and believe in our own abilities, overcoming all challenges as demonstrated by today's Laureates...thus the people we've honored today. Our vision would be realized and achieved. Our collective responsibilities will yield us the needed or expected results or success. It's possible and within our reach for Africa to be the new economic frontier only if we believe.....and work towards it, as governments and business leaders by being very critical of ourselves, creative and innovative.

And oh yes we can.....

The greatest man that ever lived on this earth, the carpenter's son said in his book and I quote "As a man thinketh so shall he be...we become what we think about"

Many Thanks and God bless you!

IMPACT AFRICA SUMMIT AWARDS OVERVIEW

By: Amanda Asante, Impact Africa Summit Council Member.

Good Afternoon Distinguished Guests and Delegates. Let me officially welcome all of us to the second component of this gathering; where we'll be celebrating and saying Ayekoo to the eminent personalities to be honored this morning. Part of our mandate as the Council of the summit was to identify names of personalities to be celebrated and honored just as the concept of the summit demands..

After several deliberations, not spared of disagreements, and our quest to live up to the directive entrusted to us, we developed a starting point. The baseline was to identify a "New African Personality"; which we described as an assured African or Non - African, confident in Africa, at home in Africa, and the world at large, who is or has exerted a positive impact on the development agenda in the country.

Having proposed the Sustainable Development Goals to be the focal point of discussion, we first decided to count on the goals to guide us identify the areas or sectors for which we wanted to award. The SDGs focuses on 17 priority areas. In as much as we had wanted to select the areas or sectors one after the other and perhaps identify persons who are already making great strides in those areas to be honored, we were very much guided by the limited resources available for the organization of the summit.

With a unanimous agreement and in no particular order, we settled on Goal 3 which focuses on Good Health, Goal 4 which is on Equitable & Quality Education and Goal 8 which deals with Economic Growth, which we linked to Business & Entrepreneurship. We further considered Goal 16 which focuses on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions for the Leadership & Governance Award. We placed the Media and Communication Award in Goal 17 which deals with Partnership for Development. An integrated approach is crucial for progress across the multiple SDGs; we thus recognized that, the media would be a key partner if the goals are to be achieved.

We then created the Rising Star Award to preferably celebrate a young visionary making exceptional strides and defying all odds in achieving excellence in his or her field of work. After laying these cards, we engaged in a number of consultations and research. Names upon names, facts and figures came up. We discussed, argued, and weighed the options available to us. We did seek a second opinion, and at times a third and over. The organizers of the summit at a point chastised us for what they described as unnecessary delays.

But we were determined to come out with a list that would reflect what the summit seeks to achieve and would be accepted by all. Finally, a consensus was reached. This was also accepted by a higher body of some eminent persons who choose to be anonymous. The premise for each honorary award is clearly captured in their respective citations; the larger picture being that, they have made an impact in their respective fields for the good of mother Ghana, worthy of recognition and celebration.

Our sincere appreciation goes to our Laureates for accepting this honor and working with us from the time we announced our decision to them till now. Our gratitude also goes to all those we consulted to assist us in the process and those who provided us with facts and figures to finalize our decision. Please join me in saying Ayekoo to our Laureates. It is our hope that we would all be inspired to achieve greater strides to make an impact on the growth of our country and our continent. It could be any of us; to be recognized and celebrated next year and the years ahead.

Thank You.

