DIRECTORATE OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN AFRICA

TRANSFORMATIVE PARTNERSHIPS ON INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

Panel Presentation by
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Transforming Partnerships towards a Green and Inclusive Africa.

INTRODUCTION:
Paradoxically, Africa and Africans had for long largely been excluded in the context of the drive for and process of Africa’s development hence its’ continuing and deepening under-development in a globalized fast-developing world. In order to ensure sustainable development of the continent therefore, the focus must be on an inclusive development paradigm rooted in a transformative partnership of the diverse interests investing in Africa’s development with Africans themselves at the centre of the process. Indeed, it is only Africans who can truly and sustainably develop Africa with other partners coming in to help out in the process. The Directorate of Technical Cooperation in Africa (DTCA) with the instrument of the Nigerian Technical Cooperation Fund (NTCF) domiciled and co-managed with the African Development Bank (AfDB) aims to achieve an inclusive sustainable development of Africa through this unique transformative partnership.
PARADIGM SHIFT IN AFRICA’S DEVELOPMENT:

Over the past decades, African countries have vigorously pursued regional cooperation, integration and development arrangements with a view to accelerating development of their economies. This was based on the premise that cooperation and integration are at the heart of development. In fact, experiences have confirmed that no nation in Africa can on its own, single-handedly resolve the challenges of its development. Furthermore, the trend today in the globalized world is cooperation rather than competition through the harnessing of competitive economic advantages.

It is therefore imperative for African nations to cooperate in all fields of human endeavour including Trade, Investment, Finance, Science and Technology among others. This is particularly so, given the growing intensity of globalization of world economies and indeed, because the challenges we face today on such matters as the environment, population growth, issues of poverty, trade and development are too complex and interrelated for any single nation to effectively address on its own.

Though cooperation has always formed an integral part of human existence within the framework of community inter-relationships, globalization has given it a new impetus on the quest for sustainable development. If well-coordinated, cooperation should involve and lead to integration, which is prerequisite for a well-rounded sustainable development. Thus, with the intensification of globalization and emergence of international economic blocs and the accompanying challenges, the critical importance of cooperation, integration, science and technology and technical cooperation in facilitating development of nations have become even more apparent.

Until recently, governments in Africa have often failed to give priority to technical cooperation among themselves in their broader development policies. The need and practice for cooperation among African countries gradually became widespread as it was both practical and cost effective, although again, this was not always based on any institutional policy. Global trends towards regional and sub regional integration, the growing number of experts from African countries both at home and in the Diaspora as well as the need to harness synergies in order to utilize and benefit from globalization to meet common challenges gradually concretized the imperative for
institutionalization of cooperation by African countries as a tool for effective and sustainable development.

It therefore makes sense to promote an all inclusive technical cooperation programme among African countries in order to expand Africa’s technological base for genuine development. We must employ innovative approaches, methods and techniques adapted to Africa’s peculiar needs and then build upon existing modalities of technical cooperation which have proven useful for achieving sustainable development. For as research conducted at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex noted, 'Asian paths to development have often challenged received wisdom on development'.

It is to be noted that in 1975, the Heads of State and Government of Africa, at the Organization of African Unity (OAU) meeting, in recognition of ‘the fact that cooperation among African countries in the deployment of their human resources is vital and will contribute to the promotion of closer solidarity and economic development among their peoples’, adopted the ‘Inter-African Convention Establishing an African Technical Cooperation Programme’, to achieve the goal of providing for technical cooperation among African countries for the development of the continent. This Programme is yet to take off as the Convention has not yet been ratified by African Countries.

This Convention, devised as a mechanism of intervention, was designed to address the problem of brain drain to the Continent. After decades of independence, marked by crippling economic performance in practically all African States, it is obvious that rapid economic growth is not achievable within the narrow confines of territorial demarcations or limited by internal markets of individual nation-states, making imperative inter-state technical cooperation, which the Convention seeks to promote.

The Convention seeks to:

a) Enable African countries with a sufficiency of skilled personnel to make this available to African countries which need them;

b) Facilitate comparison of scientific and technological knowledge as well as of experiments and experience relating to development among African countries;

c) Give African experts the possibility of further developing their expertise by tackling problems in the host countries; and
d) Create and encourage the spirit of co-operation and solidarity among African countries.

The existence of the Inter-African Convention establishing an African Technical Cooperation programme since 1975 was as a result of the foresight of African Leaders to the need for technical cooperation as a tool for the development of Africa and a testimony to the fact that Africa has all it takes to achieve the feat of technological advancement. In fact, it is unthinkable to say that any country has no area of comparative advantage. It is the continued intra-Africa collaboration and indeed an all-inclusive interaction that can bring each country’s best to the fore in favour of the development of the Continent. Africa must rise to the challenge of development while viable technical cooperation must be predicated on technical assistance that is underpinned by comparative advantage and traditional human/African brotherhood, in which what happens to one happens to all.

In the exceedingly poorly-developed, fragile and backward economies that characterize African nations therefore, the need for over-arching inclusive development which is holistic in concept cannot be over-emphasized. To achieve inclusion, a twin track approach is required which adopts mainstreaming in dismantling all exclusion barriers as well as focus on building the capacity of those who are excluded and support their lobby for inclusion. This necessarily thus entails collaboration and networking as core strategies to achieve inclusion.

In considering the critical situation of the continent, there is therefore the need to rethink the whole concept of technical cooperation. This is more so in view of the challenges of globalization and the antagonistic, conflicting and competitive relations generated by the present international economic system. An innovation of newer, more contemporary and effective version of technical cooperation must emerge. To achieve this, there must be a necessary determination to invoke new methods of achieving already existing concepts. For Africa, there is the need to develop an African solution to Africa’s problems.
ON TRANSFORMATIVE PARTNERSHIPS AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT:

Transformative Partnership involves a collaboration or network of organizations aimed at a positive outcome through the actualization of a paradigm shift in the status quo. In the African context, it entails a dynamic interactive relationship between partners working in concert towards driving sustainable development of the continent devoid of subservience but recognizing the inherent ability of every party to bring requisite factors of a varied and differing nature to bear in the development process.

“Inclusive Development” is based on and derived from a fusion of two words, 'inclusive' and 'development', which have been co-joined to enunciate a new vista and focus in the ever-expanding development process. Inclusive is defined, among many other meanings as being “to be comprehensive and all-embracing.” Inclusive development therefore refers to an all-embracing development that generates a sense of belonging and participation. It thus requires active participation by all parties in the process contrary to a practice of discrimination and exclusivity. It argues for a development predicated on the utilization of the full potential of the participating parties/persons.

It is recognition of the fact that real and sustainable social and economic progress cannot truly occur if any one or more segments of society are marginalized. This has been stated as the reason why inclusive development, as a strategy for all-round development, seems to have wide appeal among all stakeholders – government, nongovernmental organizations, intellectuals, and civil society organizations.

There are differing approaches and focus to the issue of inclusive development, which have been applied to issues of involvement of diverse groups such as women, people with disabilities, the poor, and in more recent times, the Diaspora in the development process. For example, the Forty-Sixth Session of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, focused on integrating women and the disabled into the development process by addressing the causes of discrimination. The UNDP's inclusive development approach integrates the standards and principles of human rights: participation, non-discrimination, and accountability. The four inclusive development approaches of the UNDP, to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are:

1) creating productive and gainful employment;
2) building effective and efficient social safety nets to protect those who cannot work, or, who earn too little;

3) enhancing public services by building schools and hospitals, training teachers, and doctors, and providing access to water, sanitation and transportation, all of which requires public spending; and

4) executing well designed fiscal policies - the way a government collects and spends public resources can play a major role in stimulating growth and reducing poverty.

Inclusive development is currently one of the important policy initiatives of the International Development Banks covering a wide range of issues such as disability, gender, regional disparities, and environment, being seen as a process that leads towards the goal of an inclusive global community.

An inclusive development process encourages mass participation in the development process which enables the major challenge of engendering an inclusive society to provide the opportunity for all to join in the path of development to be addressed. Thus, since inclusive development imparts a sense of belonging and respect and, in building capability, enhancing choices, and freedom, is seen as sustainable development with equity.
THE DTCA:

The Directorate of Technical Cooperation in Africa (DTCA) is an agency of the Federal Government of Nigeria under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, established in 2001 in recognition of the vital role technology transfer plays in development. The DTCA is designed to serve as a centrifugal catalyst for bridging the widening developmental gap between Africa and the rest of the world by championing the course of the rapid integration and development of Africa through the instrument of technical cooperation. Its scope and vision is development of Africa by Africans, through which it seeks to entrench the utilization of African expertise in the development process, in recognition of the vast pool of African human resources available and the inherent advantage in the utilization of this pool. The Directorate is specifically and specially designed to address the issues of ‘brain drain’, ‘brain gain’, ‘brain retention’ and ‘brain circulation’ in Africa through the utilization of expert knowledge in developmental projects all over Africa.

Mandate and Objectives:

The basic mandate of the DTCA is to attract African Experts to enhance Africa’s development by creating the enabling environment and opportunity for professionals in Nigeria and indeed, those of African descent to invest their immense intellect, expertise and skills into the economies of Africa. This is in recognition of the fact that Technical Cooperation is a powerful instrument of regional economic integration in the 21st century, and particularly so, given the growing intensity of globalization of national economies. The argument is that to tackle the multifarious challenges of development of the fragmented and fragile African economies, there is firstly, the need to sensitize and mobilize African experts and professionals themselves to effectively participate in the process as in fact, no foreigner can sincerely develop the continent for the African. Secondly, there is the urgent need to create an enabling environment that will facilitate the required participation of experts (both within Africa and those in Diaspora) in the development process of the continent. The goal is to bridge the widening economic and scientific gap between Africa and the rest of the world.

The objectives of the DTCA include the following:

- To promote technology transfer through technical cooperation between Nigeria and other countries in Africa;
To promote the exchange of high-level research experts in Science and Technology, Humanities and Arts;

To provide sustainable funding for the Scientific and Technical Exchange Programmes (STEP);

To provide a database of all Nigerian and African experts in Science and Technology, Humanities and Arts;

To facilitate capacity building for research and development in Africa;

To generate new ideas for Africa’s development through cooperative research and collaborative development activities;

To cultivate and expand strategic relationships with key agencies in order to stimulate growth and development;

To facilitate cooperation and integration in Africa through the transfer and diffusion of technology and dissemination of innovations.

Since its establishment, the DTCA, in pursuit of its mandate, has implemented a number of programmes including workshops, seminars, roundtables, conferences etc., which focused on issues relating to science and technology, training and capacity development, the African Diaspora, youth and leadership role modeling among others, aimed at promoting cooperation, integration and development of the African continent through the instrument of technical cooperation. To consolidate on the gains, experiences and lessons learnt from the programs thus far implemented, the Directorate as a matter of policy publishes their proceedings with a view to providing relevant resource materials for development practitioners, researchers and policy makers in order to add value to its advocacy programme.

The DTCA has clear, articulate and achievable mandates and objectives, which are succinctly stated in its Brochure and Handbook and currently operates a six-pronged programme Mandate that focuses on:

1) The Scientific and Technical Exchange Programme under the NTCF;
2) Compilation and Management of Expert Database;
3) Advocacy;
4) Collaboration with other Organizations;
5) Capacity Building Programmes; and
6) Technical Programmes.

**NTCF**: To facilitate the much-desired strategic integration of African countries through technical cooperation, the Nigerian Government instituted a Nigerian Technical Cooperation Fund (**NTCF**), which is project and
programme driven at the African Development Bank (ADB). The fund provides for US$25m as seed/catalyst money to finance the Scientific and Technical Exchange Programme (STEP) of the Directorate over a period of ten years, at a depletion rate of US$2.5m per year. The grant fund was negotiated through the Technical Cooperation Agreement (TCA) signed by the AfDB and the Federal Government of Nigeria on the 5th of April, 2004 and the Aide Memoir on 16th June, 2004. The Operation Manual for the management of the Fund was negotiated and initialed on the 24th of January, 2006.

In view of the fact that “Inclusive development requires addressing issues of structural transformation, especially economic, social, and demographic aspects,” and that “A multipronged policy and programme mix is indispensable to an inclusive development agenda”, the NTCF was structured to be wide-ranging, devoid of fragmentation or strait-jacketing to avail it the ample scope of addressing the disparate developmental challenges besetting Africa utilizing African expertise wherever it may be found.

Through the instrument of the NTCF, the DTCA, in collaboration with the AfDB, is mandated to deploy African professionals and experts to serve in needy African countries under STEP with a view to reverting the “brain drain” phenomenon to “brain gain” and “brain circulation” among African countries. The STEP programme targets three categories of experts as follows:

(a) The highly trained and experienced academics who, due to statutory regulations retired from Universities, Research Institutes and Colleges, but are not yet tired.

(b) The large number of senior public service officers, being seasoned administrators and professionals, who have reached the Directorate level, who can handle policy, but also, have to retire due to the statutory regulations.

(c) Those who found their way abroad, settled and worked there, and are at the cutting edge of the latest technological development in Industry, Education, Law, Research, Business, Information & Communication Technology, Medicine, Engineering and all other fields of human endeavour.

The areas of major focus for the NTCF include:

- Science, Technology & Innovations (STI)
- Health
Under the NTCF so far, a total of over seventy (70) projects have been considered, out of which nine (9) have so far been successfully concluded, with all African countries having directly or indirectly benefited from the activities of the NTCF. The procedure for accessing the NTCF is outlined in a booklet on the NTCF available from the DTCA.

It is worthy to note that the NTCF is a pre-eminent Trust Fund at the ADB, the only one by an African country, constituting the single largest Trust Fund under their management and hitherto formed about 60% of the total Trust Funds administered through the Bank. This pre-eminence of the NTCF, which evidences Nigeria’s involvement and desire for the development of Africa, invests it with some features geared towards enhancing its effectiveness and the achievement of the desired goals, which distinguishes it from other Trust Funds. One of the major features is the utilization of only African expertise as consultants/experts in the programmes/projects financed from the Funds. This is predicated on the firm belief that no-one can develop Africa better than Africans themselves and a recognition of the vast array of African professionals and expertise available in every field of human endeavour all over the world. This Fund has thus provided a fulcrum for the unearthing, registration and harnessing of this vast (and all too often ignored and thus excluded) pool of African expertise that can and are ready to invest in the development of Africa. What Africa needs now, more than ever before, is to mobilize and harness the technical expertise of its own people, especially those in the Diaspora, to facilitate its own development.

The establishment of the NTCF, and the DTCA as its administrative mechanism, are thus a necessary paradigm shift from the previous methodologies of technical cooperation programmes’ management by Nigeria, which had been predicated on assistance either in the form of mere direct handouts or without any indication of Nigeria as the source of the assistance. Nigeria’s current DTCA-NTCF intervention strategy is a clear departure to a more strategic, organized, focused and result-oriented technical cooperation in
line with Nigeria’s foreign policy objectives aimed at an inclusive development process in a strategic and transformative partnership with the African Development Bank (AfDB).

In undertaking its objectives and in fulfillment of its vision in the implementation of its other mandate programme areas, the Directorate has consistently pursued an inclusive policy that has seen it engaged in areas that span from the environment to good governance. The DTCA has thus undertaken programmes and projects in collaboration with a number of partners including the United Nations’ Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations’ Development Programme (UNDP), the Commission and the Parliament of the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS), African Regional Centre for Research and Development (CAFRAD), the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON), African University of Science and Technology (AUST), Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), several Institutions and Agencies within and outside the continent, as well as the African Development Bank (AfDB) in administering the Nigerian Technical Cooperation Fund (NTCF) and implementation of the Scientific and Technical Exchange Programme (STEP).
DTCA: PROMOTING INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TRANSFORMATIVE PARTNERSHIPS.

Taking into consideration the specific under-developed situation of African member states, DTCA promotes triangular cooperation with developed countries and among developing economies of Africa. This not only enhances the ownership and lowers the cost of development programmes, but also strengthens partnership among developing countries on one hand and among developing and developed countries on the other hand, thus engendering an inclusive and sustainable development process. This vision of DTCA therefore places focus on triangular cooperation and its related innovative approaches in promoting Africa’s development by facilitating cooperation and integration through the transfer and diffusion of knowledge and technology and the dissemination of skills and innovations.

The engagement of the DTCA in transformative partnerships with other development organizations, such as the African Development Bank (AfDB), institutions and agencies has enabled it to undertake wide-ranging and disparate developmental programmes, in spite of very limited funding available to it.

This has resulted in the DTCA being able to achieve the following, to mention a few:

i) In partnership with the US National Science Foundation, the Nigeria National Space Research and Development Agency, three American and Nigerian Universities organized a Summer Research Field Trip to the Lake Chad under the United States of America-Nigeria International Research Experiences for Students (UNIRES) the 4th of July to the 1st of August, 2009 as part of the on-going project of sustainable development of the Lake Chad Basin.

ii) From the NTCF, provided funding for an Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed re-flooding of the Lake Chad Basin from the Ubangui River in the Congo as an African solution to an African problem.

iii) Under the commission of the Nigeria House of Representatives’ Committee on Climate Change put together an Expert team of climatologists and scientists of differing fields to draft a Climate Change Legislation for the country, and in collaboration with the Special Climate Change Unit in the Federal Ministry of Environment,
produced a draft Climate Change Policy Document for consideration and adoption by the Federal Government of Nigeria.

iv) In partnership with the ECOWAS Parliament, promoted good governance through the annual capacity building of ECOWAS Legislators for effective and cross-cutting legislation in varied areas such as energy, climate change, water resource management and youth mentoring.

v) Generated a database that currently has over three hundred and fifty (350) Nigerian experts in all fields from different parts of the country, Africa and the world available for utilization in projects and programmes for Africa’s development.

vi) Midwifed the formation of the Nigeria Diaspora Alumni Network (NiDAN), an association of professional Nigerian Diaspora who have returned to the country and are viably engaged in the economy of the country to collectively invest their skills, intellect and resources in advancing the development of the country as a benchmark for replication across the continent. In partnership with this group, the DTCA contributed to the effective placement of elite Nigerian Diaspora academics as Vice-Chancellors of some of the newly established Nigerian universities.

vii) A development of the curricular of the African Regional Centre for Research and Development (CAFRAD) by two Nigerian academic experts sponsored to work there as medium term consultants under the NTCF.

viii) Published a compendium of local innovations and inventions collated through a nationwide study in partnership with the Nigerian National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion (NOTAP) for purposes of promoting commercialization of identified innovations and inventions.

The DTCA has consistently served as a low-cost, low-budget, yet highly effective catalytic agent in fostering developmental actions through its engagement of critical partners and involvement of a wide network of individual and institutional change agents across the world. In the DTCA’s experience, a key factor in its partnerships for development have been the consequential pooling of otherwise trifling resources from different organizations to collectively achieve what could otherwise not have been achieved individually.
Key Lessons:

The International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) in its report on Inclusive Development listed the following as lessons learnt in its implementation of the process:

- Focus on the overall goal and what is in common
- Tolerance for differences and respect for each other’s opinions and experience
- Actively listen to smaller voices
- Build trust slowly and consistently
- Prioritize consensus building rather than majority vote
- Share and rotate responsibility and leadership
- Acknowledge mistakes and continue to learn
- Focus on involvement as much as achievement of tasks

These have coincidentally been the driving factors for the DTCA in its implementation of its unique inclusive approach of utilizing the resources of Africans themselves for the sustainable development of the African continent for all Africans.

The creation and operations of the Directorate of Technical Cooperation in Africa (DTCA) and the institutionalization of the Nigerian Technical Cooperation Fund (NTCF) as a well focused funding window of Nigeria’s technical cooperation initiative is a transformative partnership, pioneered by Nigeria to achieve the technological integration and sustainable development of Africa. The adoption of the NTCF-DTCA initiative by the African Union through the institutionalization of the Inter-African Convention Establishing an African Technical Cooperation Programme as canvassed will fast track the process of achieving an inclusive and sustainable development of Africa and its’ technological integration and transformation.
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