Kenya's Social Development Proposals and Challenges: Review of Kenya Vision 2030 First Medium-Term Plan, 2008-2012

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Abstract

Kenya faces several development challenges including poverty, disease, unemployment, negative civic engagement among others. The development bottlenecks worsened following the introduction of the IMF/World Bank-propelled Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) of the late 1970s and early 1980s. While the SAPs had envisaged benefits, they largely became part of the problem rather than the solution to development in Kenya. Accompanying these were negative civic engagements, particularly, ethnic conflict and political maladministration especially after the re-introduction of multiparty politics in the early 1990s. These drawbacks notwithstanding, development planning went on culminating in the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (ERSWEC) 2003-2007 in 2002 and its successor, the Kenya Vision 2030 in 2007. While the former was implemented, the latter is on course with the First Five Year Medium-Term Plan running from 2008 to 2012 recently concluded. The blueprint is driven by three pillars, namely; The economic, social and political pillars aimed at transforming the country into a middle income nation status by 2030. In the social pillar of the Vision are envisaged development projects for social transformation of the country. This paper reviews the proposed projects in the social pillar that were to be implemented by the year 2012 and points out the possible challenges that stood on the way of the envisaged transformation and suggests the way forward.

Key words: Devolution, Social development, Vision 2030, Kenya

Introduction

Since independence, the governance of development in Kenya has faced numerous challenges leading to poor economic performance and hence negative consequences on the country (Mwenzwa, 2007). In particular, centralised planning largely left grassroots leaders and local communities playing an insignificant role in decision-making and implementation of planned development projects. Consequently, beneficiaries have for the most part been passive as opposed to active partners in development which has given rise to heightened dependency. As a result, community-initiated development has been hard to come by and whenever this happened, projects have largely evolved into shadows of their true potential or stalled altogether (Misati and Ontita, 2012). This has resulted in extreme wastage of resources, dotting the country with stalled projects. The top-down mentality and approach to development was inherited from the colonial administration and very little has been seen to change it especially during the first three decades of independence.

The colonial government had created a framework which the independent government adopted and utilized to govern society and hence political independence, safe for changing the actors, had nothing for celebration by the common man (Kanyinga, 2001). The colonial framework was a highly centralized bureaucratic structure which continues to play a leading role in governance and coordination of development in Kenya currently. This top-down framework of governance is partly to blame for development malaise in much of the developing world in general and Kenya in particular (Ontita, Mwenzwa and Misati, 2013).

Indeed, it is seen as part of the problem rather than the solution since several decades of development partners-propelled development have produced little worth celebrating (Tucker, 1999). The Government of Kenya has identified centralized planning as a major development bottleneck and devised strategies for gradual devolution of decision-making power to the grassroots (Mwenzwa, 2007).

It is acknowledged that the independence government inherited many structures from the colonial government, which it has used without positively transforming them (Kanyinga, 2001; Kanyinga & Njoka, 2002). Indeed, any transformation of these structures have more or less been for the self-interest of the incumbent political elite and, therefore, of little benefit if any to the common man. As such, the Kenyan state has never been structured in the interest of the masses and the public good (Gakuru, Mwenzwa & Bikuri, 2007). Instead, it has been used as a tool of coercion, enforcement and maintenance of the oppressive regime of the politico-economic elite, whose interests never coincide with those of the common man.

It is acknowledged that governance influences development and political maladministration is a recipe for underdevelopment. Hence with poor governance in most of the developing world and Africa in particular, public *departicipation* in development has been the order of the day (Kanynga, 2001). For this reason, development cannot be addressed in isolation of how the state is governed, its power organized, distributed and appropriated. An investigation into development as such is, but an inquiry into how the state is governed. Consequently, the state in Kenya has had several development blueprints with the first and perhaps the most celebrated being the *Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 on African Socialism and Application to Planning in Kenya* (Republic of Kenya, 1965). The policy document addressed poverty, disease and ignorance, issues that have recurred in subsequent development plans since independence.

In particular, the Sessional paper introduced the concept of decentralization aimed at devolving decision-making power to the grassroots. This concept was amplified in 1983, when the District Focus for Rural Development Strategy was implemented (GoK, 1983; Makokha, 1985; Chitere & Ireri, 2004; Mapesa & Kibua, 2006). This policy made the district the local level-planning unit with district level civil servants and Government officials and political leaders as the members of the implementing team. Since then, the government of Kenya has accepted this development approach as a strategy for delivery of services to the people and in resource development and mobilization. However, the adoption and implementation of the decentralization strategy was met by challenges.

The implementation of various development blueprints notwithstanding, poverty and other related development setbacks persisted and therefore it was found necessary to specifically come up with strategies to combat poverty. This culminated into the National Poverty Eradication Plan 1999-2015 (Republic of Kenya, 1999). This development blue print although well-intentioned, was too ambitious and can therefore be questioned on its practicality especially so, the concept *eradication* of poverty. It is not expected that poverty can be *eradicated*, but rather *reduced* or *alleviated* and therefore this over-ambitious nature of the policy paper and the subsequent interim poverty reduction papers left more doubt than enthusiasm among the masses.

In the meantime, economic performance nosedived and the government technocrats had to re-think their development strategies. Hence, when the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government took over in 2003, it was found necessary to adopt a multi-sectoral approach to development aimed at re-positioning the economy on the path to recovery. This saw the formulation of the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (ERSWEC) 2003-2007 (Republic of Kenya, 2003) and its subsequent Investment Programme (Republic of Kenya, 2004). Upon implementation of the ERSWEC 2003-2007, with various successes and shortcomings up to 2007, the country seemed to be on its path to real recovery, but the 2007 post-election violence dealt a major blow to much of the gains. Even then, the Kenya Vision 2030 had been conceived as a strategy for transforming the country into a middle income nation by the year 2030. It is this most recent blueprint that this paper generally focusses on and in particular one of its driving pedestals, the *social pillar*.

The Concept of Vision

Any development endeavor requires that the end result is defined so that it acts as the guide and motivation among the stakeholders. For this reason, people will not only know where they are going, but also when and how to get there. Consequently, a vision when applied to a development blueprint like the Kenya Vision 2030 can be looked at as a statement or affirmation that defines time-bound and specific long-term direction of what a country intends to achieve or become in the future.

It is variously seen as a long-term dream of an entity and as such it encompasses the goals which the entity constantly strives to achieve. In the context of the Kenya vision 2030, the long-term aim is to transform the country into a middle income nation by 2030. Moreover, a vision can be seen as a forward looking statement highlighting in summary form, how an organization aims and plans to deploy and use resources to achieve set goals. It is therefore understood as a goal-oriented method combining people, resources and processes to achieve a better and sustainable life for the present and future generations. From the foregoing, a vision as such should provide a vivid picture of the desired future state of affairs and enlist action from all stakeholders. The implication is that it provides a basis for formulating strategies and objectives to achieve set goals, while planning and deploying resources in various sectors of the economy for the accomplishment of planned activities.

As a forward looking statement, a vision focuses on the future, and as such inspires and provides clear decision-making criteria bearing in mind the overall goal. With the overall goal in mind and the necessary inspiration, motivation and resources, a vision orients people's energies and serves as a guide to action with the aim of goal attainment. With such motivation and inspiration to achieve higher ideals, a vision is important in stretching people's expectations, performance and aspirations to increase their output in anticipation of improved welfare standards.

The Kenya Vision 2030

The Kenya Vision 2030 is the most recent development blueprint in the country whose overall objective is to achieve a middle income nation status which would not only be globally competitive and prosperous, but also accord high quality of life to her citizens. The Kenya Vision 2030 is a long-term development plan for the country, a result of multi-stakeholder engagement and participation starting in October 2006. It came up immediately after the implementation of the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (ERSWEC) 2003-2007 (Republic of Kenya, 2003; 2004). Implementation of the ERSWEC 2003-2007 was responsible for numerous socio-economic gains including reduction in national poverty levels from 56% in 2002 to about 46% in 2006 (Republic of Kenya, 2008).

In addition, there has been increased access to social services particularly with devolution of funds to grassroots such as Constituencies Development Fund, the Local Authority Transfer Fund, the Constituency Bursary Fund and the Constituency AIDS Fund (ibid). In particular the Constituency Bursary Fund backed by the introduction of Free Primary School Education (FPE) (UNESCO, 2005) and the Free Day Secondary School Tuition has substantially increased enrolment with some areas experiencing over-enrolment. For instance, national primary school enrolment rates increased from 106 to 110 and 104 to 104.4 for boys and girls respectively in the period between 2003 and 2007 (Republic of Kenya, 2009b). In addition, transition rates from primary to secondary saw marked improvement between 2003 and 2007 although regional, gender and socio-economic disparities still persist to the present(Mwenzwa,Musyoka and Misati 2010).

The social pillar of the vision aims to achieve a just and cohesive society with equitable development, which will be based on society`s key sectors; including education, water, environment, housing, gender, youth, sports and culture. This will be done through enhancing access to social services and mainstreaming the disadvantaged sections of the population to the rest of the society. For instance, a proposal is made to re-orient the health care system to emphasize preventive as opposed to curative services, while making it more accessible and affordable especially to the most disadvantaged. The other target is to enhance environmental conservation in line with UN Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 7 (UN, 2000) by rehabilitating five water catchment towers. In addition, housing units especially in urban informal settlements are to be increased and improved in line with rising population and need for housing.

The Social Pillar in the First Medium Term Plan, 2008-2012

Social Development Proposals

The overall vision for the social pillar is the building of a just and cohesive society that enjoys equitable social development (Republic of Kenya, 2007; 2008). This is to be realised through the revamping of various sectors as outlined below:-

Education and training

The flagship projects for the term ending 2012 included building and equipping 560 new secondary schools to provide room for the increased primary school graduates courtesy of the Free Primary School education programme introduced in 2003 (Mwenzwa & Onduru, 2010). There is also a proposal to recruit about 28,000 teachers to offset the personnel deficit in the sector. In addition, while it is proposed that the school computer supply programme will be enhanced to equip students with Information Communication and Technology (ICT) skills; there are also plans to construct at least one boarding primary school in each of the arid districts to ensure continued learning on the onset of migration of nomadic communities.

Health - Care services

The aim of the health sector for 2030 is the effective provision of quality health care for all citizens, with the first five year medium-term plan aiming to revitalize community health centres to promote preventive as opposed to curative services. The sector also aims to devolve more powers and funds by channelling funds directly to hospitals instead of the district headquarters to minimize government red tape. This would also include delinking the Ministry of Health from service delivery to policy making, aimed at augmenting health care management by giving public health institutions at district, provincial and national levels the necessary autonomy to provide quality health care. Moreover, there is proposed a National Health Insurance Scheme to promote equity in access to health services to all. Suffice it to mention, some of the proposals will require legislation and hence, intervention of parliament.

Environment, Water and sanitation

The Vision rightly recognises that Kenya is a water-scarce country and therefore the other target sector in this pillar is water and sanitation, whose vision for 2030 is to ensure that water and sanitation services are not only available, but also sustainably accessible to all Kenyans. The goal of the sector for 2012 is to increase both access to safe water and sanitation in both rural and urban areas beyond 2007 levels. To achieve this in 2012, there is need to construct two multi-purpose dams with a water storage capacity of 2.4 billion cubic litres along rivers Nzoia and Nyando and 22 medium-sized dams to provide water in ASAL areas. In addition, there is the proposal to construct a water canal from Tana River to Garissa (the Rahole canal) and expand urban water supply in key satellite towns. To ensure adequate supply of water to the coast and ensure food security, the Mzima Pipeline and major irrigation schemes respectively will be rehabilitated and expanded accordingly.

Environment and conservation

Regarding environmental conservation as spelled out in the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 7 targets (UN, 2000), the goal of the sector for 2012 is to increase forest cover from the 2007 level of 3% to 4% and enhance disaster preparedness in disaster-prone areas including Budalan'gi and the Tana Basin. To achieve the foregoing, the proposal is to rehabilitate five water towers including the Mau Escarpment, Mt. Kenya, Aberdare Ranges, Cherangany Hills and Mt. Elgon. In addition there are also proposals to reclaim wildlife migratory routes, relocate the Dandora Dumpsite in Nairobi and come up with more focussed regulations to discourage manufacture and use of environmentally-detrimental plastics bags.

Gender, Youth and Vulnerable populations

The gender, youth and disadvantaged groups' vision for 2030 is equity, improved livelihoods for vulnerable groups and a responsible and prosperous youth. The sector's goal for 2012 is to increase opportunities for the aforementioned groups in line with the principles of equity. As such, the proposal is to increase annual allocation for both National Women and Youth Enterprise funds from the current ceiling of Kshs. 1billion to Kshs. 2 billion, while at the same time establishing a Consolidated Social Protection Fund. Moreover, there is proposed the need to build and equip at least one Youth Empowerment Centre in each of the 210 parliamentary jurisdictions. A sports academy and a cultural centre are also proposed to promote sports and performing arts respectively.

Housing and Urbanisation

The other target sector is housing and urbanization whose goal for 2012 is to increase annual production of housing units from the 2007 level of 35,000 to 200,000. In addition, a second mortgage finance corporation and a national housing fund are also proposed to inject competition in the industry and help lower mortgage rates to levels where many more prospective home owners can afford.

Moreover, metropolitan and investment plans for six identified regions and selected border points would be prepared for implementation.

Labour and employment

To ensure equity and poverty reduction is realized, the goal for 2012 is to reduce the number of people in poverty by placing citizens at a level of sufficient income to cater for basic requirements. The national manpower survey to come up with the country's skills inventory and strengthening the links between industry, education, training and research institutions.

Science, Technology and Innovation

To achieve the foregoing, it is recognized that exploitation of knowledge in science, technology and innovation (STI) is paramount. As such STI will be applied across all sectors in the three pillars for efficiency, improved welfare and enhanced democratic governance.

Achievements attained under the First medium term plan (MTP) 2008-2012

Under the first medium term plan various projects aimed at national healing and reconciliation following the post-election violence were implemented. More specifically, enrolment in early childhood education increased by 40% from 1.72 million in 2008 2.4 Million, while transition rates from primary to secondary education increased from 64% in 2008 to 77%.The number of students enrolled in university education increased by 103% from 1118,239 in 2008 to 240,551. A total of 21, 400 primary school teachers and 600 post primary teachers against a target of 28,000. Additionally, 37 boarding primary schools in 23 out of a total of 46 constituencies in ASALs were rehabilitated, equipped and expanded.

On environmental conservation, the proportion of land under forest cover increased marginally from 3.47 to 3.82%.The National action plan on climate change was also finalised. The national youth policy which spells out the strategies to be addressed so that the young people can play a key role in nation building has been developed and 355 youth polytechnics were equipped with basic and specialized tools. The youth enterprise fund increased from 2.2 billion in 2009 to 6.5 in 2012.

Improvements in health care provision were realised as 70% of the health facilities targeted for rehabilitation were completed and a comprehensive medical scheme for civil servants through NHIF implemented. In the provision of housing, only 991 civil servant housing units were completed in Nairobi and 900 units in Kibera completed under the slum upgrading program against the proposed the proposed 200,000 units proposed. On service provision vulnerable populations, over 200,000 poor vulnerable households are benefiting from the cash transfer program.

Social Development challenges

The realization of the vision is not cast on stone and, therefore, has several assumptions that must hold for it to be a reality by 2030. These include macro-economic stability, sustained governance reforms, equity in poverty reduction opportunities, viable infrastructure, and adequate energy for wealth creation and use of science and technology for innovation. Others include land, legal and related reforms, strategic human resource development and enhanced security to make the environment conducive for constructive civic engagement and quality entrepreneurship. Given these conditions then we may need to ask the question: what challenges did the country face in realizing the First Medium-Term Plan 2008-2012 targets and indeed the Vision 2030? It is these challenges that we now turn to in the preceding paragraphs while at the same time pointing out the way forward.The three pillars of the vision are seen to affect one another in a triangular relationship such that adverse performance of one pillar negatively affects others. For example, political maladministration (political pillar) negatively affects economic growth (economic pillar) as investors withdraw, which in turn affects purchasing power and hence access to social services including education, health and security (social pillar). Hence, challenges in one sector present difficulties for the whole vision and hence the approach to its realization should be both multifaceted and multi-sectoral in nature. Despite the need for realization of the vision objectives, there are several bottlenecks that stand on the way, hence, making progress towards 2030 a mirage.

Negative ethnicity and ethnic conflicts

To start with, unconstructive civic engagement manifested in the form of ethnicity and ethnic conflicts have had a negative impact on peaceful co-existence and nation building.

It is to be noted that these occurrences have been seen to escalate with the advent of multiparty politics in Kenya in the 1990s with disastrous impact on welfare indicators. For example, while the implementation of the ERSWEC has had numerous gains in the development of the country, the 2007/2008 post election violence reversed many of the gains made through destruction of property, loss of lives and disruption of economic opportunities, all of which have a direct relationship to national development. It is important that we quantify the impact of the violence and sensitize the citizenry, particularly the youth who are more prone to manipulation and misuse as weapons of violence.

Impact of HIV/AIDS, Overreliance on donor funding and brain drain

Ill-health in Kenya including HIV/AIDS, malaria among other diseases has over a long time strained the health care system and taken a high toll on personnel. This has, therefore, adversely affected the implementation of development projects and nation building. In addition, the health sector has over a long time been dependent on development partners and their withdrawal has had a devastating impact on access to health services. This is more pronounced among the citizens in the lower socio-economic echelons who mainly depend on public health facilities. Moreover, there has been a considerable brain drain among highly trained technocrats, which in turn affects the quality of health care services. Most important, Kenya is known to rely heavily on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Overseas Development Assistance (ODA), which are not only unguaranteed, but also unsustainable. Consequently, it is going to be a tall order for the country to achieve most of the vision 2030 targets in the absence of seriously addressing the foregoing issues.

Inequalities

It is widely acknowledged that education plays a central role in the development of any country and therefore the welfare of its citizenry. In Kenya, gender, regional and socio-economic disparities regarding access to education are so acute. It is skewed in favour of males, some regions and the upper and middle income echelons (Republic of Kenya, 2002; 2007; 2008; 2009a). The foregoing has far reaching implications on gender and regional equity, balanced national development and in effect the achievement of Kenya Vision 2030 targets. For example, the arid, semi-arid, urban informal settlements and other marginalized areas do not only lack viable infrastructure, but also the necessary personnel, which hampers delivery of quality education services. Suffice it to mention, bridging the disparities would require pumping   enormous resources in this sector. In addition, the inadequacy of personnel is partly to be attributed to the phenomena of brain drain, responsible for the migration of well-trained and experienced personnel in search of greener pastures. These factors hold back the progress of the country towards achieving the Vision 2030 targets and thus require urgent redress.

Insecurity

Sustainable peace and tranquility has eluded the region for a long time and conflict and civil strife has been seen to escalate in the last two decades with the fall of the Siad Barre regime in the former Republic of Somalia. The impact has been the proliferation of refugees and illegal fire-arms and ammunition into Kenya (Omosa, 2005; Mwenzwa & Njaramba, 2006) leading to   a state of insecurity and thus affecting national development as investors are kept off. It is important that an atmosphere peace and tranquility is cultivated in the country first by securing international borders and secondly disarming pastoral communities and criminal gangs mainly in urban and some rural areas. Indeed, disarmament of the pastoral communities while the international borders remain porous is unlikely to achieve much. Failing to provide a safe haven for investment will erode investor confidence and thus render vision 2030 a mirage

Realistic planning and agenda setting

While planning is important for the achievement of development priorities and for ensuring sustainable wealth creation and hence poverty reduction, some of Kenya's development plans and targets are over- ambitious and unrealistic. For example, in the 1980s and early 1990s, the government promised to provide adequate tap water for every home by the year 2000. However, such a feat was not to be and it would seem that in 2000, taps that had running water in the 1980s had dried up, making Kenya a *water scarce country* (UNDP, 2003, Republic of Kenya, 2003; 2004, 2007; 2008). In addition, in 1999, the government came up with an anti-poverty initiative, dubbed the *National Poverty Eradication Plan* (NPEP) 1999-2015 (Republic of Kenya, 1999) another yet over-ambitious plan given that even esteemed democracies of Western Europe and North America have yet to eradicate poverty among their citizenry.

One would then be compelled to ask: is it really possible to *eradicate* poverty? Against this backdrop there is every reason to hypothesise that the Kenya Vision 2030 is yet another over-ambitious development blueprint!

Climate change and natural hazards

Many areas of Kenya, particularly, ASALs experience perennial hunger, malnutrition and starvation due to the frequent yet predictable adverse weather patterns. As a result many people in the country cannot meet their basic needs of food, water and shelter. At the same time, there are vast pieces of land in agricultural potential areas that lie idle at the expense of food production. The government has recognised this problem and formulated the Kenya National Land Policy (Republic of Kenya, 2009c). This policy has envisaged land reforms that would lead to prudent utilization of idle land to enhance national development. However, this may raise ``political temperatures`` given that the vast and yet idle land is the property of the *politico-economic elite*. It is important, therefore, that the land policy and the recently promulgated constitution are implemented to the letter to forestall hunger and associated problems in society. Only once the very basic needs of Kenyans are met can we think of achieving higher ideals as the targets in the Kenya Vision 2030.

In many areas of the country, adverse weather conditions leave the areas devastated and, therefore, requiring humanitarian assistance. In much of arid and semi-arid areas, natural as well as human induced catastrophes have been seen to leave behind them a great trail of human suffering. This is partly blamed on the absence of a viable Early Warning Systems (EWS) for major disasters. For example, floods and drought have been seen to occur within months of each other from year to year (UN, 2007). These events have the tendency to retard development and therefore seen as impediments to the achievement of the Vision 2030. It is imperative that viable disaster EWSs are developed and personnel deployed in disaster-prone areas to ward off their consequences.

Official Corruption

Financial indiscipline is not strange to Kenya and it would seem that corruption has been institutionalized to the detriment of development and the welfare of Kenyan citizenry (Mulei, 2000).From land scandals to Goldenberg, Anglo Leasing scandal and political mischief, Kenya has lost substantial resources that would otherwise be invested in the provision of social services such as education, security, health and water that are glaringly unmet. This is compounded by government red tape regarding access to social services, considerably disillusioning the tax payer. These are significant impediments to the achievement of Vision 2030 proposals and hence the need to tackle them decisively. It is important that such vices and their breeding grounds are effectively dismantled and those culpable in both the public and private sector made to face the law as a deterrence to others.

Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that while substantial progress was achieved in the implementation of flagship projects outlined in the development blue print through concerted efforts by the implementing agencies comprising government ministries and other departments, various obstacles impacted negatively on the outcome and success. As already pointed out, there still remain high regional inequalities in terms of access to various social services and quality. To successfully move *vision 2030* to the second phase of implementation and deliver accelerated and inclusive economic growth, higher living standards, better education and health care and increased job creation especially for the youth as espoused in the Jubilee coalition manifesto "Agenda for Kenya, 2013-2017 and beyond" requires that the impediments discussed above are taken into consideration.

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