

Leadership for the Africa We Want

What is a leader? In the context of Africa, a leader is someone who cares only about their well being than the well-being of the citizens. Someone who is a villain in this movie called life because all they ever do is destroy all life. This is the definition that our leaders have made us believe. We as young people have suffered in the hands of this leadership and all we want is better leadership. What does it mean to be a good leader? A good leader is like a ship captain who is the last to leave a sinking ship after he/she has ensured that all the passengers and crew are safe and accounted for. A good leader is one that takes responsibility and faces the consequences of their actions head-on. Unfortunately, for decades the African child has been starved of good leadership. The absence of good leadership creates a toxic cycle. The younger generation sees their leaders dining and winning off the backs of the people they represent. The effect of this is that the younger generation emulates what they see and when they become leaders, the toxic leadership cycle continues to the detriment of the region's progress.

We want a leadership that thinks of others before self, a leadership that molds and shapes the environment in a way that allows the younger generation to realize their full potential. As Africa we are blessed with many resources which can be used to create employment for citizens. However, our leaders let outsiders take our God given gifts. For them to manufacture and resale to us at a higher price. Most Arabic countries are located in areas that have no water, however, they have made use of what they have and created ways to alleviate the situation. Africa has water, good soils, oil, minerals but we are the poorest continent because we have bad leadership. Our leadership has failed to manage our resources. We want a leadership that would come up with better ideas to build and make Africa better. A leadership that would stand for the people and will stop letting foreigners take our resources. A leadership that would take bold steps like the president of Ghana with the cocoa situation.

We are tired of watching our fathers kill themselves, we are tired of watching our mothers cry. All we ask is for a leadership that values every citizen. Fathers are killing themselves because they cannot provide the basic necessities for their families. Mothers cry as they watch their children die of hunger. Youths are killing themselves because of depression. Who can stand sitting at home for many years doing nothing? Who can stay sane after working very hard at university for a degree, only to be employed as a maid because there are no jobs available? We are forced to seek employment or refuge in other countries not because we want to but because the situation forces us to. We do not want to be without families but we have to find ways of making money in other countries. Divorce rates on the rise because husbands and wives have to live in different countries to gain enough money to ensure that the families are well fed. Families are separated, children are left with strangers who abuse them and the cycle of abuse goes on. All we want is a stable economy and creation of employment. Our fellow Africans have endured torture, rape and all sort of abuse to obtain entry in these other countries. Some have to travel and walk for months to seek refuge in

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other countries. We have lost many of our own to crocodiles, snakes and human traffickers because our leaders have forced us to find employment elsewhere.

Living in Africa is hard, basic necessities are expensive. Good education is expensive in Africa. The government schools ill-equipped and unhealthy. Children from disadvantaged homes are discouraged because of the state of the schools. We want good affordable government schools, every child deserves an education whether rich or poor. The value of education has been degraded because what is education if there are no opportunities. Additionally, if we make our own opportunities, the government comes and takes it. How are we supposed to grow, how are we supposed to make use of this education that we have received? As youths, we are discouraged and hopeless.

Unemployment rates are high which translates to high crime rates. Our fellow sisters are being trafficked. Youths are forced to find other means of getting an income such as prostitution. Some youths in the drug business and some are thieves because they have no choice. In most African countries, an 8 - 5 job is not enough to feed the family, you ought to have a side-hustle to be able to provide all necessities. We are forced into such situations because of the state of our countries which is determined by the leaders.

Water and sewage systems are not maintained. Electricity is never there and we need to use other power sources which is another expense we cannot afford. We want working systems in Africa, proper sewage systems. A leadership that would come up with ways on how we can solve these problems.

Corruption is another big issue in Africa. The authorities are corrupt and all systems are corrupt. You cannot get certain things without paying a small fee. This way of living has taught everyone else to be corrupt also in our dealings. We are not valued as citizens and no one cares about how we feel. We want to be heard, we want our opinions to matter when decisions are being made.

We are an intelligent people, we are hard workers and we are resilient people. Even with all these hardships, we soldier on and make a way. However, that is not how life is supposed to be. We need to be given the space to make use of our skills. We see Africans involved in coming up with brilliant inventions in other continents because they were given the opportunity. When given an opportunity, I believe we can come up with amazing solutions and our Africa will rise. If the African leaders unite with the citizens and value their contributions we can make better strides forward.