

THE NEED FOR POLITICAL AWARENESS FOR AFRICA'S YOUNGER GENERATION

PART I

Is it democracy that in Africa, where majority of its population are below age forty, elect majority of its leaders, who are above age sixty, to power?

Are we really satisfied with the way our countries are being governed by leaders of that age group whom are not in touch with the realities/expectations of the moment?

Take for example, Zimbabwe, Cameroun, Malawi and Liberia where the heads of government are at the ages of eighty-seven, seventy-nine, seventy-six and seventy five. Should it not bother us that at the age people generally take retirement and rest, our politicians actually become eligible to be at the helm of affairs? Why is it that people below forty are considered as political kids? Our nations desperately need young leaders who personify energy, enthusiasm, morality, and diligence. No doubt we have progressed a lot in the last fifty years or so, but the development pace would have been completely different had some young torchbearers led this process of development.

It is next to impossible to find a young partisan politician with no political family background in the furor of politics. There can be two reasons for this.

One may be that the youth today are not interested in actively participating in the political field. They are content with what they are doing and how the country is being governed. But this reason seems to hold no ground seeing the discontent shown by this generation of youths. The young generations today, are aware of the problems facing our nations and the world at large. Given a chance they would be ready to change the political condition of the country for the better. This takes us to the second reason.

The second reason may be that young people are not given opportunities to prove themselves on the alleged basis that they are not equipped with experience to participate actively in the governance of the continent. This reason seems to be more logical seeing the monopoly of old leaders in almost all the major political parties across the divide. Old people should realize that proper development could take place only when they make way for younger people to take control of the activities. It is not intended to mean that old people should leave the political scene and retire. What is appropriate is that they should be there but for guidance.

Until these generation of teens and young adults decide to engage in political leadership, we have no place to complain of bad leaders and bad governance in Africa. This is because persons now in their late sixties and seventies, who have been involved in politics since the early sixties, at the time most of

Africa acquired her independence from her colonial masters, our fathers who fought for her liberation, are still the persons in government today. And why is this so? It is so because the younger generation have left governance through political means to them. As such, these older generation who have been in governance for all these years, have always had a fill, rotating positions of leadership amongst themselves. In those days, post independence era in Africa, we had Heads of Governments in their early thirties, government ministers in their twenties etc. And now in their late sixties and seventies, they are still governing the continent, making relevant decisions to protect their interest etc. And then they claim that is so, because the younger generation are inexperienced, nor ready.

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