MANAGING NIGERIA’S TRANSFORMATION AGENDA: THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

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Abstract

Nigeria’s President won the 2011 Federal Government elections on the groundswell of popular support and the promise of a transformation agenda. Transformation is a strong word that portends a radical, structural and fundamental reappraisal of the basic assumptions that underlie our reforms and developmental efforts. The challenge before government is how to move the nation away from an oil-dominated economy, institute the basics for a private-sector driven economy, build the local economy on international best practices, transform a passive oil industry to a more pro-active one, and restructure the country along the lines of a more decentralized federalism. But beyond this, there are management and leadership challenges to contend with - building an efficient and effective polity, inspiring a shared vision, remodelling a corrupt polity, building character and integrity in our leaders, redefining the imperatives of transformational leadership, and creating the Nigerian dream that will inspire patriotism and commitment in the citizenry.

Keywords: Reforms, Transformation, Governance, Management, Leadership.
I. INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian nation is no stranger to economic reforms. Before the 1980s, the reforms were purely in the form of extended national perspective plans that attempted to mobilize human, material and natural resources of the nation to achieve goals of national life. There was the 1962-68 Plan, then the 1970-1974 Plan, the 1975-1980 Plan, and the 1981-1985 Plan. Often, these Plans went beyond mere economic prescriptions to address social, human and political goals. Thus, the 1970-74 Plan defined the national objectives to be the building of:

a) A united, strong and self-reliant nation;
b) A great and dynamic economy;
c) A just and egalitarian society;
d) A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens; and,
e) A free and democratic society.

In implementation, these Plans hardly involved any fundamental restructuring of the national economy. They were in the main, monetarist prescriptions that did little or nothing to address the structural and fundamental distortions in the economic, social and political life of the nation. By the 1980s the need for reforms paved the way for the Stabilization/ Austerity Measures of the Shagari Administration. The sharp drop in the international spot market price for oil resulted in plummeting national revenues, putting in dire peril all the budgetary projections and planning for the period. The hurried and fire-brigade approach to the emerging problem, failed to address the root causes of a national economy in great fundamental and structural distress.

In 1986, the Structural Adjustment Programme was introduced by the Babangida Administration to address the fundamental and structural imbalance in the economy, diversify the economy, strengthen the currency, and build a viable, sustainable industrial infrastructure upon which real economic growth and development can be founded. The reform exercise rested on a tripod of measures: Liberalization of foreign exchange transactions, Rationalization of public sector agencies and para-statals, and Optimization of the capacity for domestic production and stimulation of non-oil exports.

The Vision 2010 reform package was introduced by Abacha Administration in 1998. The aim was to “develop a blueprint that will transform the country and place it firmly on the route to becoming a developed nation by the year 2010” (Vision 2010
The general objective was to transform the country into “a united, industrious, caring and God-fearing democratic society, committed to making the basic needs of life affordable for everyone, and creating Africa’s leading economy”. The Policy projected that by 2010, the Nigerian people would re-discover themselves and revert to being God-conscious and God-fearing, caring, sincere, honest, accountable in their dealing with public trust, and proud of their country and heritage.

In 2004, the Obasanjo Administration introduced NEEDS - National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy. The NEEDS reform programme rested on four key strategies (NEEDS, 2004):

- Reforming Government and Institutions;
- Growing the Private Sector;
- Implementing a Social Charter;
- Value Re-Orientation.

The complimentary tools for the realization of the above goals included Pension Reforms, Energy and Power Reforms that led to the desegregation of NEPA into 18 successor companies, the GSM Telecommunications Reform, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, the Corrupt and Allied Offences Commission, ICPC, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, and the Reforms in the Financial Sector.

With the advent of the Yar’Adua Administration in 2007, the Federal Government articulated the 7-point Agenda for national development. The policy thrust revolved around the seven-point contract of that Administration with the Nigerian people: Energy, Education, Agriculture, Infrastructure, Wealth Creation and Poverty Alleviation, Land Reforms, and Security. The point was further made, that these reforms would catapult Nigeria to the rank of one of the 20 most developed countries of the world by the year 2020.

On April 16, 2011, President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan won a pan-Nigerian mandate that swept through the North and South of the nation. He ran his campaign on a promise to radically transform the nation and overhaul every aspect of the national life. The Transformation Agenda Final Report defines the goal of the reform exercise in these words:

> During 2011-2015, the policies and programmes directed at addressing governance will focus on the public service, security, law and order, the
legislature, anti-corruption measures and institutions, the judiciary, economic coordination, and support for private investment... These will be addressed through the implementation of the recommendations ... in the areas of public service reforms, judicial reform, anti-corruption initiative, electoral reform, land use reform, fiscal management reforms, power sector reform, police reform, financial sector reform, infra-structural development reform, and information and communication technology (p. 51; Cited by Asobia, 2012).

Thus, it seems that the NEEDS provided the common denominator upon which the 7-point Agenda, the Vision 20 2020, and the Transformation Agenda rest. The expectation was that all the above reform measures, would culminate in the fulfilling of the 2001 Kuru Declaration:

To build a truly great African, democratic country, politically united, integrated and stable, economically prosperous, socially organized, with equal opportunity for all, and responsibility from all, to become the catalyst of [African] Renaissance, and making adequate all-embracing contributions, sub-regionally, regionally and globally (NEEDS: viii, 2004).

Sadly, after more than fifty years of policy reforms, Nigeria has painfully remained:

i) A public-sector led economy with a bloated government presence in every facet of national life;

ii) A nation with very weak private sector which has grown a “rent-seeking and unproductive culture of over-dependence on government patronage and contracts, with little or no value added” (Harneit-Sievers, 2004);

iii) A mono-crop economy with preponderant influence of one commodity in determining the nation’s revenue-expenditure profile and the balance of payment position;

iv) An extractive and primary economy that produced unrefined raw materials for export, either in the form of agricultural products or crude oil. Manufacturing was at a very rudimentary stage, and industrialization remained an inconsequential factor in the nation’s economic equation;

v) A nation without an effective industrial infrastructure for economic take-off - no petro-chemical industry to fuel the industrialization process, no effective iron and steel complex to produce flat steel, a deficient power and energy sector, insecure and inhospitable environment, and poor communications;
vi) An economy with a weak and tottering national currency that was the whipping boy of the international financial community.

The mandate to reform and transform Nigeria has been most emphatically communicated in the majesty of the democratic process. The dream is for a bold and audacious transformation programme that will radically, fundamentally, structurally and massively transform the national economy, reinvent the politics of the nation, secure the polity, care for the underprivileged, and provide responsible, responsive and credible leadership to Africa’s largest and most promising economy. The challenge is how to turn this moment in history, into a turning point in the people’s national experience in nation-building.

In this paper, we shall identify the governance challenges confronting Nigerian leaders, but with particular emphasis on the management and leadership challenges. Hitherto, much of the panacea offered for a resurgent Nigeria, had revolved around improved infrastructure, more diligent exploitation of the nation’s resources, and the establishment of core industries that will move the nation from the fringes to centre-stage of international relevance. This paper will focus more on the management and leadership challenges for today.

II THE PROBLEM WITH NIGERIA

Good governance has been equated to political and institutional processes and outcomes that support the exercise of legitimate authority by public institutions in the conduct of public affairs and management of public resources, so as to guarantee the realization of sustainable human development. The true test of “good governance” is the degree to which it delivers on the promise of human rights: civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. The key question is: are the institutions of governance effectively guaranteeing the right to health, adequate housing, sufficient food, quality education, fair justice and personal security? (Human Rights, 2007).

If the nation’s Agenda 20:2020 is to be believed, Nigeria hopes to be one of the 20 major industrial and developed nations in the world. So how does Nigeria compare with the countries that play in the Premier League?

• Life expectancy in Nigeria according to international estimates is 51.9 years; by comparison in Switzerland it is 80.85 years (one of the countries in the League of Developed nations). In Malaysia, a nation which gained independence at about the same time as Nigeria, life expectancy is 74 years (UNICEF, 2005).
Over 70% of Nigerian citizens live below the poverty line (International benchmark is $1.5 per day), and Nigeria is ranked 156th out of 187 countries in the world ranking of nations using the Human Development Index (UNDP, 2011). Meanwhile, Nigeria has earned close to $450 billion since 1970 on oil receipts alone. Between May 1999 and June 2008 alone, the country earned over $205 billion (Cited by Wokoma, 2008). In Switzerland, 7.4% of the population is below the poverty line.

Nigeria’s Human Development Index at 0.459 lags behind the Sub-Saharan Africa average of 0.463 and the world average of 0.682. The inequity-adjusted HDI is even further disappointing at 0.278. The low point in the global scale is 0.456! The Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) shows that 54.1% of the population live in poverty, with 57.3% in intense deprivation (HDI, 2011);

Other HDI for Nigeria include: Life expectancy 51.9 years; Education index 0.442; Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index 0.310; and Gross National Income per capita 2,069. Current statistics reveal that 1% of Nigeria’s population enjoy the privileges of 80% of its oil wealth. Thus, 99% of the population have barely 20% of the overall wealth to struggle over. By the way, in Venezuela, an oil producing country, the price of fuel has not been raised since 1999; it costs $1.02 to fill the tank of a car. In Nigeria, the equivalent cost would be $30.0 (Yusuf, 2010).

Nigeria is ranked 14th as the world’s most failed state in the 2011 rankings released by Fund for Peace, an American independent non-profit research and educational organisation. The survey which considered 177 countries used the following criteria: Group Grievance, Uneven Development, Legitimacy of State, Public Services, Security Apparatus, and Factionalised Elite. Nigeria’s position dropped sharply from 54th in 2005, to 22nd in 2006, and 14th in 2010 and 2011. Nigeria was only better than the likes of Somalia, Chad, Sudan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Haiti and Iraq.

The nation’s Misery Index is on a persistent rise. Indeed, a Preston curve on income distribution in the world indicates that Nigeria is one of the three poorest nations of the world, where more than 80% of the population earn less than $1 per day (Egwu, 2007).

The anti-corruption group, Transparency International has consistently ranked Nigeria among countries most riddled with corruption. It described Nigeria as a Gangster’s Paradise where “…you pay a bribe to see a key official in many an establishment. You pay a bribe to get a job. You pay a bribe to get the passport that is yours by birthright. If you do not give or collect bribes, you remain
The 2011 Ibrahim Index of African Governance released by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, ranked Nigeria 41st out of 53 African countries studied. The Index seeks “to provide a robust, comprehensive and quantifiable tool for civil society and citizens to hold governments to account, to stimulate debate on governance and to provide a framework to assess governance quality in Africa” (Obi, 2009). The Index ranks good governance in four major areas: Safety and Rule of Law, Participation and Human Rights, Sustainable Economic Opportunity, and Human Development. Some of the scores proved quite interesting: Cape Verde scored 78.0, Ghana 66.0, Sao Tome 60.2, and Nigeria 46.5.

The giant of Africa is thus proving the point that “possessing mere potentials seems to be inadequate for transformation to greatness. Good leadership is critical as it provides the required governance that can exploit all the potentials for the good of the citizenry” (Obi, 2009). The MO Foundation also instituted an annual Prize for good leadership in Africa. In 2007, the prize was won by Joaquim Alberto Chissano, former President of Mozambique. In 2008, Festus Gontebanye Mogae of Botswana received the prize. The question remains: when and which Nigerian leader will ever receive such prize?

In 1998, the World Economic Forum (based in Germany) rated Nigeria 22nd out of 23 African countries in the order of competitiveness for foreign aid. Of the five factors cited as the culprit, corruption was the star of the pack. Indeed, the other factors - poor infrastructure, lack of clear direction in market-oriented economy, political instability and military dictatorship - owe their potency to the escalating effect of corruption.

Given this sad and inglorious profile, how does Nigeria break out of the logjam of underdevelopment? How can the country resolve the fundamental problems posed by the deadly cocktail of high level of poverty, absence of a productivity culture, unabating scourge of corruption, absence of security and gross abuse of the budget process.

Nigeria’s transformative agenda must see the country move from oil-dominated to a more diversified economy; Change from public-sector dominated to a private-sector driven economy; Integrate the local economy with the global economy; Transform a passive oil industry to a more pro-active one; and, Restructure the country from centralized federalism to a more decentralized
federalism with greater political and financial powers ceded to local governments towards empowering communities to manage their development (Abdullahi, 2008). Nigeria’s New Deal demands nothing less.

This paper shall review the contribution that management and leadership principles could make in the resolution of the nation’s developmental dilemma.

III MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES

Transformation is a fundamental shift in the deep orientation of a person, an organization, or a society, such that the world is seen in new ways and new actions and results become possible that were impossible prior to the transformation (UNDP-LDP, Cited by Asobie, 2012). It is a mandate for a radical, structural and fundamental re-arrangement and re-ordering of the building blocks of the nation. It portends a fundamental reappraisal of the basic assumptions that underlie our reforms and developmental efforts that will and should alter the essence and substance of our national life. The expectation of most Nigerians is for a development blueprint that will transform the economy, establish the social security net, and upgrade the quality of the human estate.

So what are management and leadership perspectives of the agenda? Transformational leadership refers to the ability to inspire and motivate followers to achieve results greater than originally contemplated, and for internal rewards. These leaders create the vision and are able to carry people along in the realisation of the vision. Transformational leaders fundamentally alter the parameters of the status quo through providing a vision for the future and then investing the time and effort in having others share that vision. Through sharing the vision, they clarify the present, explain how the past has influenced the present, and promote a view of the future. They are good listeners, and are generally consistent, persistent and focussed in order both to empower others and maintain momentum.

Factors in transformational leadership include:

- **Charisma** - the ability to instil a sense of value, respect and pride, and to articulate a vision;
- **Individual Attention** - focussing on needs of subordinates and seeking the growth and overall personal development of followers;
- **Intellectual Stimulation** - encourages creativity and innovativeness in subordinates and helps them rethink rational ways to examine every
situation;

▪ **Contingent Reward** - cuts a clear path between responsibility for performance and the consequent rewards that follow;

▪ **Management by Exception** - allows followers a wide latitude of self-expression, and only intervenes to correct off-the-course performance.

Herbert (2012) captures the point most poignantly:

> With transformational leadership, a landlocked country can create coastal waters and become a powerful State like Israel. With transformational leadership, Japan, a country devastated by World War II and devoid of natural resources can become a leading industrialized nation. With transformational leadership, a country can convert its desert into an oasis, like United Arab Emirate that is now a world-class tourist destination and international financial centre. With transformational leadership, a country can transit from Third World to First within 20 to 30 years, like Singapore under Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. With transformational leadership, a country can transform from a backwater, commodity exporting country to become one of Asia Tiger’s economies, like Malaysia under Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad.

One of the more enduring challenges for leadership in Africa remains the example of Nelson Mandela, a man fired by the zeal for his fatherland. At great personal risk, he put his life on the line to salvage his people from bondage to colonialism, apartheid, poverty and want. He paid a great price - nearly thirty years in the gulag, dehumanised, brutalised, scandalised and thoroughly traumatised. With great patience, candour and humility, he paid his dues. The day came that he swept to victory on a groundswell of the people’s vote. The despised last citizen soon became the first citizen. He assumed power as President of the Republic of South Africa without any bitterness, without any hint of vindictiveness, and without any thought of revenge. He became the glue that held his nation together, a symbol that inspired young and old to great nobility of character and personality. Such was his popularity that if he wanted to be President for life, it was easily within his grasp. But no, he declined a second term in office. He would rather that the younger ones were given the opportunity to grow; he paid the price, but held out the prize to his country men. When he was the anvil, he bore a tremendous lot; but when he became the hammer, he was most reluctant to strike.
Transformational leadership was the lighting rod for the metamorphoses of a poor village cattle boy and a jail-bird into an international statesman, the world’s Number 1 citizen, and a frontline opinion and character moulder. That is the story of the man Nelson Mandela! Raised from obscurity and irrelevance to become the Face of Africa, his ever-ready winsome smile communicates the confident assurance of a continent’s ultimate triumph over the forces of hate, greed, bigotry and mindless violence. Today, Mandela has become an oracle, not because he went to jail, not because he fought apartheid, but because he demonstrated leadership.

Mandela left mankind eight lessons in leadership:

▪ *Courage is not the absence of fear - it is inspiring others to move beyond it.* He learned as a leader to pretend to be fearless, and through the act, inspire others. He knew that he was a model for others, and that gave him the strength to triumph over his own fear.

▪ *Lead from the front - but do not leave your base behind.* He had a vision and conviction to chart a new course for his people, but he also knew that his support base was his strength. He got the people to buy into the vision and be part of the new deal; he took them along at each turn.

▪ *Lead from the back - and let others believe they are in front.* In herding cattle as a boy, he learnt that cattle can only be led from behind. He developed quite early, the need to form consensus as a leader. “The trick of leadership is allowing yourself to be led too. It is wise to persuade people to do things and make them think it was their own idea”.

▪ *Know your enemy - and learn about his favourite sport.* The leader must understand the strengths and weaknesses of the enemy and formulate tactics accordingly. Whether fighting with the enemy or negotiating with him, either way, the leader’s destiny is tied to the enemy’s.

▪ *Keep your friends close - and your rivals closer.* Keeping a wide circle of acquaintances is a means of neutralizing those that cannot be trusted, with charm. Embracing rivals is a way of controlling them; they are more dangerous on their own than within the leader’s circle of influence.

▪ *Appearances matter - and remember to smile.* Symbols matter as much as substance; and often, perception is more powerful than reality. A smile can be all the message friends and rivals need. For Mandela, white South Africans found in his smile, an absence of bitterness; and for the Blacks, it was a symbol of his sure triumph.

▪ *Nothing is black or white.* Life is never either/or. Decisions are complex, and
there are always competing factors. Nothing is ever as straightforward as it appears. A leader should be comfortable with contradictions, so long as he is pragmatic enough to keep the goal in sight.

- **Quitting is leading too.** Knowing how and when to abandon a failed idea, task or relationship could be the most difficult challenge for a leader. But it is the duty of the leader to set the course, not to steer the ship. And leaders lead as much by what they choose not to do as what they do (Stengel, 2008: 23-28).

Leadership moves a nation from the fringes of international relevance - from the dark dungeons of the Third World - to the centre stage of emerging medium power and industrial and economic democracy of the 21st century. That is the story of Lee Kuan Yew! He oversaw the separation of Singapore from Malaysia in 1965 and its subsequent transformation from a relatively underdeveloped colonial outpost with no natural resources into a "First World" Asian Tiger. He has remained one of the most influential political figures in South-East Asia.

Nigeria requires a leader that will articulate a vision that will drive the nation’s transformation process - a leader who will dream dreams and mobilise fellow Nigerians to buy into that dream. Such leaders inspire a clear mutual vision for the nation, a clear mission that all citizens will commit themselves to. This is what Warren Bennis (2001) calls the *management of attention*.

Nigeria’s transformational leader must be able to build virile teams that will work with him to transform the polity - not political lightweights nominated by godfathers being rewarded for political patronage. Leaders are not just managers or supervisors; they are team leaders. And a team is more than just a group. A team is a group of people with a high degree of interdependence geared towards the achievement of a shared goal for which they hold themselves mutually accountable. Belbin (2003) identifies nine team roles vital to effective leadership:

- **The Plant** - These are the original thinkers who generate new ideas, offer solutions to problems, and think in radically different and imaginative ways;
- **The Resource Investigator** - These are the creative icons who are prepared to “run with the vision”. They are popular extroverts who get things going;
- **The Coordinator** - They are highly disciplined and controlled individuals, who have the capacity to focus on objectives and truly unify the team;
- **The Shaper** - They love a good challenge and are achievement oriented.
They always go for great and good results;

- **The Monitor Evaluator** - These are the analysts - calm, detached objective thinkers, who balance and weigh the various options;
- **The Team Worker** - This is the diplomat - the good team player, always supportive and cooperative, and wants what is best for the team;
- **The Implementer** - This is the expert with great organisational skills with a lot of common sense, who just wants to get the job done;
- **The Completer** - These ones are painstakingly conscientious, able to check details, and always willing to tidy up after others;
- **The Specialist** - This is the professional with drive and dedication, possessing specialised skill (Cited by Templar, 2005).

The leader must satisfy two indispensable conditions: he must be **trustworthy** and be able to **communicate his vision**. Trust and confidence in a leader is the single most reliable predictor of employee satisfaction in an organisation. And effective communication requires a successful application of analogy, metaphor and vivid illustration as well as emotion, trust, optimism and hope so the vision can secure the attention of subordinates.

Trust is the combination of competencies, constancy, caring, fairness, candour and authenticity at the core organizational relationships that hold together the entire entity. Trust is a balance between **Ambition**, **Competence** and **Integrity**. **Predictability** makes it possible to anticipate what will happen if certain actions are undertaken. It is the weakest form of trust. Then there is **Reliability**, where employees fairly assume that employers will follow through with their promises. This is a stronger form of trust. Finally, there is **Mutuality**, a state where employers and employees share expectations of each other, and so feel comfortable in taking actions with limited communication (Mills & Friesen, 2001). This is the strongest form of trust. Nigerians are yet to see a leader they trust, who will not lie to them, and who will model the best virtues that we desire to see in ourselves and our children.

The leader is responsible for the two major determinants of how to act within an organisation: **culture** and **climate**. While culture is the deeply rooted nature of the organisation resulting from long held formal and informal systems, rules, traditions and customs, climate is a short-term phenomenon created by the individual and shared perceptions and attitudes of organisational members. Organisational climate is directly related to the leadership and management style
of the leader, based on the values, skills, attributes and actions as well as the priorities of the leader. The character of the leader is the single most important factor that impacts the climate of his organisation. So what culture and climate have Nigerian leaders fostered within the Nigerian nation? How have they set the agenda for productivity, reward and incentive schemes, and standards of performance? The challenge is to create the atmosphere to stir up efficiency and effectiveness in the polity.

Perhaps the most challenging task in transformational management and leadership is the need to recreate values that will order and direct the citizenry. Negative values have been likened to the mathematical symbol of zero (0). Whatever is multiplied with zero becomes zero. One billion or trillion Naira in excellent planning and budgeting, when set in a multiplicative function against zero, is zero. Nigeria’s national problem is thus, not primarily that of poor infrastructure, nor poor human resource development, nor even the mono-crop economy with its over-dependence on oil. The problem is zero values and ethical bankruptcy in national life. If national infrastructures became the best on the African continent, with upside-down values, they would soon become decrepit and rundown, monuments to crass inefficiency. If the country had world-class industries, refineries and power-generating turbines, with wrong values, routine Turn-Around Maintenance would be nightmarish and the edifices would soon become white elephant projects.

Men without values constitute a blot on the nation’s psyche:

a) A Teacher without proper values will sell grades for sex and money;
b) An Engineer without sound values will build roads and utilities that will neither endure nor give real service;
c) An Architect without values will design buildings that will collapse and kill their occupants;
d) A Judge without values would be a stranger to justice, selling and buying ex-parte motions, and standing fair conduct on its head;
e) A Politician without values will be an opportunist in the corridors of power -greedy, malevolent, deceitful, master of double speak, dishonest and above all, dangerous to the nation’s well being; and,
f) An Accountant without values will substitute “expediency for priority, imitation for innovation, cosmetics for character, style for substance, and pretence for competence” (Covey, 2003). He soon becomes a terrible chef, good at “cooking” accounts books and falsifying records, an embezzler, a dealer in stolen goods, and a pretender who glories in the wealth of others.
The leader Nigeria craves is one who will empower the citizenry and lift individual performance beyond their normal limitations. Empowerment is a tool for improvement of employee productivity and customer satisfaction. It frees people to innovate in the marketplace and to find more efficient ways of performing their work. It also permits many decisions about customer service to be made in immediate proximity to the point of service delivery. Thus, the customer requests are typically filled more efficiently, with greater satisfaction to the customer and reward to the entrepreneur.

Empowerment permits a change in organizational structure, from top-down hierarchical device to a network of relationships that guarantees immediate responsiveness and faster communication. It facilitates a change in the role of management, from daily operational decision making to focus attention on vision and planning, placing individuals in broad process-oriented teams rather than narrow functional jobs. Citizens are driven by goals not by orders; their performance is measured by results not behaviour; and managers do not just direct, supervise and control, but allow employees to use their own judgement to make decisions and drive communications. Empowerment makes possible a change in management style - from ability to administer and control, to the capacity to demonstrate empathy and fine-tune the soft factors of employee welfare, care and motivation, and generate new visions that chart the course into the future. Furthermore, empowerment requires a change in incentives - employing intrinsic rewards, and using results and team output as bases for rewards. Finally, empowerment dictates a change in control systems - application of vision, goal setting and performance indicators (for example, profit, cost, market share, and so on) as elements of the new control mechanism (Mills & Friesen, 2001).

Without doubt, Nigeria’s need for the moment, the heart-cry of the citizenry, is for a transformational leader who:

▪ Is genuinely interested in serving rather than being served;
▪ Has the ability to create the vision, inspire and motivate followers, and through consistent, persistent and focussed guidance, empower individuals to achieve results greater than they ever imagined;
▪ Will fundamentally alter the parameters of the status quo through providing a vision for the future and then investing the time and effort in having others share that vision;
▪ Will encourage creativity and innovativeness in subordinates, allow
followers a wide latitude of self-expression, and cut a clear path between responsibility for performance and the consequent rewards that follow;

- Models what he preaches, and whose claim to leadership rests on the force of his convictions, the elegance and style of his performance on the job, and the integrity of his life and practice;
- Unites rather than divide us, ennobles rather than demean us, truly transforms rather than deform us - who will diligently search out and celebrate subordinates better than himself.

The mandate Nigerians gave to the current Administration for transformation of the polity is one that seeks for the style of governance that will:

- **Recreate the value system** - replacing patronage appointment with an insistence on merit, and restoring the moral tone of public officers;
- **Inculcate a healthy work ethic** in the citizenry - developing the individual worker intellectually and equipping him to do a good job, providing efficient supervisory and management skills at the workplace, selecting and placing staff on merit rather than on nepotic and ethnic considerations, and a fair reward-incentive scheme that motivates;
- **Resolve the nation’s national identity crisis** by forging one united people out of the diverse ethnic nationalities that comprise the Nigerian nation. One of the enduring wonders of our age remains how the United States has become a melting pot of different nationalities living together just as Americans, notwithstanding the fierce nationalistic struggle and rivalry that described their past. Today, whether they are Italian-Americans, German-Americans, Anglo-Americans, or Afro-Americans, they all have one proud heritage as Americans. Perhaps, the best gift any Nigerian leader can bequeath to his country men today is to forge one united nation and people out of the disparate peoples of Nigeria;
- **Lead the nation in a deliberate and determined battle against corruption.** Corruption has penetrated the warp and woof of the Nigerian society. The boss and his messenger, the police officer and the recruit, the classroom teacher and his student, the politician and the voter, the judge and the lawyer, the pastor and his parishioner - none can remain untainted by this stigma. The greed of the ruling class plays upon the poverty of the larger majority of the people to perpetuate this scourge. Unfortunately, the battle against corruption is being prosecuted by men who are not morally qualified to lead in the crusade. Success in this battle demands on the part of the leader, commitment, sincerity, and consistency, and must be pursued relentlessly,
no matter whose ox is gored.

► **Redefine the national priority** in favour of hard-work, diligence, honesty and patriotism. So long as people make it because of their connections, so long as tribe and old school ties are the basis for progress in public service, so long will all the talk about National Rebirth and Reorientation be mere talk. Nigeria must build a system that respects excellence. No country ever went to the moon, or transformed into a developed economy by federal character. **Excellence** must become the national motto, if the country must remain relevant in the new millennium;

► **Unleash the creative potential of the people.** This will mean encouraging challenges to current ways of thinking and doing, establishment of goals that explicitly contain creative components, cultivating an attitude of focussed freedom to apply natural and acquired skills in defined areas of activity, and associating creative efforts with specific evaluative domains.

In the words of Maxwell, Nigeria needs leaders:

*Who know the way, go the way, and show the way;*

*Who inspire and motivate rather than intimidate and manipulate;*

*Who continue to search for the best answer, not the familiar one;*

*Who handle themselves with their heads and handle others with their hearts;*

*Who use their influence at the right times for the right reasons;*

*Who take a little greater share of the blame and a little smaller share of the credit;*

*Who live with the people to know their problems and live with God to solve them;*

*Who realize that their dispositions are more important than their positions;*

*Who never place themselves above others except in carrying responsibilities;*

*Who discipline themselves so they will not be disciplined by others;*

*Who encounter setbacks and turn them into comebacks;*

*Who follow a moral compass that points in the right direction regardless of the trends (Maxwell, 1993).*

### IV CONCLUSION

The task of transforming the Nigerian nation from a social, political and economic perspective requires more than the **hard factors** of macro-economic growth and development. Also needed, are the **soft factors** of management and leadership skills. Rightly has it been said that there are no under-developed countries; only under-managed ones. The need of the hour is for transformational leaders able to articulate their vision, possessing assessment skills, communication abilities, and at the same time very sensitive to the skill
deficiencies of their subordinates. They must be men (and women) who will lead by example, who have the courage to tackle the status quo, and who will place character and integrity above every other consideration in assembling a winning team.

Such leaders must be connoisseurs of talent - more curators than creators, with a smell for talent, unafraid of hiring people better than themselves. They are ready and willing to abandon their ego to the talents of others. They are experts at management of relationships - trustworthy and consistent, providing the emotional glue binding followers and leaders together.

Finally, the leaders Nigerians want may not necessarily have the loudest voice, but the most attentive ear; instead of bureaucratic hierarchies they have a structure built of energy and ideas; they lead people who find their joy in the task at hand while embracing one another; and they do worry about leaving monuments behind. Great leaders are produced by great groups and by organizations that create the social architecture of respect and dignity. Without each other, the leader and the led are culturally impoverished.
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