

## **A message from the President and Founder of African Monitor**

The goal of development must be to enable people to enjoy their potential to be fully human. Bringing the corrective balance of human realities and contextual groundedness into all our policy-making is essential for our planet's long term well-being, without which humanity will not survive. Though for too long the economic systems of the developed world have operated as if it were not so – with catastrophic consequences for all of us – the fact is that we live in a world of finite resources. Human-focussed economics argues that creation can well supply enough for our needs, though certainly not for our greed, if we are ready to be faithful stewards not only for today, but for tomorrow.

And when it comes to development policies, alongside all the statistics of hunger and need, and the totals of dollars spent, it must be remembered that what matters most is that the neediest individuals urgently find tangible, sustainable solutions. Though this is often the hardest thing to quantify, it is the only thing that truly counts. Whilst it is informative and credible to measure progress through the condition of our economies and the strength of our currencies, we must also not neglect to concentrate on how well our planet feeds its hungry, cares for its sick, houses its homeless, educates its children, employs its adults, and supports its elderly and vulnerable. Only when we achieve this can humanity dare claim to be truly civilised.

Current policies that exacerbate the inequalities between rich and poor, across most nations of the world, and between regions of the planet, are dangerously destabilising – in economic terms, in social terms, in human terms. Development programmes are most effective and sustainable when intended recipients are fully included – respected, heard, involved – in every stage from inception and planning to delivery, and when adequate attention is paid to the realities on the ground. Policies that propagate conflicts, confrontation as well as marginalization have a sell-by date beyond which people will revolt with dire consequences to political and economic stability.

At African Monitor we continue to be motivated and heartened by the way African people continue to soldier on in spite of the many challenges that we face as a continent. Recently, we are motivated by the current wave of indicators that the continent is about to achieve a development breakthrough; that something is about to give in and allow the continent to experience its full potential.

A number of views have been conceived about what it would take to move Africa's development agenda forward and to realise Africa's moment. Our strategy is framed within that shared hope that certain levers need to be unlocked for Africa to realise its moment. And we make no illusions; this cannot be achieved overnight. Neither can a few stakeholders achieve it. A concerted effort from all players is needed in order to realise Africa's moment.

The next five years will therefore see African Monitor moving a gear up through its focus on the African moment campaign. Policy makers, civil society all over are talking about this being "Africa's time to shine". After delving into what constitutes the moment, from the various discussions, African Monitor has realized that a lot of the talk is rather largely based on the usual fuzzy but exciting macro-economic projections. As such, we see African Monitor and partners' role in this 'African moment agenda' being to

work to shine the light on the grassroots and citizen aspirations as the key missing link in the current conversations about the African Moment. It is therefore important for us and those engaged as collaborators in this process to recognize that we will be the interpreters who translate dreams and recommendations at the grassroots level into messages digestible at the policy and implementation levels.

Our strategy is therefore part of our effort to launch our campaign under the theme “Unlocking the African Moment”. Recognizing the reverberations throughout the continent about a ‘new dawn’, African Monitor is taking a proactive stand to not only support this agenda, but to inform it from the distinctive perspective of grassroots communities – the ordinary African citizen. We will continue to engage the policy makers and implementers because they continue to hold the key for the levers that need unlocking in order for Africa to realise its moment. Advocacy therefore remains core in our work as the proverb illustrates, “It is useless for the sheep to pass resolutions in favour of vegetarianism when the wolf remains of a different opinion”.

Grace and Peace

Archbishop Njongo Ndungane