PARLIAMENT'S INFORMATION MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA

GOVERNANCE AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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WHAT IS GOVERNANCE?

- Governance refers to the manner in which the sovereign power of a community and power over that community is exercised in the stewardship of the total portfolio of its political,economic and social resources for the benefit of that community.
- Hence it is concerned with the processes, systems, practices and procedures- the formal and informal rules- that govern institutions, the manner in which these rules and regulations are applied and followed, the relationships that these rules and regulations determine or create, and the nature of those relationships.
- In the political context, governance addresses the role, efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of both the elected leaders and the political institutions.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF LEADERS?

It is expected that every political institution will be headed by competent persons that exercise leadership, innovativeness, integrity and sound, informed, objective & independent judgment of issues so as to lead the community from where they are today to where they would want to go.

This means that :

EXECISING LEADERSHIP

involves:

- Ability to predict the future, seeking out and managing uncertainty, learning and adapting to change, creating other leaders around you, digging deeper and deeper into the unknown to manage the future from the present.
- It also means **envisioning, enabling, empowering and energizing** those that you lead to ensure that they succeed.

EXERCISING INNOVATIVENESS

- suggests thinking outside the box, thinking across boundaries, creating new categories or seeing what others cannot see.
- implies an ability to acquire and apply knowledge and know how to constantly create the new.
- recognizes that the past is a useful touchstone but a very heavy gravestone and therefore demands organizing for the future building on available information.

EXERCISING INTERGRITY

- Implies that leaders re-enforce what they demand of their followers by example.
- Suggests that leaders demand from themselves the same very high ethical and moral standards that they demand from their followers
- Demands that there is open and transparent disclosure of all that leaders do and that they earn the right to lead from developing their skills, their strength and behaviour in service of those they lead

EXECISING INFORMED JUDGEMENT

- Demands that leaders make informed, objective, independent and sound judgment based on an examination of the best available information.
- Implies that leaders ;have access to, understand and assess all available information before exercising judgment or making a decision.

This is the core of our discussion in this meeting.

QUESTIONS THAT ARISE

{"Africa is endowed with an abundance of natural resources, a dynamic people and the best of climates- it is perhaps the richest continent-, yet it has the largest proportion of its people living in abject poverty, it is the most exploited, the most marginalized, the least developed and now the least well governed"}

Therefore, the following questions arise:

- To what extent do those who lead our countries have access to information?
- To what extent do those who lead us acquire, analyse and use the information to guide their decision making?
- To what extent is the state of governance in the continent as a result of lack of access to information?

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- If Africa is to alleviate poverty, it must acquire information, digest the information, discern what is useful and apply it for the benefit of the continent- *Focused intelligence – the ability to acquire knowledge and know how is the new source of wealth.*
- Unfortunately, because there is so much information, the Leaders of African must now adapt, adopt and develop suitable mechanisms for collecting, collating and classifying information so as to identify that which is of critical relevance to the people of continent and their needs.

GOVERNANCE & ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- If the leadership in Africa is committed to changing the continent, it must enhance access to information freeing and allowing the people of the continent to be creative, innovative and competitive.
- Unfortunately if we continue to do what we always did, we will get what we always got- poverty, ignorance, disease , marginalization and enhanced exploitation of our continent.

{Those who govern must now learn to exercise focused intelligence- the ability to acquire and apply knowledge and know-how.}