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**THE ROLE OF THE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT IN  
THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS:  
ISSUES IN CONSTITUENCY STRATEGIC PLANNING**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In this paper we discuss some planning and development strategic issues which confront an MP now and into the twenty first century. Strategic issues are issues which must be addressed if a person, a role or an organisation is to respond to a changed environment. If a strategic issue is not mediated the person, role or organisation does not survive in the new environment. A key strategic issues in Kenya is the role of the MP. We address this in historical perspective and suggest how MPs should restructure their role through addressing pressing national planning and development issues at the constituency level. In other words MPs have to create a strategic purpose for their role before they can address other strategic issues. In our opinion, there are other planning and development strategic issues crying out for attention. These are sustainable agriculture, education, technology, AIDS, and, perhaps the most important, community organising. The role of an MP has changed dramatically since Eliud Mathu went to the colonial Legislative Council in 1944.

## **ELIUD MATHU'S ROLE**

When Eliud Mathu went into the legislative council, he was legitimised as a legislator by the nationalism process. His planning and development role was clear. He did not have to campaign in the wider African community for all of us who were around then saw him as our own. He could not do wrong for any issue he sought to pursue was in our view legitimate for our development. It

may not have been an issue from which each one of us derived direct development benefits but we were convinced that he was fighting for us. The issues which we, Africans, were interested in were obvious. We wanted colour bar to end. We wanted Uhuru. So we supported him fully. We also did not expect to benefit directly from his activities. It was all right if he focused on the needs of some. Our turn would come. We hoped. Hope in this sense is defined in the original Greek meaning of having the possibility of less evil in the future. Colonialism was evil and anti-development. Mathu would fight it and thus reduce it, we believed, for proto-nationalism informed us that one day we would be free and, according to Kwame Nkrumah, all things would be added to us. Mathu was a hero. Heroes do not make mistakes. Heroes are adulated.

Mathu's world fell apart when the Mau Mau war started. We got other heroes who appeared to want to deliver us from bondage quicker. They acted rather than talked. Those in the forest and in prison were the new leaders for some of us. Others were convinced that these were not leaders. We, the Africans, split. Therefore the role of a legislative leader changed. It was diminished. It was contested.

Legislative leaders who followed Mathu, the Ohangas, the Amalembas and the like, had a hard time leading us not only because they were chosen for us but more fundamentally since we, the Africans, were split in our demands on leadership. Until the legislative leaders selected after the Lyttleton Constitution, in 1955, the role of a legislative leader was essentially illegitimate for some of us, maybe the majority. It was only to be legitimised by the nationalists.

## THE ROLE OF A LEGISLATOR 1955 TO 1963

From 1955 to 1963, the role of a legislator is the role of the tribal representative as a nationalist. The interpretation is based on the phenomena which led to public interest being calculated by legislators in terms of what development was to go to the mythical *my people*. We, the Africans, were now thinking in terms of what our immediate communities could get from our representative at the meeting of the tribes, the colonial legislative council. Indeed one can argue that the legislative council was no more than a gathering of all the tribes. The Mzungu tribe, ably represented by settler parties, sought to acquire national power. Their interest is to be seen as different from the colonial government's interest which sought to control the legislature through the preponderant representation of mzungu bureaucrats in the legislature and the all powerful executive, the Governor.

Initially, many legislators created little political parties which only covered their tribe. It is true that pan tribal political parties were not initially recognised by the colonial government. This does not diminish the point that the legislator only organised the tribe. The legislators did not use the model of pan-tribal organising initially.

Along the way though, some adventurous legislators began to create organisations which were wider than the tribe. The momentum was in Nairobi logically for it was, and continues to be, the most cosmopolitan of our towns. It consequently had a crowd. A crowd could be turned into political operations. However, the organising by Mboya in Nairobi did not mean that



fundamentally we, Africans, agreed that he was the leader we could all access. He was a leader but the way to him was through the tribal legislator leader. Witness the patronage of Mboya scholarships or Odinga scholarships. They were handed to us locally by the tribal leader legislators who got them as part of their patronage. Since our sons and daughters were being sent overseas to study, the tribal leader as legislator was development conscious.

The legislator role also suffered from our questions on the detained. Legislators had to declare their position on Kenyatta, the triple proxy for forest fighters, detainees and nationalism. The strategic question by us, the Africans, was how we could be free while some of us were detained. In the future, Kenyan historians and political scientists will have to revisit the struggles for African leadership in the legislative council between 1958 and 1961 to give us more light on the posturing on the detainees issue. Publicly all African legislators were in favour of releasing Kenyatta. In party formation and political tactics, many knew he could dominate the nationalist movement and thereby diminish the tribal representative role in the gathering of the tribes. Consequently, during the formation of both KADU and KANU, the primary representation issue was not ideological but geographic tribal. There was little discussion on the meaning of development. What was important was to mobilise the tribe. If the tribes were to gather, the one with the most tribals, or are they indigenous?, would carry the day. This was also clearly understood by the colonial government, more than settlerdom. After all the colonial anthropology institutes in Makerere and Salisbury had done their intellectual justification of focusing supposedly nationalist political organisation along tribal lines for a generation of colonial rulers.

It is important in our understanding of the historical roots of the role of a legislator to go behind the veneer of nationalism, the call for independence, and to see the kind of development issues raised by legislators in the period. They concentrated on schools. Schools were development.

Our images of the leaders were also graphically portrayed by them. They wore, in the name of Africanity from their point of view, the regalia of tribal bosses. We, the Africans, saw them as affirming that they were tribal leaders. This was reinforced for us by their harassing the local petty tyrants be they missionary, white or black administrators or traders. They stopped communal labour. We therefore stopped terracing. We stopped protecting watersheds. We stopped making roads. We waited for *serikali* to do these things as they preached to us. In their understanding the things they stopped were not developmental!

The majority of the legislators of the period were ex school teachers. This explains their concern with development as meaning only expansion of the educational facilities and their preachy style, derived from misguided colonial pedagogy of producing parrots. After all, they knew. We were supposed to respect the teacher. We obeyed the teacher. We, the Africans, agreed. Since they were teachers mainly, most of them had earned community leadership roles for colonial teachers were special. They were likely to also be local church leaders, local business leaders, local leading farmers and the like. They were the best and brightest of the colonial products. They did not tolerate tradition for it represented everything they were escaping from, although some had joined the tribal associations, started as part of the colonial counter-

insurgence measures of the fifties, to defend traditions most did not know!

Community leadership for development, during this last phase of colonialism, was however not with the legislator. Depending on different parts of the country, it was either traditionalist or a mixture of traditionalist and modern elements. Colonial chiefs feature in community development leadership of the period heavily for they wielded immense colonial state and community power. The immediate followers of the legislators, the youth wingers obeyed Nkrumah's dictate of being recruited from the *verandah boys*. If one is a *verandah boy*, one is neither employed nor employable. They were likely to be not very literate. They also were not likely to be propertied or even highly motivated people. Many of the youth wingers created a new profession called *mwanasiasa*, a person who had no occupation other than talking at the various market places. Some become legislators in later years. They were a major huddle in teaching that development was a process of communities and not an activity undertaken by just a ministry or government.

### **THE ROLE OF A LEGISLATOR 1963 TO 1969**

One of the ironies of all African independence was the belief that after independence all things shall be added to us, Africans. We were so busy believing this that we, Africans, did not take part in defining ourselves as Kenyans. Neither did we understand that the *Kenya We Want* in development terms would only be possible if communities defined their development needs and struggled for them. Instead we left the definition of our development needs and our Kenyanness to the ex colonial bureaucrats. An explanation is



in order.

First, we believed that politics was over. After all we, Africans, were ruling ourselves. The first decade of our independence is the decade of bureaucratic rule par excellence. State bureaucrats believed that the business of running the government, in their view equivalent to developing the country, was solely theirs. They did not need us. They needed legislators only to enact what they had studied and recommended. They would plan development. They created a ministry to coordinate planning in 1966. By 1970s, they were so arrogant about their development achievements in ruling, planning and dominating society that they wrote into one report that they had created modern Kenya and it was now time for them to go into business. They were henceforth allowed to own businesses. We sanctioned this and the regulators became owners of what they were regulating. This bore public corruption which still haunts us. It was the basis of bureaucratic accumulation.

In the merging of KANU and KADU and APP, the regionalisation of KANU in Limuru, the founding and banning of KPU and general de-politicisation of the first decade of independence, we, the Africans, were transformed into Kenyans essentially under bureaucratic rule with the erstwhile tribal legislators marginalised. In this rulership, provincial administration ran riot. The tribal legislator was a development spectator who occasionally kneeled at the foot of the many bureaucrats. Power came from the office of a bureaucrat. Bureaucrats planned settlement schemes, schools, dips, roads and the like. The tribal legislator had to know the rounds of the different ministries if he was to get any services, in the name of development, for his tribals who were indigenous or migrants!



The origins of the legislator is no longer the teacher during this period. Most of the new entrants are youth wingers whose specific point is to get even with the historically established local leaders. Hell hath no fury like a youth winger become a *Mheshimiwa*! Matters public became issues of personal accumulation of influence, power and wealth. Representation, in the sense of taking local issues to the national level, became peripheral. The relationship between locally identified development needs and national government planning outputs was at best dubious. Given that the local community distrusted the legislator, he spent inordinate amount of time in Nairobi with matters of state! We, Kenyans or tribals, were supposed to understand. We did. The MP became irrelevant in our development activities. We began to look for leadership elsewhere.

## **THE ROLE OF THE LEGISLATOR IN THE SEVENTIES AND EIGHTIES**

Beginning with the seventies, we, Kenyans, tribals and indigenous, became disillusioned with the bureaucratic and depoliticised state which planned development without involving us. We disengaged. A *Mheshimiwa* was a mortal. He was not even a tribal leader. We could exist without him as long as we could corner the DC and the PC and all other bureaucrats for our development needs. After all, we had our eyes and ears in the civil service also. Each one of ours, and the others we could bribe, could deliver a particular development service. After all, the *Mheshimiwa* was just a youth winger before he sold a licence!

The second point is that we, Kenyans, tribals and indigenous, became Harambee fanatics in the seventies, for this was development we could plan and control locally. In the process, our tribal legislators forgot about us other than just showing up to shout to us "me and my friends" during harambees! Through the seventies it was not too bad, we could organise our own harambees. We even built colleges of technology.

However, by the eighties, the state with a highly politicised and wealthy bureaucracy, took over harambee. Our little harambees for each village or sublocation were now centralised. The big leaders wanted to compete nationally and harambees had to be constituency or district wide to show off who had more friends within the one party, one bureaucracy and one government. Our *Mheshimiwa* would not accept that we plan our little developments. Of course money collected by all these big leaders was kept by them and we never even got it back. It was centrally planned and administered! We innovated though. We started collecting money for our schools and used it and only reported what we spent in the big harambees so that our *Mheshimiwa* could announce his millions! You see we Kenyans, tribals and indigenous are not exactly stupid. We do not like being looted. We also made so much noise on the harambee land buying companies that they had to be abolished and our plots given to us. We also forced politicians out of our cooperatives. This way we deepened our local development planning so much that the national development plans began to assign a role for our harambee contributions!

Since the seventies, many of us, Kenyans, tribals and indigenous, do not really

select our legislators. They were vetoed by the one party and financed from outside our areas. Who become a *Mheshimiwa* was a function of the single party factionalism. This is why we concentrated on eating campaign money. It was not ours! It was the one major service we got from our *Mheshimiwa*. We did not confuse this eating with development other than when we forced those who wanted to go to be elected to contribute to our small projects. We kept them out of our cooperatives, school boards and local development activities. They did not like it. They fought us. The more they fought, the more we articulated that we needed change. That others picked our ideas and created other parties is a detail. We rebelled. We looked for other development leaders locally.

## **THE ROLE OF A LEGISLATOR AND THE MULTI PARTY ERA**

Part of current reality is that the social and economic environments have changed thereby changing our planning and development needs. Strategically speaking then the development role expectation of a legislator is being redefined. First, members of the Seventh Parliament have extremely diverse backgrounds. Some naturally come from the leadership of the 1950s. Others are former bureaucrats par excellence who have been radicalised to question the *arcana imperii* they operated so well. Other legislators are ideologues, uncomfortable in the talking shop, to use their language. Many are from the professions. Others are self made businessmen. Others are farmers. Others are academics. Some are just local leaders.

Several points need to be made. First, the many backgrounds offer an



opportunity for articulating many development alternatives if tolerance is accepted. The risk exists that the assorted backgrounds will only lead to cacophony. Second, the purely political struggles within the house can diminish the possibility of debating alternative planning and development options. This can marginalise the legislature's role in making policy on planning and development to address current strategic concerns.

This Parliament and the ones to come is confronted by different Kenyans from those of the past. We, Kenyans, are different. We are young. It is estimated that only 8% of the national population is above fifty years old! This is to say that only a tiny minority of the nation has an adult experience of pre-independence. Only about 24% of the nations population is above 30 years old. This is to say that more than three quarters of the national population has been born since independence! In most constituencies, more than 80% of the registered voters in the last election were under twenty five! By the next election, it is estimated that more than 90% of the voters will be between eighteen and twenty five!

We do not understand what the political fights in the past thirty years are all about. We are Kenyans and do not have our development reference on tribes. We aspire to modernity. Our leaders are many for development cannot just be economic. Some are dancing stars. Others are athletes. Still others are religious leaders. Some are bankers, teachers, pimps, farmers, rugby players, engineers and so forth. We are not locked into seeing leaders only in Kenya. For us a *mwanasiasa* is a contradiction in terms for one has to have a profession. For us political leadership is what one does to fulfil community obligations and not an occupation. We look for solutions to specific personal

and community development problems. Jobs and inflation are currently priorities. For us the legislator is just one of the many in society who are in leadership positions and not necessarily the supreme leader. We are aware that the old folk do not share our vision of poly leadership for development. We also do not understand how they are basically locked in thinking that legislators are primary to the development process.

To complicate matters, for us Kenyans, tribals and indigenous, legislators are now organised into many parties. Each party seeks to direct its legislators to some policies. These have been codified into documents. There are obvious divergencies from the statements of party policy and the behaviour of the parties. More important though is the feeling we have that the parties are still locked into some of the fights of the last thirty years for many of the national party officials are creatures of that period. All of them articulate past concerns primarily. It can be stated that the parties still see the legislators as the most important of their officials. Put it another way, the validation of a successful party leader is to be elected to parliament. Perhaps this will change. Perhaps it needs to change quickly for local level leadership in some development activities is what the young need more than politics.

### **THE LEGISLATOR AS A LOCAL LEVEL ORGANISER**

In summary then, the development role of a legislator enjoys fairly low status now. Martin Shikuku caught part of the spirit of this when he said they are *Miserable Persons*. He did not capture all of it for he should have added that they are ignored by the bulk of the population. Not many of the young voters know their MP. Many do not go to the MP for any particular service. It seems to me then the challenge for the legislator is to redefine the role of an MP in

the local community to become a development leader. This assumes an organisational role. It also assumes a listening role. A listening role for the silences of the community. For me this is strategic thinking about the role of a legislator in the future.

The historical roles are over and done with. What is called for is for a development organiser at the local level primarily. There are several reasons for this. First, the state is increasingly being marginalised especially in development and economic sectors. As state roles diminish, communities will have to organise themselves to do many of the things, which Africa and indeed the world, assumed can only be done by the state. Some of these development activities will be done by community organisations and others by self interest groups and organisations, for example business groups or professional organisations.

The second reason has to do with competing development leaders. As Kenyan local communities become more complex and need services, which are increasingly bought outside the public sector, other individuals, professions and organisations have become more important than the legislative leader. They command more skills, influence, power and wealth than most legislators can command even when cash flowed by political parties for electoral reasons. Thus legislators are not going to be the only important development power brokers in the future. They can though become important development organisers of different local influence, power and economic fractions. The strategic purpose of an MP will therefore be that of a local organiser. In this role the legislators will be dealing increasingly with equals, and, at times, superiors at the local level. District Focus institutions give a framework within



which legislators can actualise the new role.

One of the most creative actions by the state was to start District Focus for Rural Development in the early eighties. It anticipated some of the planning and development problems now confronting the country where communities are divorced from the state and government development activities. At the local level DF was supposed to draw communities and development agencies, be they state or donor driven into dialogue about local development priorities. Yet at the local level, the institution has not been used to its fullest potential primarily since MPs have not paid attention to the problem. The Sublocational Development Committees have not really been formed in most parts of the country. At the next level, the Locational District Development Committees are still dominated by the lowest level bureaucrats and coteries of local influentials. By the time one gets to the Divisional Level, one is lucky to hear any community voices. It is my submission that the legislator can use this framework to get serious community discussion of development as well as mediating the conflicting local interest groups. This framework is more useful than utilising either a party or state bureaucracy for it allows for many voices to be represented. Any attempt to keep issues in one party will definitely lead to local fragmentation and heighten conflicts to the detriment of development as well as the shortening the public life of the legislator.

In creating and playing out the development organiser role, the legislator will have to confront some of the key issues confronting this society for which Kenya needs strategic thinking. The priority one will be to assure food production.

## STRATEGIC THINKING ON SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Kenyan agriculture has generally been able to feed the national population over the past fifty or so years. However, this was achieved by high energy agriculture limited to high potential areas. It is clear now that we will not be able to feed ourselves with food grown under high energy agriculture in the high potential areas given our exploding population. It is estimated that average land holding in agroecological zone three is less than an acre now! We must begin to produce food surpluses in the ASALs which form 82% of the land mass.

Sustainable agricultural practices which need to be implemented are stopping erosion on crop and pasture land, soil nutrient enhancement on crop and pasture land, expansion of food production, reduction of land under cash crops, emphasis on production and utilisation of grain proteins, adoption of natural pest management, reduction in reliance of artificial inputs and conservation of water for food production. These are synergistically related but clearly the most important is conservation of soil.

If Kenyan agriculture does not become sustainable, we will use massive national resources to buy food. Since we cannot finance such imports, the external financiers will impose controls on our nation. We shall be involved in the global politics of food which have replaced cold war politics.

Central in sustainable agriculture is the need to save the soil from erosion. In the Athi Catchment, one study estimated that on average 400 tons of soil per square kilometre is lost through erosion annually. In the Tana catchment,

another study estimated that 4,600 tons of soil were lost annually from each square kilometre of cropped land. The other catchments clearly have similar if not higher losses. It is deplorable that we have spent little money to establish what national erosion patterns are! In any case if the few existing studies are indicative, the nation's soil resource is endangered. At this rate we will have to import soil in less than a hundred years! Those who do not believe this conclusion should visit Ethiopia and see how similar erosion patterns have turned agricultural areas to desert in less than fifty years.

It should be clear to every legislator that a key development issue is to ensure that each local area saves its soil and produces the maximum amount of food possible to enable the nation to survive. This is not to deny comparative advantage in agricultural production but to emphasise that each locality will have to maximise production of food. This is not just a role to be delegated to the Ministry of Agriculture and the many inefficient institutions and processes in the agricultural sector. It is a problem for national legislative and community leadership for it is such a major strategic issue that those legislators who do not address it will fall on the wayside. It is a matter all parties must address publicly rather than keeping it under wrap of the policy documents. It is a matter for the community to conserve every farm and plot eroding. It calls for total approach rather than seeing erosion as a plot owner's responsibility. Students of soil structure know that the benefits of soil and water conservation accrue to the community rather than only to individual plot owner. This needs to be ingrained to every Kenyan. This should become central in the educational system.



## STRATEGIC THINKING ON EDUCATION

Traditional education systems of the many Kenyan peoples was located within the community and included conservation of natural resources which has been lost. Such an approach was overtaken by the colonially derived educational system which specified what skills were to be rewarded socially and at the market place. Post-colonial education follows the basic dictates of its colonial roots for its end objectives are to produce consumers. It is anti-development. It is not ecologically specific and it has little on natural resources utilisation, especially soil and water, conservation.

The strategic issue though is not to go back to pre-colonial education although there is a sense in which the dictates of local ecology demand that an aspect of traditional education, that is local resources utilisation and conservation skills, be taught. One strategic development issue is to create an educational system which utilises local resources for technicalising production. A second issues is local financing of components of the formal educational system. Current Ministry of Education practice demands that communities provide classrooms, laboratories and the like. Communities will need to be organised not only to produce these capital developments but also to pay school fees and uniforms and the like for the poor members who are increasingly not able to provide for the education of significant numbers of their children. AIDS orphans will need to be financed. It may sound unrealistic, but there already is partial data to suggest that many more Kenyans will not be able to attend school simply because their parents are not going to be able to finance the fees, uniforms, exercise books and the like. Already there are many constituency educational development funds. This is indication of where the

communities are in terms of future needs.

The planning of education for specific communities presents an opportunity for leadership. If legislators do not incorporate it in their role redefinition, they will be marginalised.

The content of education needs to be made local natural resources specific over and above catering for local human resources. This is not to say that there should not be a national curriculum for all people. All that is being argued for is that those learning in an area which has crop potential should get extra education on crops. Where fishing is important, we should build up on it in the local school system and so forth. In this way Kenya will begin to struggle with the integration of the educated to the local production systems. To date we educate for the towns, a colonial education hang over. To educate for the community is to begin to identify specific technologies for utilising available local resources.

## **STRATEGIC THINKING ON TECHNOLOGY**

By getting an educational system to think of how it supports local resources base, it is then possible to define technical production needs and technologies relevant to the particular areas. To date, the issue of technology has been badly handled at both the macro-policy level and at the micro level. Nationally we have failed to support local machine tool industry. Consequently, all sorts of machines are imported. Variety here is costly for all replacement has to come out of foreign exchange.

We also do not upgrade our skills. At the macro-level, technology related to production should be supported by policy and finance especially if it seeks to modify, generate or design more relevant technology.

At the micro-level, we have sought homogenisation. Thus we find the improved maize technology for ecological zone three in zone five. Water harvesting techniques needed for zone five have yet to be designed since our farmers and agriculturalists still think of high rainfall agriculture. Jua Kali production systems are similar in Lokichoggio and Lamu.

In thinking about technology, it should be understood one is not only talking of making better pangas but also locally attenuated tractors, computers and software systems for peculiarly Kenyan applications. We should not be conventional in our thinking. New technologies offer opportunities. The area of information technology offers some lucrative returns. Making communication equipment is participating in one of the growth areas of the future. Biotechnology is another. Training in these sectors now is important. It sounds esoteric but there are very cheap ways of using biotechnology to improve our production now. For example cloning more drought resistant plants, making nitrogen fixing bacteria as substitutes for petroleum derived fertilisers or fermenting food to improve its nutritive value and to preserve it as many of our ancestors knew.

These future growth technologies are no longer issues to be left to the state. They have to become issues of the local communities. Kisii women tea farmers know how to vegetatively grow tea plants. It is a small step to the tissue culture production of tea plants.



To date the only technology education institutions, other than the self driven *jua kali* artisanal production systems, which have filtered to the local levels are village polytechnics. The village polytechnics were started in the late sixties under the auspices of the NCCK, to train carpenters, masons, typists and tailors. These are over supplied now. By the seventies, various colleges of technology were started, essentially by non-politicians, for training at a higher level. It can be argued that these formed the root of the state driven expansion of university education along technical fields by the late 1970s and early eighties.

All these systems have not made technologies of the future central. For the next century, African society will have to technicalise much more than it has done in the past one. To remain competitive in this, leadership and investment will not only need to come from the state but will have to be generated in the local communities. That will surely be one of the issues each legislator will have to address in their area. It is not enough that a community just produces classrooms and supports the poor in its community who cannot go to school. Communities will have to put into place technical education feeding into the national production stream. The most efficacious way of doing this is to begin with technical and technology needs of local production and stream the local human and material products to the nation.

In some ways leadership on the technology issues is the most elusive in Kenya public life, legislators included, for we do not have a tradition on it. This is precisely why all legislators should, as a matter of urgency, find ways of establishing local resource persons knowledgeable on the issues to begin to address them locally. These local resources should identify what teaching

institutions are needed and come up with ways of organising them. It also is a question of entrepreneurs investing in technology. The resources put in bars are more than sufficient to create teaching institutions with good incomes for the investors. This should be explored locally. The state on its part needs to put in policies which support investing in twenty first century technologies. A good beginning would be to abolish duty and taxes on computers for example or financing of biotechnology products for use in food production.

Until the local communities debate and discuss their technology needs, the national macro-policy level will still remain confused for no real demands in technology will be put on it in the same way no pressure has been put on macro-policy on AIDS.

### **STRATEGIC THINKING ON AIDS**

In 1987, a group of Africans, meeting in Kericho to look into the future of the African continent, predicted that portions of this continent will be totally depopulated by AIDS. This was treated as a joke by the local media and many African Governments. This has come to be in several African countries where whole villages have been wiped out. AIDS is the crises which will not go away. It is killing people. Nationally, there is not enough information on it for it is argued that such information will scare tourists away among other perceived problems. It is time AIDS got discussed as a problem in each constituency for it is a strategic issue which threatens the very fabric of society.

If legislators understand that the trained young are a community and national development resource, they have no choice but to discuss AIDS in their communities and to make legislation to handle the problem. If a community wants to survive, it has to discuss AIDS. All communities are vulnerable in different degrees. The disease is not only on the Malaba/Mombasa Road as was argued in the past. Since nationally we did not get into public education on the crisis effectively, it has got into every corner of the republic. After all, we melt in Nairobi and Mombasa among other towns and return to the assorted villages spreading the scourge.

AIDS knows no classes. Politicians, paupers, professors, prisoners, priests, prostitutes, pathologists, prophets, police persons, poets, prospectors, printers, prosecutors and others have died and are going to continue dying if we do not push public education on the disease. AIDS will even spread faster as our nutritional standards fall since we are not producing enough food.

Communities will have to decide how they are going to handle AIDS orphans. Traditional mechanisms which saw orphans farmed out to immediate relatives seems to be failing in many African countries as the crisis deepens. There are tentative steps on new ways of handling orphans suggested by all the local church related orphanages, which are supported, to some degree, by local communities. This though is not the way for if the AIDS pandemic continues exploding, the numbers of orphans will be more than can go to public institutions. They will have to be spread to non-relative families for adoption. These are hard decisions to confront voters with but they need to begin to think about them.



Each legislator has an obligation to educate his local public for there will be no public for him to lead unless Kenyans, tribals and indigenous, begin now to change sexual practices. This must be done in public and not in the closed manner of past AIDS discussions. This obligation comes from traditional African morality which strategically specified that a leader who does not inform the community of its imminent death forfeited community leadership. Nothing threatens the integrity of communities making up this nation as AIDS does.

## COMMUNITY ORGANISING

In development studies community organising has specific meaning which refers to creating organisations and processes in a community which reflect on development problems and find solutions to them. In our jumbled history of the past hundred years, we have not organised our communities for problem solving since we were always looking outside these communities for solutions to development problems. Over the past fifty or so years, the solution lay in politics. Politics was in Nairobi. Government was also in Nairobi. Both were not part and parcel of our community. These comments are what we understood as *siasa* and *serikali*. They were not of us for they were far away.

It is clear these days that each community must do for itself some of what it had always assumed will be done by *siasa* and *serikali*. This means that the legislator must be involved in defining what development is to be done at his local level by the community as well as what is to be done by the government. It is clear though that the government will be doing much less

than it has done in the past. There are several reasons for this. First, it cannot raise more resources from the nation to do all the things expected until national productivity rises. Of course raised resources should be more efficiently used. Second, it is no longer fashionable to expect it to. Therefore donors will look for other channels of giving assistance. In this environment, communities will have to do for themselves what in the past was expected of the state. Communities will have to be organised for this.

In these communities, there are many forces organising. They range all the way from international and national NGOs, through modern interest groups to traditional groups. All local terrains are full of organisers and organisations. It is inconceivable that anybody will be elected a legislator if they do not find ways of coordinating these diverse community processes.

Already some of the more creative legislators have targeted women organisations, cooperatives and teachers associations among others. This has been easy for these do not conflict directly. In the future though, it is expected that trader associations will clash with cooperatives, especially the fast growing sacco's, organised labour, conservation groups and consumer groups in the market place. Conflicts will not necessarily be bounded locally but can be nationalised and/or internationalised. Pointers to future conflicts are Coffee Industry struggles, Tana Delta, Times Complex, Teachers Strike Threats or Tea Farmers Price Struggles. Whoever wants to be a legislator will have to mediate local interests for they will have the potential of blocking his election and role. New and non-traditional organisational forms still clash with

traditional organisations like clans. Much is made in some constituencies that elections are won on clan basis. Whatever the veracity of this, modern competing organisational forms will need to also address traditional organisational forms for they can bloc decisions at the community level.

It should also be noted that the organisations above are for less than 24% of the national population! Legislators will have to think how they access the under thirty who form more than 75% of the population. Their organisations are transitory, usually not apparently economic and mainly entertainment or socially oriented. They can only be accessed by the young. This will mean that legislators have to find young activists for organising their peers.

There is also the issue of many political parties at the local level. This is new. Many see it as fragmentary. Others see it as potentially liberating for it allows for debate and airing of dark closets. What is clear is the fact that the legislator will not afford to ignore members of other parties and other party officials in the local community. These are constituents who must be mobilised and wooed for development objectives if for nothing else. The existence of many parties calls for skills in persuasion on what is to be accepted as local development positions whatever parties do nationally. The legislator would be jeopardising his position if he does not see his role as one of persuasion about development and other public matters. Above we have discussed the historical role of the legislator and some of the other strategic issues which must be addressed.



## CONCLUSION

The current economic and social environments are a minefield for the legislator for society is rapidly changing and the state's development role is being scaled down. Individuals and communities, through new institutions, are redefining survival roles for themselves, public bodies and political leadership, including legislative leadership. Within this minefield, the legislator who wants to be elected to Parliament, to last and to lead, must begin to debate local development with the local power brokers be they individuals, self interest organisations or parties. It is a working hypothesis that those who do not maximise on discussing strategic issues for their communities will lose their public role.

In a past era characterised by high inflation, nascent parties and confusing national goals, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote: "A leader would certainly become a misleader so long as he does not clearly refuse to become the idol of the led." This is a fitting summary to the discussion of local level strategic planning and development issues confronting the legislative leader now and into the twenty first century. In the past adulation was sought. Local level leadership in planning and development was not taken seriously. Adulation is no longer relevant for we do not believe in heroes any more. The leader must articulate the hard choices confronting his constituents. There is no room for being idolised in that work.