STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY RELATIONS PERSPECTIVES FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE: PROPOSITIONS FOR THE AFRICA AGENDA 2063 ASPIRATIONS

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ABSTRACT

There is a growing role of civil society in inspiring citizen action across Africa and the world. This has seen a momentum considering the growing connectedness, enhanced by information and communication technology innovations. Though there is a worrying sluggish progress by established institutional powers within nations, for engagement with civil society, there is recognition of good governance avenues, cited in the role of civil society on supplementing and regulating the state and the market. This importance is also noted by multilateral and global institutions such as the African Union, African Development Bank, United Nations and the World Bank. This article explores state-civil society relations literature, in order to inspire scholarly perspectives for good governance towards achieving the African Union Agenda 2063. The article is narrative in its nature. Hence governance is applied as a theoretical stance. The article argues that there is a positive acceptance of civil society as a strategic partner in achieving national and regional aspirations, as with it is with the Agenda 2063. The article concludes by adding that new multi-levels engagements and dialogues are needed to contextualise and steer new socio-political ideologies for a radical wake of a new social labs to facilitate the agenda of a unified civic driven Africa.

Keywords: Civil Society, Governance, Africa Agenda 2063, State

1. INTRODUCTION

The year 2015 was the watershed year for the global development discourse, and thus marked the winding down of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It also marked the wake of a new agenda which will shape global development for years to come – more precisely the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Governments and their constituencies are central to the achievement of such global commitments. Therefore the development of governance approaches within regions remains critical to position collective representation and guided participation in the global political economy (NEPAD, 2001; Pere, Pressend, Ruiters & and Zondi, 2008). Africa has been no exception in this

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case. The development of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, followed by the African Development Bank in 1964 and the conversion of the OAU to the African Union (AU) in 2002 indicated Africa's unity in the idea of a collective and integration for strategic global participation (Tieku, 2007; AU, 2013; AU, 2016). This idea has been supported by states and often their conceptualisation is influenced by socio-political ideology trade, through civic dialogue among diverse forces (Nyaxo, 2004; Moyo, 2007; Englebert, 2009). Civil society organisations play a great role in the achievement of the desired inclusive Africa (AU, 2015). This is evident in inculcating the idea of Africa's collective identity, culture, politics and economics in the discourse and activism within civil society organisations (Hearn, 2001; Adetula, 2016). However the idea of integrations remains a complex phenomenon, hence Africa presents a complex socio-political and economic environment. Notwithstanding that Africa is part of a complex world and is subject to the trends and emergence of interconnected and dynamic realities that are prevalent today.

Contexts of state–civil society relations in Africa presents complex and diverse scenario because of its colonial history. African states have been in the past and to some extent continue to be sensationalised (particularly by the media) as a place of coups, famines, corruption and gross inhumanity (Hearn, 2001; Ellis, 2007; Meagher, 2007; Englebert, 2009). This was accompanied by largely underrepresentation in global forums, marginalisation in global negotiations, debates and decision-making process (AU, 2013: 2). The idea of state–civil society partnership presents a renewed sensation of a collective Africa driven by civic power than institutionalised government hegemony. This is in the sense that civil society engagement with the state and other constituencies create avenues for a people centred and responsive governance than just government (Biekart & Fowler, 2009; Vincent-Jones, 2006). The role of civil society in inspiring, supporting and promoting practices of civic driven development and democracy has continued to thrive, despite challenges of dealing with obstinate governments and market-economy powers.

This *article* explores perspectives of African state – society relations in order to inspire propositions for good governance towards the Africa Agenda 2063. The article uses a narrative literature review approach as a method. Scientific literature review articles are methodological studies which use database search to retrieve results of research, and have their main goals, objectives and theoretical discussion of a specific topic (Green, Johnson & Adams, 2006; Cronin, Rayan & Coughlan, 2008; Randolph, 2009). Narrative literature review describes and discusses the state of science in a specific topic from a theoretical and

contextual point of view (Gray, Bebbington & Collins, 2006; Enferm, 2007; Randolph, 2007). Narrative analysis is more qualitative, while on the other hand systematic literature reviews are systematically planned to answer specific research question using specified methodology for identifying, selecting and critically evaluating of studies in a specific topic.

2. THE IDEA OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN AFRICAN CONTEXT

The concept of civil society continues to receive deferent definitional connotations for scholars and discourse. Civil society has presented wide contestations of its meaning and application, (Gebre-Egziabher, 2001; Sievers, 2009; Benequita, 2010; Jaysawal, 2013) to an extent that some has rendered it to mean anything that is not done by the state or the market. Therefore exploration of the concept of civil society must be considered in order to contribute valuable inputs, particularly for a partnership with the state. The point being that there is to some extent confirmable understanding of what the state and market are than the emerging so called civil society (Althusser, 2006; Kapferer, 2011). Civil society as a sector is broadly understood as the occupation of the space between, family, market and the state (Gray, Bebbington & Collins, 2006; CAFSA, 2012). Civil society encompasses the way in which society organises itself to promote or discourage discourses in their communities. Commonly it is viewed as the voluntary sector where communities organises, provides services, undertake policy dialogue and advocacy.

Political theorists like John Locke, viewed civil society as when society strives to define and develop political legitimacy, where politics represents the order of a good life desired by society (Gebere-Egziabher, 2001),in which case society determines the rules and norms of political legitimacy. Civil society is social spaces where commons interact in ideological transactions, to determine a suitable state of public affairs within their polity. These interactions are constituted by ongoing dialogues, producing civic driven change in governance (Biekart & Fowler, 2009). Though there are arguments that the concept has ancient roots (Siligman, 1995; Kean, 2013), the recent idea of civil society originates with the enlightenment of the 18th century. In the context of the enlightenment civil society was referred to as associational life organised spontaneously by community based on their common interests and values (Pearce, 2002; Edwards, 2009; Colas, 2013; Hall, 2013). This notion emphasised communities' requirement of co-operative behaviours for survival (Sievers, 2009), notably independent from the state, family and the market. The concept has however thrived to be commented about in other sectors, including private sector, public sector and political discourses.

In order to make effective contributions the article lean on the

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definition provided by the London School of Economics and Political Science, Centre for Civil Society (LSE). The LSE puts it that *"Civil society refers to the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organisations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organisations, community groups, women's organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, trades unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups"* (LSE, 2006 cited in Merkel, 2012: 335; Jaysawal, 2013: 2). The article leans on this definition considering that it covers most of the conventions about what civil society is in contemporary literature. In order to ensure that this adopted definition covers adequately what has been viewed as civil society, the article unpacks and compares the definition with used definitions of the concept. It is worth noting however that each stance is worth special attention as a focus of research about civil society. Hence the focus of this article is on the civil society-state interface on the issues highlighted on the Africa Agenda 2063.

2.1. Uncoerced Voluntary Actions

LSE begin their definition noting that "civil society is an arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values". This is from the view that people in civil society organisations are voluntary actors, who seeks not profit in return of their service or participation (Kanyinga, Mitullah & Njagi, 2007; Scholte, 2007). Membership to civil society organisations is thus stimulated by the free will of participation by members, with consciousness to the non-monitory or material beneficiation. Civil society formation should not be bound to state rules or regulation but by spontaneous actions of community members. These actions are those that are collectively undertaken as a means of promoting or discouraging discourses that affects citizens' lives (Cuong, 2008; wollebae & Selle, 2008, Edwards, 2009). Although civil society organisation may generate revenue they may not seek for profit, but rather give back to the organisation to further serve its social causes in society. Thus civil society organisation can engage in business like operations, which benefits society rather than individuals.

2.2. Shared Interests, Purposes and Values

Civil society represents groups and organisations, which act independent of the state and market to

promote diverse interests in society (Jaysawal, 2013; Ndou, 2014). Civil society organisations promotes shared interests, purposes and values of collectives, in self-generating, self-supporting and state-independent organisations that allows its members to act collectively in the public sphere. Civil society as opposed to the state and the market, it represents cultural forces that emanates from societal values, beliefs and norms (Kanyinga, Mitullah & Njagi, 2007). This makes civil society to form associations to promote social justice, moral generation, education, human rights and cultural protection groups. While at the other hand the state represents political forces and the market economic forces.

2.3. Civil Society Institutions are Distinct from the State, Family and Market

Civil society though public in their activity, they are private in their institutional form, in that they are not public as government institutions. The distinction mainly is evident in their funding models. Civil society organisations' funding is mainly privately sourced, as opposed to public tax based funding for government institutions (Colhoun, 2011). Civil society organisations are self-governed, in the sense that they operate within a legal framework, independent of the state, and are under no interference by other organisations, including that of family and market except in contexts where the state funds activities of civil society (Gray, Bebbington & Collison, 2006). In

which case, civil society is required to account for such funding to the state. However the state would not interfere in the operations of the civil society organisation concerned. Further it is non-profit, in that there are no material benefit speculated to the founders of civil society organisations. Civil society as opposed from business (private sector) it does not engage in business operations to benefit individuals, but for the benefit and pursuit of social cause (Coung, 2008). Civil society organisations are organised society with institutional realities, which distinguish them from informal structures such as the gatherings, movements and families (Ancheier, 2000).

2.4. Blurred, Complex and Negotiated Boundaries with the State and Market

Civil society is regarded as promoting socially coordinated public action among their members and other citizens (Krishna, nd: 1). Cameron (2008: 1) contextualises civil society as the sphere of social interaction between the economy and the state. The edges of interface between the state, the market, the family and civil society are often blurred, complex and negotiated, due to the interactions and mutual influences among these sectors (Coung, 2008). The context in which civil society relates to the state and the market are more complex and sometimes difficult to notice. This is because most of problems today cannot be associated with one sector. For instance civil society's interest in advocacy

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for sustainable development and environmental protection is a central issue in modern business and policy practices. More other issues that mark the proliferation of civil society are important for both the public sector and the market, these include education, politics, policy and human rights.

2.5. Civil Society Embraces a Diversity of Spaces, Actors and Institutions

Civil society has been conceived as located in the space between the family, market and the state. In Cameron (2008) civil society is described as the space of collective public actions as well as the actors and institutions that populate such a space. As noted issues confronted by civil society cannot be subjected to one sector. However civil society activities are carried out in various settings, which affect varied organisational setups and players. Many civil society organisations are made of many institutional memberships, and individuals drawn from many sectors including the public sector, political society and economic society (Salamon, 2010; Low & Smith, 2013; Hassan, 2015). Civil society is now organised in dynamic and productive spaces, most notably the cyber space (Garratt, 2006; Ellison, Lampe & Steinfield, 2009; Clark, 2012). Internet aided interactions and dialogues have seen proliferation, accounting to advances in information and communication technologies.

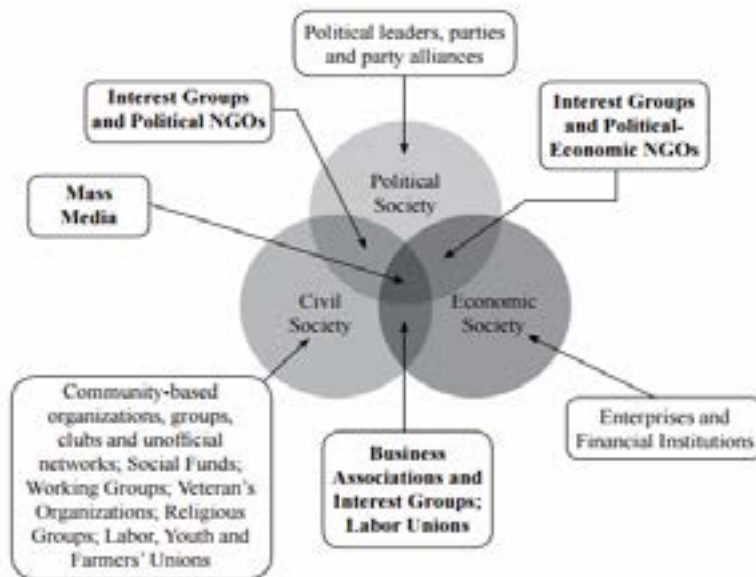## 2.6. Civil societies are often Populated by Organisations of May Forms and Purposes

Civil society is often recognised by its population. For instance there are a number of authors that cites civil society as the aggregate of a range of organised groups and institutions that are independent of the state, self-generating and self-reliant. Civil society is constituted of organised societies, possessing institutional reality (Anheier, 2000; Pekkanen, 2006; Edwards, 2009). In this case the populations or types of organisations that must be included or excluded in civil society must be clear. For instance civil society has been viewed as not seeking to win state control, power or positions, but persuades the state concessions, benefits, policy change, institutional reforms, redress, justice and accountability. In this regard civil society excludes all groups and individual who run for power in government office. Therefore political parties are excluded from civil society and form part of political society.

3. CONTEXTS OF STATE-CIVIL SOCIETY RELATIONS

Civil society is concerned with public rather than private ends. It is thus deferent from parochial society (Diamond, 2009: 8). Civil society also relates to the state in some way, which is blurred, negotiated and complex. In its relations to the state it does not seek to control over the state. Thus civil society does not seek to govern the polity as a whole (Diamond, 1997:

8). Coung (2008:16) differentiates between civil society, political society, economic society and institutions of the family. To explain the context of state-civil society relations, the *article* adopts Howards's (2003) model of defining civil society position in a social system.

Figure 1: A model to define civil society position in a social system

Source : Howard,2003: 38

From this framework Howard, displays the interface of three sectors, from which the diverse spaces and groups of civil society can be located (Cameron, 2008; Coung, 2008). This model provides a clear picture that civil society is the acts in between several spheres of society, depending on a particular interests, which ranges from social, political and economic (Biekart & Flower, 2009; Hassan; 2015). In order to classify therefore the approaches of state-civil society relations, on the basis of this framework, there is a need to identify the reasons for interactions. For instance a civil society that is found between civil society and political society or that which is found between economic society and political society. These former are interested in influence the state, in their institutional and social formation. The later instead is interested in influencing either government or the economic society in the affairs of the economy. Basically there are three positions that motivate the interface between the state and civil society. Which are discussed in the following:

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3.1 The Social Context of State-Civil society Relations

The basic assumption about civil society is that it emanates from the social behaviours that accumulate and preserve cooperative attitudes, social values and interests. It equips individuals with the necessary skills to understand their inadequacies, to learn to act collectively with others to achieve agreed objectives (Hearn, 2001; Brown & Jagadanadana, 2007; Calhoun, 2011). This provides the state with good citizens which require minimal state intervention (Wang & Young, 2006; Ataei &Enshaee, 2011; Zhang, Xue, Wang, Zhang & Gao, 2012). The state therefore is required to provide guidance and support for flourishing civil society, which does not compromise principles of good governance and democracy (Rau, 2006; Satterthwaite & Mitlin, 2013). In most cases it is the main objective of government to promote effective and inclusive governance, civil society therefore informs provides platforms for dialogue and continued social inquiry (Anheier, 2000; Habib, 2003; Biekart & Fowler, 2009). Government is the custodians of the social welfare of the people. Development of social policies that are embedded in the social, political and cultural contexts of society requires inclusion of practical and lived experiences of the society (Simmons, Dobbin & Garrett, 2007; Deci & Ryan, 2012). This context resides within grassroots organisations that gather the social values and norms of society and preserve them. Civil society is socially resourced to build social capital, from which political society can draw public leaders, who understand the social aspiration of society.

3.2 The Political Context of State-Civil Society Relations

Good governance of public affairs, emphases the importance of the extent to which governments programmes are directed by the society they are served to (Stoker, 1998; Gridle, 2007; Castell, 2008). Civil society in this case channels the voices of the poor and marginalised people in society. These ensure that the views of the poor are witnessed in the development, implementation and examination of the application of state policy. States that strives towards good governance improves its legitimacy through civil society's participation in decision making, as civil society is regarded as preservers of public interests (Arko-cobbah, 2006; Steffek & Nanz, 2008). Evidently civil society ensures strong transparency and effectiveness in all democratic processes, from elections to service delivery itself (Brown & Jagadanandana, 2007). At times civil society dose provide public services to communities, which are primary roles of government. Government can thus promote such services by funding civil societies act to supplement and complement public service.

3.3 The Economic Context of State-Civil Society Relations

A market economy cannot operate efficiently without civil society and the state for many reasons, including regulations of unfair competition, protection of society, collective labour bargaining, and consumer protection (just to mention a few). Transaction in any economic system requires the participation of good citizens and agreed mutual trust mong such citizens (Castells, 2008; Cuong, 2008; Somers & Wright, 200). For government to develop economic policy, it requires strong participation of both the economic society and civil society, to contextualise policy positions that balance the interest of both the sectors. In the recent developments, there is a growing concern about the contribution of industry to environmental challenges. This has manifested in the growth of policy and civil society organisations that are driven by the environment agenda (Allen, 1997; Edwards, 2009; Kean, 2013). State-civil society relations are critical in developing sustainable communities. Improving economic growth require a strong entrepreneurial culture, which can be cultivated from economic NGOs. Governments' ability to ensure an enabling environment for such kind of civil society, has far reaching benefit for citizens, which is the ultimate goal of government.

3.4 African State-Civil Society Relations

The African state-civil society relations present an interesting and yet complex context. Africa in general has been viewed by the world as largely under developed and lacking coherent governance systems (Ellis, 2007; Meagher, 2007; Obadare, 2011). Civil society reports shows growing hostility by states towards civil society and social cause. In order to ensure the achievement of the article's objectives, the article will engage contexts of state-civil society relations approaches, seeking aspects of state-civil society relations that can contribute insights to partnership towards the Africa Agenda 2063. There are clear cut context that characterises civil society as distinct from the state and the market as demonstrated in the earlier discussion of the article. However there are interfaces that have been remarkable about civil society and the state (Scholte, 2004; Finke, 2007; Calhoun, 2011). In most instances civil society arguments are placed that governments has a role to play in the creation of environment where civil society should flourish. In order to do so, government should interact with civil society, the market and other stakeholders to ensure that activities of every sphere of society are beneficial to the public in general. Recent literature of the context of state-civil society indicates emergence and unpredictable patterns (Moran & Elvin, 2009; Pahl-Wostl, 2009; Loorbach,

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2010; Ghosh, 2011). These are evident in the rage of public unrests over socio-political upheavals. The relations between the state and civil society in Africa present tensions and trials. Most are known of imbalances of power and privileges. Funding constrains continue to hamper civil society's performance. In many instances civil society is marked by international funding and influence, with less relevance to local communities.

4. AFRICA AGENDA 2063 AND COMPLEX GLOBALISATION CONTEXTS

As part of lessons learned from the review of past Pan-African plans, the African people through the African Union introduced an African Agenda 2063. In the Agenda 2063, the AU calls for mobilisation of the people and their ownership of continental programmes at the core. It promotes the principles of self-reliance and Africa financing its development; the importance of capable, inclusive and accountable states and institutions at all levels and spheres and holding the government and institutions for results (AU, 2015:1). In this Agenda, Africa rededicate itself to the enduring Pan African vision of "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena (Airhihenbuwa, 2006; Adogambe, 2008; James, 2012). In this views and contexts of Africa, it is well established that Africa is seeking a strategic role playing in the global political economy. Hence

the establishment of civic driven change is at the centre of the call for people and their ownership of development programmes in the continent. Civil society remains organisations at grassroots in which African states can set the Agenda for an integrated prosperous and peaceful Africa (Shivji, 2006a; Ellis, 2007; Young, 2007; Glasius, 2010). The value of civil society is increasingly recognised in international communities. Civil society continues to play a diplomatic role in conflict resolution and cooperation with other civil society across the globe.

At the centre of the Agenda 2063 are seven aspirations, which the continent is committed to act together and achieve (AU, 2015: 2). These aspirations are:

- A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development

- An integrated continent, politically united and base on the idea of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance

- An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law

- A peaceful and secure Africa

- An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics

- An Africa whose development

is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children

- Africa as a strong, united and influential global player and partner

In all these aspiration, a strong partnership between the state and civil society, can create progressive alliance, and be responsive to emerging community needs. The aspirations in their setting underpin the development agenda in the global arena presented in the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore a strong state-civil society relation has a potential of making Africa a strategic player in global issues. If Africa committedly engages in these aspirations, to unify its socio-political and economic discourses, it will be a dynamic force in the global political economy and decision-making.

5. STATE-CIVIL SOCIETY RELATIONS CONTEXTS FOR PROMOTING THE AGENDA 2063

In order to achieve the objectives of the Agenda 2063, governments of African states should organise themselves to implement such an agenda. This can be achieved only if conducive environments for dialogue and interactions between all sectors of society are provided (Shivji, 2006b; Rotberg, 2009). African state commitment to these aspirations and their achievements require strong governance principles, which are recognised by the

African community. Governance principles in Africa should be embedded in the idea of unity in Pen-Africanism (Carmichael, 2007; Adogamhe, 2008; Shijvi, 2009; Martin, 2012; Sherwood, 2012). This is to secure a governance context that recognises Africa is a unique and complex society, with its own cultures that does not compromise, human rights and their collective identity (Stoker, 1998; Shivji, 2006a; Young, 2007). The concept of governance remains critical as an approach of achieving agreed programmes, like the Agenda 2063. Contextualising contexts in which government and civil society interact, in the decision making and their implementations are critical for Africa today.

Governance as opposed to government signifies a change in the condition of ordered rule. Governance is concerned with the creation of conditions for ordered rule (government) and collective action (Civil society and the market). The outputs of governance are rather not deferent from those of government; it is rather the deference in the process (Rotberg, 2009; Bevir, 2011; Crook & Booth, 2011; Monga, 2012). The process of governance recognises the role of multiple stakeholders in decision making, implementation and evaluation, while government is in pursuit of public interests through the political society. In the case of government the state is dominant and their decisions are commonly state-centric. In governance political society, economic society and

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civil society interact to shape the behaviours of a minimal state (Makinda & Okumu, 2007; Kaufmann, Kraay & Mastruzzi, 2009; Monga, 2012). This is a context in which government works with organisations and institutions that represents contexts and lived expressions of the public. Governance creates a condition for states and civil society to recognise their joint responsibility to tackle socio-political and economic challenges of society. Governance is a proposition for what Stoker (1998:18) recorded as five propositions for governance as a theory. The propositions includes viewing governance as : 1) a set of institutions and actors that are drawn from but also beyond government; 2) Identifying the blurring boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues; 3) identifying the power dependence involved in the relationships between institutions involved in collective actions; 4) Autonomous self-governing networks; and 5) recognises the capacity to get things done which does not rest in the power of government command or use its authority. In this context, it is clear that state require some level of cooperation with civil society and the market to get programmes going.

5.1 Embedding the Africa Agenda 2063 in State-Civil Society Relations

In order for African states to develop strong governance position, it should develop governance contexts that will guide the participants on the role for promoting the

Africa Agenda 2063. Civil society as described in the above interacts with the state in various contexts that includes social, political and economic pursuits. The prevalent challenges of the continent are marked by multiplier effects, which demarcate them within various spheres (Yartey & Adjasi, 2007; Booth, 2012). In order to pursue the Agenda 2063, African sates need to create a conducive environment, allowing a free flow of relations between actors. This can be through establishing partnerships with civil society that promote principles of good governance (Arguden, 2011; Brinkerhoff, 2011). Civil society can be useful in shaping and monitoring the state and thereby promoting democracy and protecting human rights. Promotion of a vibrant and capable civil society to supplement African states in their developmental mandates, require established funding and support (Davarajan, Khemani & Walton, 2011; Scholte, 2011; Grindle, 2012; Van Rooy, 2012). Development of legal frameworks that guide civil society relations with the public and private sector is critical. This will also help reduce misuse of civil society by private individuals and capital. This should be done with clear intentions for the promotion the seven African aspiration outlined by the Agenda 2063

6. CONCLUSION

The aspirations outlined by the Agenda 2063, can only be achieve if African states involve communities in their governance.

Upholding principles of good governance that promote the view that government needs regulation and support from diverse forces of civil society. Governance as new approach of public administration is critical and needs to be conceptualised in the context of the African people. This is on the view that if African governance should be one which serves the interest of Africans, most notable within the contest of Pan-African views. Civil society, states and markets in Africa needs to reinvent themselves to fit such contexts of African governance embedded in the Agenda 2063. New multi-levels engagements and dialogues are needed to contextualise and steer new socio-political ideologies for a radical wake of a new social labs to facilitate the agenda of a unified civic driven Africa

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