

## **A Report on the Global Launch of the 2023 United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa's (OSAA) Flagship Report Titled "Solving Paradoxes of Africa's Development: Financing, Energy, and Food System".**

Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA), a UN agency, was established in 2003 with the mandate to enhance international support for Africa's development and security, through the Africa Dialogue Series (ADS). It is an advisory body that acts as a link between UN leadership, member states, and other stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations. It monitors the implementations of global commitments initiated in Africa and plays a pivotal role in shaping UN policies and mobilizing international cooperation to support the transformative visions outlined in Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 for Africa's advancement.

The report launched on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023 is also the result of such dialogues on Africa's development which frames the development narratives. OSAA's flagship report titled "Solving Paradoxes of Africa's Development: financing, energy, and food system" is a 100-page report that has three chapters. The initial chapter "The triple paradoxes of financing, energy, and food systems" focuses on the challenges faced by Africa in achieving sustainable development and how the continent that is rich in financial resources, has abundant energy resources and is rich in arable land is facing debt distress, inaccessibility to electricity, and food insecurity. The next chapter "Addressing the paradoxes through an integrated approach" talks about how the paradox be resolved using a systemic approach to connect the dots of problems, as one of the panelists said, these issues are inter-connected, and inter-dependent and cannot be tackled one by one but we need to have an integrated approach where agencies of public and private ownership work in collaboration with the government, global organizations working for the development of Africa and stakeholders, that is, the people of Africa. The report suggests that there is a need for enhanced fiscal and monetary policy and a need for enhanced revenue mobilization for effective domestic resource mobilization. According to the report, enhanced and effective taxation will help to generate additional revenue of \$70 billion which is 2.5% of the continent's GDP that is not collected due to redundant tax incentives.

The last chapter "The Role of Strong Institutions in Overcoming the Triple Paradoxes" talks about the necessity of replacing the extractive and dependent model of governance with an inclusive and independent model of governance, with a better and digitized Domestic Resource Management (DRM) system that works in collaboration with government, private entities and the stakeholders with better access to the real-time information.

The report was insightful and evolved fruitful discussion on the paradoxical condition of the resource-rich continent of Africa. And reflected on how the continent that produces precious resources is the last one to utilize them. Similarly pointed out by the ambassador of Cameroon, the international organization is trying to resolve issues of Africa in the presence of the limited representatives of African countries. And the valuable insight on Niger's currency convertibility issue which has roots in its colonial background, expressed by the Ambassador of Niger that "Niger is blessed with natural resources but France as the mediator takes most of its profit, as they trade in the currency Franc CFA. In which the uranium resource of Niger is sold by France to the other country and that uranium importing country pays France in Dollar or Pound currency that is converted into Franc CFA, and only 50% of the payment amount is received by Niger. Thus, it reflects upon the impact of the colonial past on the present of Africa.

To conclude, the report was informative, and enlightening, as it touched upon the socio-economic challenges that emerged from post-colonial time to the post-covid 19. The ideas raised

by African leaders also indicated the necessity of contextual study of the challenges of African countries separately, although they may have similar challenges such as debt burden, energy inaccessibility, and food insecurity. Yet these 54 countries have different conditions and challenges that cannot be resolved by using the 'one size fits all' approach. For instance, as asserted by the Ambassador of Niger, the enhanced taxation policy for effective revenue mobilization can be enforced in some African countries but countries like Somalia, Burundi, etc. will not have a positive impact, as people are already poor and cannot afford nutritious food and clean drinking water. Hence, it becomes crucial to develop an in-depth understanding of individual countries instead of generalizing them all by one hypothesis.

\*Views are personal.



Author: Ms. Smita is a Research Scholar at the Department of African Studies, University of Delhi, 110007.

[Smita.mphil@as.du.ac.in](mailto:Smita.mphil@as.du.ac.in)



Forwarded by: Dr. Manish Karmwar Faculty,  
Department of African Studies, University of Delhi, India, 110007.