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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: A REVIEW OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) fosters development. Sufficient and effective action by the corporate world has resulted in development. The African continent has however not experienced commendable economic development through CSR. In some situations, communities have been exposed to health risks and greater poverty as companies expropriate community resources and claim to practice CSR for development. This study systematically reviewed literature on CSR and development in Africa over the last 10 years to identify the themes, incentives and challenges in the practice of CSR. Good governance, economic incentives, contextualization of CSR action, appropriate and robust legal and institutional frameworks are essential for CSR to play a meaningful role in developing the continent. This has been hampered by CSR initiatives being uncoordinated and failing to be integrated in core functions of organizations. It is also necessary to contextualize CSR to the needs and environment of Africa. Governments ought to provide a facilitative environment to encourage CSR for development in terms of policy formulation and setting in place oversight bodies to monitor and coordinate CSR activity. Corporate establishments need to form partnerships to reduce the overall cost of CSR and impact greatly on the development. Countries need to encourage companies to disclose their policies and practice so that they are held accountable to governments and communities adjacent to their establishments.

Key words: *Corporate Social Responsibility, Developing countries, Sustainability*

INTRODUCTION

There is an increasing emphasis on the positive role business can play in development through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Commission for Africa 2005). Business associations such as the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) view businesses as having the ability to contribute to development. CSR is also perceived to be the “social Strand” to achieving sustainable development (Morimoto, Hope and Ash 2004). The extent to which CSR initiatives have succeeded or failed to bring about development has been the subject of many researchers in CSR. However, according to Hamman (2006), impediments to CSR in achieving development have not been clearly identified despite the enormous level of CSR activities in Africa. There is need to review and consolidate these research findings in literature in order to identify barriers inhibiting CSR in achieving development and also recommend means of overcoming the impediments to CSR's role as a means to development for Africa. By examining different strands of literature in Africa for the last 10 years, we argue that for CSR development initiatives to make any meaningful impact on development, they must be contextualized and respond to the needs of the target population. Further, CSR must work in partnership with communities and African governments for better coordination and accountability.

The definition of CSR is an important starting point bearing in mind that there is none that is universally agreed upon (Morimoto, Hope and Ash 2004). In literature though, the definitions of CSR incline towards two general assertions. In one CSR is seen as an ethical stance entailing “giving back to Society” and the other is where CSR is undertaken as a business strategy and is practiced to accomplish strategic business goals. (Wan, 2006, Moore, 2003, Goyder, 2003, Jones 2003, Lantos 2001 and 2002.). These definitions underlie the motivation of businesses to undertake CSR. Development on the other hand is a complex term and is sometimes viewed as human development and “a process of enlarging people’s choices” (UNDP, 1990). Encompassed in this “development” term would be the reduction of poverty and the improvement of health care, social welfare and educational opportunities which are main areas of focus in CSR as identified by GTZ 2009. It is therefore plausible to link CSR to development in Africa since the development challenges in Africa relate to “deepening poverty, high levels of unemployment and increasingly vulnerable livelihoods, high levels of urbanization, severe housing backlogs, lack of basic services, environmental degradation and the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases” (Hamman 2006). These problems have been the focus of CSR initiatives.

This paper examines the relationship between CSR theory and practice to effect development with the main objective of identifying the role of CSR in fostering development in Africa. This is achieved by identifying the key themes in CSR practice and proceeding to enlist the challenges that get in the way of achieving development through CSR. Arguably, different organizations get involved in CSR for varied reasons and incentives and these dictates the level to which these actions would foster development. We explore challenges faced in the implementation of CSR for development with an aim to inform policy formulation for stakeholders and governments in order to boost sustainable development in Africa.

Themes and Debates

One of the debates on CSR centers on the definition of the term. The theory and practice of CSR is riddled with misunderstandings as the definition of the concept denotes a myriad of meanings to organizations undertaking CSR. CSR is context-based and applies differently to organizations depending on which understanding they base their activities upon. Whatever the definition one subscribes to, CSR can be broadly taken to refer to the activities that serve the needs of appropriate stakeholders. This agrees with Hopkins’ (2003) definition that “CSR means treating the stakeholders of the firm ethically or in a responsible manner”. This definition combines both the ethical stance and the business strategy views. However, CSR actions have to be contextualized and encompass the needs and aspirations of the target population in order to give rise to development.

Mintzberg (1993) considers motivation for undertaking CSR activities in four broad forms. Firstly, CSR is practiced for its own sake and a company does not expect anything in return. Secondly, CSR is undertaken with the understanding that it pays whether tangibly or intangibly. Thirdly, CSR is practiced as a form of investment and finally CSR is undertaken in order to comply with expectations. These motivations are internally constructed and CSR will need much more external incentives to influence development. In regard to the practice of CSR as an investment, Foote et al (2010) agrees that CSR has a significant impact on the corporate performance.

The British Department for Trade and Industry differs from these arguments and would rather define CSR by what organizations do than what CSR is by defining it as management of an organization’s impact on the stakeholders and the society in which it operates (Hopkins 2007). This agrees with The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD, 2005) definition of CSR as “business commitment to contribute to sustainable development, working with their employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve their quality of life” which dwells on what organizations do.

Three themes stand out in Africa with regard to CSR discourse and could partly explain the failure of CSR in effecting development in Africa according to Idemudia (2011).

1. CSR agenda neither addresses issues like tax avoidance, unsustainable investment and poverty reduction nor does it attempt to address the structural and policy determinants of underdevelopment. Most companies interviewed by the GTZ in Kenya were of the opinion that the country lacked national and local guidelines towards ‘CSR strategy, policy and practices’ (GTZ, 2009)
2. CSR agenda universalizes a set of conditions that do not exist in Africa. Activities are controlled and dictated from a northern perspective disregarding the unique conditions faced by the African continent which are not represented in setting the CSR agenda. It is important that conditions unique to the African continent be identified in order for CSR to fit in the African context. This calls for contextualization of CSR agenda.

3. CSR ignores the big picture for the developing countries. The developmental levels of countries are different and CSR activities need to address specific needs of the country and the community that they serve.

There is thus a call for a south-centered CSR agenda that can help highlight and direct CSR activities to the needs of the continent by directly involving the African stakeholders in identifying and prioritizing the developmental needs of the communities. Moreover, developed countries are quite different from developing countries - which are rapidly expanding economically and therefore provide many business opportunities highly impacted by social and environmental crises, and face CSR agenda challenges that are unique from the developed countries (Arli and Lasmono 2010). Ironically, CSR actions in Africa have not enlisted target populations in redefining their needs.

Adeyuyi and Olowookere (2010) state four broad theories that summarize the application of CSR activity to development. These include instrumental theories, in which the corporation is seen only as an instrument for wealth creation, and its social activities are henceforth a means to achieve economic results; political theories, which concern themselves with the power of corporations in society and a responsible use of this power in the political arena; integrative theories, in which the corporation is focused on the satisfaction of social demands; and ethical theories, based on ethical responsibilities of corporations to society. In practice, each CSR theory presents four dimensions related to profits, political performance, social demands and ethical values (Garriga and Mele 2004). Although it can be argued that these factors of CSR cover the three areas of sustainable development: economic, social and the environment, CSR actions needs to embrace and be propelled by a genuine desire to improve the living conditions of target population who are also their clients.

Sustainable development although largely elusive was defined by the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Clugston and Calder, 1999). Thus sustainable development in three dimensions in which the environmental dimension provides the foundation, economic dimension provides the tool, and the social dimension gives the ultimate goal of discussions on sustainable development. It is under the social dimension that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is linked with sustainable development. This is because the voluntary contributions of corporations are done to create a better society where the needs of the society in which they make their profits are met. The environmental dimension is addressed in CSR initiatives that mitigate the impact of organizational activities on the environment and communities in which they operate. Admittedly, CSR benefits organizations in creating a health balance between profits and responsibility to the communities.

This is the approach taken by Cronje and Chenga (2009) as they examine sustainable social development in the South African mining sector. This approach steers away from looking at development using the modernization theory and blames the underdevelopment on dependency of the mining communities on the mining companies. Human-centered development is reiterated by Akpan (2006) when he considered the communities’ perspective of community development and established that they perceived community development as not just “projects” but “everything” they “cherish” and “everything that gave them a sense of worth as a community”. Akpan’s study found that “CSR practices in the communities were often driven by extreme economic expediency” illustrated by oil companies viewing communities around the oil company as squatters and therefore had no rights to demand protection against hazards caused by the corporate activities. The corporate organizations were found to “fragment communities and devalue the contributions of communities so that they save money by spending less in the provision of amenities”. This fragmentation was also used in the appointment of employees leaving other communities out. This implies that there is need for serious dialogue between target communities and organizations undertaking CSR to harmonize expectations. CSR actions must be grounded on a desire of improving standards of living and not just legitimizing expropriation of profits.

Incentives for investment in CSR

Cronje and Chenga (2009) cite government policy as a major incentive for CSR in South Africa. The government in South Africa had the following policies to guide the operations of mining companies which affect the corporations’ participation in CSR for sustainable development:

1. Organizations were required to increase the number of disadvantaged South Africans in management to 40% and also increase the women in mining to 10 %.
2. The South African government also required organizations to be involved in infrastructural development and poverty eradication projects in their area of operation.

The South African government had however not spelled out what this policy meant in practical terms and this was a major contributor to the gap between policy and practice. Companies may only have been involved in CSR for fear of losing licenses to operate. This in Hamman's (2006) view is the practice of CSR as a result of forces beyond the organizational boundary. DRC case presented a different picture on meeting conditionality set by governments on involving natives in the company management. In this case, 97% of the employees were Congolese but none of these were in senior management. The company was however offering training to Congolese engineers to take this position three years from then (Maria 2011). This would ensure sustainable development by empowering the natives with knowledge to continue in the mining industry. Arguably, even when enlisting local people in employment, deliberate efforts must be made to engage them in decision-making level and in jobs that bolster transfer of skills.

The government is presented as a key player in providing a suitable environment for practice of CSR. The governments in Africa have not facilitated the contribution of corporate companies in the process of development through CSR when compared with other countries in the developed world (Idemudia 2011). This calls for a rethink of government policies in Africa on CSR with an aim of creating an enabling environment for communities to get an equitable share from these actions. Hamman (2011) identified several ways in which the public sector can facilitate the practice of CSR for development and outlined several ways of doing so using a document sourced from Fox (2004) represented in the table below:

Governments' Role	Specific Activities to be enforced
Mandating	laws, regulations, and penalties and associated public sector institutions that relate to the control of some aspect of business investment or operations
Facilitating	setting clear overall policy frameworks and positions to guide business investment in corporate responsibility; development of non-binding guidance and labels or codes for application in the marketplace; laws and regulations that facilitate and incentivise business investments in corporate responsibility by mandating transparency or disclosure on various issues; tax incentives; investment in awareness raising and research; facilitating processes of stakeholder dialogue
Partnering	combining public resources with business to leverage complementary skills and resources to tackle issues within the corporate responsibility agenda – whether as participants, convenors, or catalysts
Endorsing	showing public political support for particular kinds of corporate responsibility practice in the marketplace, or for individual companies; endorsing specific metrics, indicators, guidelines or standards or award schemes, and 'leading by example', for instance through public procurement practices

Source: Fox (2004) adapted from Hamman (2011)

Okoye (2012) suggests that though CSR in general refers to business and society relationships, its content and targets need to be defined in context. The attempt to pass CSR laws hint at a need to concretize objectives particularly to link CSR to development. This can be done through frameworks which include the use of law in all its forms. The implication of this is that for CSR to work, there is need for governments to prepare a legal policy framework to guide and monitor CSR activity so that this results in sustainable development. On this, the WBCSD (2010) point out that business engagement is critical in achieving sustainable development and poverty alleviation. However, good governance, economic incentives and appropriate and robust legal and institutional framework conditions are essential for business to play a meaningful role.

There are attempts by African governments to adopt a structured approach to CSR by providing legislation. However, there is need for frameworks and concrete objectives for it to be actualized in an African context. Further the debate around the structuring of CSR activity in legal frameworks is paradoxical. CSR is meant to be voluntary yet developing legal frameworks would be mandating the organizations to carry out CSR as defined in the framework and hence robbing them the will to voluntarily participate in CSR. A clearer balance between voluntarism and legal obligations must be sought.

Ethics was also cited as another incentive to CSR with the argument that because economic transactions rely on social norms and values, it was important to adopt an ethical approach to business (Hamman 2003). A good reputation was considered a means to enhance companies' performance from the local project level, through improved community

and worker relations, right up to the international level through improved access to mining concessions and finances. Thus CSR was fundamentally about how social, environmental and ethical values were incorporated in the core business of a company- rather than add-on philanthropy. CSR was also driven by economic incentives as it had positive impacts on the profitability and competitiveness of an organization. Hamman (2003) in his critique of Friedman (1970) who opined that the sole purpose of business was making profits stated that CSR was good for profits and cited profit as an incentive for corporate organizations to engage in CSR.

Globalization and the increased demands and expectations on CSR were found to be another incentive. Corporate organizations were embracing CSR because of a global change in perception of the business roles from philanthropy and impact mitigation. CSR could be seen to have progressed from philanthropy and impact mitigation through community investment and eco-efficiency to social partnership. Globally, CSR was receiving greater focus attested by the many initiatives in place to address CSR. Among these were: UN's global Compact, European Commissions' CSR initiative and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and Business for Social Responsibility. A plethora of CSR principles and reporting guidelines have been established such as the global reporting initiative. This motivates organizations to be involved in CSR in order to be ranked.

Globally, businesses wanted to be seen to be taking on a more responsible and interactive role in social transformation and sustainable development. However responding to this incentive presented companies with significant challenges, as well as opportunities. Companies ignoring these developments risked losing their license to operate and their international competitiveness.

Challenges of CSR

Integration and coordination were the biggest challenge, given that implementing the various sustainable development policies was too big for any one individual organization. There was need to find out how best to integrate, and also identify when it was beneficial for organizations to operate in parallel. Within the organizations, it was found that departments lacked coordination, there were multiple and overlapping reporting and performance management systems, and limited capacity in management and implementation of CSR (Hamman 2006). Corporate organizations needed to be aware of initiatives surrounding CSR. They needed to develop corporate policy on CSR supported by top management. Such policies should have a set of principles and policies. They should have a set of targets linked to measurable performance indicators. There should be clear management, accounting and reporting structure to ensure ongoing improvement in the implementation of the policy at site level. There was however criticism that there was excessive emphasis on reporting and too little on performance, yet it was in performance that the challenges of CSR lie. In Nigeria for instance, Shell's failure was attributed to the following three causes; failure to involve the beneficiaries of CSR, lack of human resource, and failure to integrate CSR initiatives into a larger development plan (Adewuyi and Olowookere 2010).

Despite South African business society having come together and made three declarations to guide their business and role in CSR, organizations faced a number of constraints. The declarations included adherence to principles of good governance, commitment to environmental sustainability, upholding positive stakeholder relationships, supporting universal human rights, fighting corruption and establishing effective and transparent accounting systems. The constraints were that the content of these declarations were not specific and lacked public sensitization across the continent. Hence, the implementation of the guidelines had been limited (Hamman and Cleene 2005).

CSR initiatives' failure was attributable to culture shock where most communities around mines were rural communities which made them not to respond effectively to the development changes (Cronje and Chenga 2009). This was as a result of the "occupational needs requirements and the rapid change from agricultural society to a cash dependent one". Cronje and Chenga (2009) labeled this a problem of acculturation. Hamman (2003) also opined that cultural differences were at the heart of company community conflicts and had given rise to deep divisions within communities and companies. This scenario calls for joint analysis of needs and prioritizing actions.

The "communities' voice" was another challenge in terms of who would speak on behalf of the community to get the community's consent and whether these people represented the communities view or their own interests. The communities lacked the "media and public concern... an organized civil movement with enough finance and commitment and an adequate level of competence and the genuine commitment of all the parties to the relationship process". Communication was yet another challenge cited in the articles as responsible for failure in CSR initiatives.

The mining corporations required a communication strategy to enable communication between the community, government and other stakeholders.

Ignorance on the part of communities surrounding copper mines in the DRC frustrated CSR efforts to shield them from the negative environmental effects of copper mining. For instance, a polyethylene basin had been built to store the acids and solid wastes used to stop pollution of local aquifers yet some of the natives would steal bits of polyethylene at night to roof their huts, unaware of the damage they were causing (Maria 2011). These calls for sensitization to enable communities' understand and accept CSR initiatives meant to shield them from negative environmental impact

Political power relationships were cited as causes of CSR project failure. Mining companies were forced to get skilled labor from without and the white skilled workers felt their job security would be jeopardized if the locals got involved and trained. The whites thus imposed a system of "colour bar banning blacks from settling permanently in the mining towns". The mining corporations were seen to wield more power than the governments of the countries in which they operated. This placed the local communities in awkward position of vulnerability when negotiations were required. The same was reiterated by Hamann (2003) who stated that "in the context of globalization, the power of nation states is widely perceived to be diminishing relative to that of big companies in the wake of technological developments and global trade connections that create huge companies and government policies that often decrease the extent to which companies are regulated". This lack of regulation and the desire to maximize profits discourages the multinational companies from incurring the costs of training locals to take up key positions in the organizations.

Inability to prioritize development projects was found to be another challenge. Hamman (2006) opined that the development projects needed to be prioritized from the communities view on what they felt was urgent. The communities viewed the mining corporations as responsible for community development yet review of literature showed that the responsibility lied "between government, mining corporations and the communities". It was supposed to be in collaboration with all stakeholders. Pasco-font (2001) opined that there was need to have a clear split on who was responsible.

A lack of integration into core business was apparent in the manner in which some companies called themselves good corporate citizens, with reference to their education and health programmes, while at the same time continuing to neglect some of the negative consequences of their core business activities. (Hamman 2006). The lack of knowledge about communities obscured development because CSR initiatives that were implemented may have not been tailored to meet the community needs. Marginalization was found to be a major factor contributing to a lack of knowledge about the communities. This led to cutting out of traditions and connections with them. This was predominant in the mining communities and resulted in poor identification of community needs and implementation of CSR projects. According to Kambalame and Cleene (2006) some of the

Challenges were company related such as:

- i. Perceived cost involved in implementing CSR programmes
- ii. Lack of expertise on CSR within the organizations
- iii. Problem of aligning CSR strategy with core business practice

Consequences of CSR

According to Sharp(2006) "Contributors to the recent discussions in international affairs (2005) were unanimous in their judgment that CSR in its current form did not meet the development goals spelt out in 2000 in the United Nations' Global Compact" (Kuper, 2004). However, Sharp held the opinion that CSR benefits were unpredictable. CSR may have unintended consequence of resistance to development because development involved disrupting the lives of millions of people. Stakeholders and host communities were to be treated differently from those who had no claim of involvement in particular interventions. CSR was also capable of delivering a variety of benefits in unpredictable ways.

Akpan (2006) is of the opinion that when business corporations are allowed to define developmental needs of a people, instead of the government, CSR takes a "dysfunctional character". CSR appeared to cause psychological dependence on multinational companies. This was a serious impediment to sustainable development. In Maria's (2011) view beneficiaries of a public service must contribute to its funding. Otherwise, historically rooted dependence on paternalistic mining companies would be perpetuated and the communities surrounding such mines cannot sustain the

development initiated after the exit of the multinational companies. Execution of CSR actions must be clearly thought out and linked to government programs for fostering sustainability.

METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the research design undertaken to write this paper and gives the criteria for selection of the articles considered. A brief description is given for the process used to identify the themes and challenges in implementing CSR for development in Africa.

A literature review was conducted on journal articles that contain the key words: Corporate Social Responsibility, Development, developing countries, as well as sustainable development and Africa. This literature was then examined to identify the key themes, the main gaps, and areas where future work could usefully be undertaken in CSR. A particular emphasis was on the incentives and challenges encountered in CSR initiatives and responses to them. The article is descriptive since descriptive studies are used to document the phenomenon of interest in the real situation (Marshall and Rossman 1995) and the main objective was to relate the theory to practice of CSR in Africa. The paper examined the debates, identified the general discourse in CSR in Africa and analyzed these based on what the articles communicated relative to the theory of CSR. The discussions and conclusions are aimed at linking CSR to development.

Selection of the articles for analysis was purposive to represent CSR activity across regions in Africa. Though subjective, this non-probability method of sampling has been applied in qualitative researches to obtain samples that represent the population (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996). It is however important to note that literature on CSR in Africa is limited and skewed to South Africa (Idemudia 2011). Other articles were selected to enable an objective analysis CSR by providing theory and definitions on which the analysis was done.

Findings were classified under the objectives of the study and efforts were made to summarize the content of the articles considered. The discussions stemmed from the theory to identify the extent to which it meets practice and a linkage was drawn to achievement of sustainable development in Africa. This was done in line with the debates on contemporary issues pertaining to the practice of CSR as highlighted in the literature review.

DISCUSSION

CSR projects are capitalist driven and like Milton Friedman (1970) argued the “social responsibility of business is to increase profits. There is therefore no link between philanthropy and development. Thus, CSR projects are bound to fail in addressing the issue of development more so eradicating poverty. Newell (2005) rightly remarked that “most CSR initiatives are not intended to tackle the question of poverty and exclusion. They aim at less ambitious goals of performance enhancement and image management”. The main question is whether CSR is systematically managing the corporate image or tackling poverty. If CSR is to be embraced as a development tool, then a different narrative that leverages the benefits to communities concerned needs to be pursued. Discourse on development intervention entitlement is ubiquitous. There is debate on who the beneficiaries of CSR are: stakeholders or the community “whose entitlement stems from the fact that they are directly affected by or in some way involved in the core business of the corporations concerned” (Sharp 2006). In this light CSR limits what can be expected of corporations in development or in fighting poverty. It focuses on those who possess something or some characteristic that can be exploited by the corporation. Those who possess seem to be the ones entitled to receive some development in return. This limits the extent to which CSR can bring about development to the majority of citizens in a country. Interests of CSR actions must be clarified for any meaningful development to take place.

In the same level CSR is criticized as “largely driven by the concerns and priorities of western countries and therefore tends to be insensitive to local priorities as well as inadvertently harm prospects for sustainable livelihood in developing Countries” (Idemudia 2011). The ability of CSR therefore to spark economic growth in Africa is pegged on the priorities of the multinational companies and depends on the exploitable resources a community has. The CSR activities that they implement may not be commensurate with the benefits that they derive from the community resources and can therefore be argued that CSR leaves the communities worse than they found them. CSR may therefore be seen as a cover for exploiting the continent that has no capacity to effectively use its resources. Consequently, there is need to re-evaluate the motivations of CSR if target communities are to benefit.

The stakeholders discourse goes further and has the effect of creating hostility amongst the communities. There is a desperate scramble among communities for resources channeled through CSR initiatives. This creates hostilities

between benefiting communities and their surrounding communities. There is need for genuine discussions on equitable distribution of resources according to needs. The states need to intervene by ensuring that development brought through CSR is replicated countrywide. The intentions of CSR appear to be grounded on image management and to woo public opinion and not poverty reduction.

The tendency for oil operating companies in Nigeria to prioritize social investments in social infrastructure provision, such as roads, hospitals and community centres (that is, micro-level CSR issues) in their community development efforts, often overshadows the real problems they are causing such as environmental degradation, corruption, lack of accountability and declining manufacturing and agricultural sector production. Unfortunately, it is these macro-CSR issues that are critical for community development and poverty reduction in local communities in Niger Delta.

Partnership between companies, the government and the civil society were cited as a more efficient and effective way for companies to contribute to sustainable Development. (Business Partners for development, 2002). They were a means of providing quality as opposed to quantity because of “complimentary core competencies”. In Malawi, CSR provided a platform for stakeholders to come together to manage Malawi’s supply and value chains so as to improve livelihoods (Kambalame and Cleene 2006).

The following were listed by Kambalame and Cleene (2006) as benefits of partnerships:

1. *Relationships between all role players would be improved with high levels of trust and better channels of communication.*
2. *There would be a high developmental impact, in terms of tangible results such as infrastructure provision, training or land access, with comparatively low costs for all role players*
3. *Due to increased participation in the development process and higher levels of skill development, local communities would be less dependent on the mining companies.*
4. *The company’s reputation would be enhanced at the local, national and international level resulting from tangible development benefits and improved community relations.*

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CSR actions are being implemented in various countries in Africa with the aim of boosting development. However, it is still debatable whether CSR activities are genuinely bolstering development because of underlying motivations by corporations to participate in CSR. These range from maintaining good public opinion, providing a conducive environment to expropriate resources and profits to improving standards of target population. There has not been a genuine dialogue between all stakeholders and communities involved in CSR to prioritize actions and link them to development. It is incumbent upon the governments to play a leadership role in order to safeguard rights and interests of communities. To this end, we recommend that:

1. The African leaders and organizations operating in Africa need to adopt a “south-centered” CSR agenda. Idemudia (2011) argues that CSR ought to be contextualized and in Africa the values of ‘Ubuntu’ are of essence. This agenda should be one that articulates and promotes aspirations of the South.
2. The governments in Africa need to develop Africa’s CSR policy frameworks and the build institutional and technical capacity to govern CSR activities. Local priorities are often not reflected in the CSR policies and practices. This should be linked with research to address the complex relationships that link CSR to development. The emphasis should be on contextual factors (Social, economic, cultural and political), the dynamic stakeholder relationships, and responsibilities and how they mediate CSR contribution to development.
3. The governments should mandate disclosure on companies’ policies and practices with regard to CSR. Such regulations exist in some European countries, including the United Kingdom and France. This would facilitate awareness-raising among a broad spectrum of companies and provide self-imposed benchmarks against which companies’ performance could be monitored by a range of stakeholders. (Hamman 2006). Hamman and Cleene (2005) also advocate for an inclusive 'stakeholder approach' which requires that 'every company reports at least annually on the nature and extent of its social, transformation, ethical, safety, health, and environmental management policies and practices'.
4. Partnerships in CSR projects between governments, civil society, the private sector and organizations should be formed to synergize. This will also promote transparency and accountability among all stakeholders in development.

5. Corporations should initiate genuine dialogue with communities and civil society organizations as well as take into consideration the local context in order to narrow the differences and harmonize development objectives before implementing CSR actions. Community input and interests must be safeguarded at all times in the design and implementation of CSR activities and the government should play an arbitration role in case of conflicts.

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