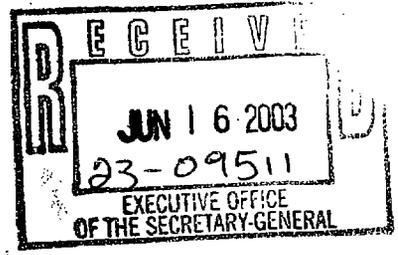


Via Mr. Gambari

Vip "K"



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C/o UNDP - Zambia
Lusaka - Zambia

Fax: (260-1) 25-12-01

13 January 2003

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Dear Mr. Secretary General,

May I begin by extending Greetings to you and your family for the New Year and God's Blessings and guidance to you as you carry out your responsibilities of the World Body at this critical juncture in its history.

I am writing in my personal capacity, through Professor Gambari, requesting you to please do me the honour of doing the Foreword for the Book that I am writing, entitled "Think Pieces, Concept, Papers Development Initiatives and Publications".

Attached, please see a Brief on what the Book is about. I have seen you Foreward to the book of paintings by the Jamaican Master Pinter, Barrington Watson, "the PAN-Africanists" and have been inspired by what you said then." In the next century, a new generation of men and women of African descent must carry the struggle further still, into a new era when the hopes and aspirations of their leaders will be realized once and for all. I believe that this book is part of "carrying the struggle further", as will be evident from its contents.

H.E. Kofi Annan
Secretary General of the United Nations
New York

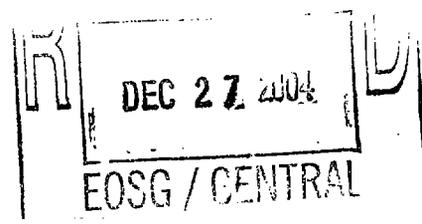
Cc: Professor Ibrahima Gambari
Under Secretary General and
Special Advisor of Africa
Department of Political affairs
United Nations
New York

Mr Secretary General, I trust that I can look forward to your positive response.

Yours sincerely

Olubanke King-Akerele

Filipino
A.K.



Dedication

This book is dedicated to a great woman who was amongst those who had a profound impact on my professional life – the late Danielle de St. Jore, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Environment and Economic Planning, of the Seychelles.

The late Danielle de St. Jore-----

Proceeds from the sale of this book will go to the establishment of a fund, the idea of which was initiated some years ago with-----

**THINK PIECES, CONCEPT PAPERS, DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES
AND
PUBLICATIONS**

*~ A Glimpse into the
Professional Life of an
African Woman Development Practitioner ~*

By

*Olubanke King-Akerele
January 2003*

PREFACE

This book contains a series of writings by an African Woman Development Practitioner over her professional career – both in her home country Liberia, at the National level, and in International Development.

After a brief, but nevertheless insightful biographical sketch, the reader arrives at the heart of the book, consisting of a number of substantive papers, comprising “Think Pieces”; Concept Papers of Ideas or Visions for practical implementation.

Very pragmatic in its approach, the papers have, in fact, been operationalized as evident in the section on Development Initiatives – herein lies the uniqueness of the publication. The book essentially demonstrates what can be termed “Walking the Talk”. It spans two continents – Africa and South East Asia, from which lessons have been applied to Africa and encapsulates some 30 years of “hands on” development experience.

Then there are actual publications and “Think Pieces” that span a variety of subjects from “Women in Development” to *Capital Flight; the Brain Drain*, to “regional integration” to “Africa and globalization”. In its presentation, it reflects a woman of vision; pragmatism and action – It demonstrates a professional life in the service of her people, “the African People”, and a commitment to Africa; a fundamental requirement for the upliftment of the African Continent if, as she argues in her article “Positioning Africa in the Global Space” published in early 1998 in the CODESRIA Bulletin:

“.....as we grapple with globalization and its full implications; as we move into the Twenty-First Century, Africa must, “Create its space” and “hold that territory; defining at the same time, its “outer boundaries” if we are to participate in globalization, we need to be strategically positioned to be effective players. But, above all, we need to be aware of wherein lies Africa’s true interest or others will define and determine those interests.”

And this, four years before NEPAD.

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2. "An exercise in the Integration of Women into the Development of Plan of Zambia" in **Planning for Women in Rural Development** – A Sourcebook for the Caribbean, 1982".
3. Paper on "Arresting Capital Flight" – A UNDP contribution to the problem of Resource Mobilisation for Development purposes in Africa (1991)".
4. Publication on "Positioning Africa in the Global Space" – Reflections of an African Woman in **CODESRIA** Bulletin No. 1 1998. Special issue on Africa in the 21st century.
5. A "**Think Piece**" on the **Growth Triangles** with lessons for Africa (1998). It is these ideas that have been operationalised as the first application and adaptation of the Growth Triangle concept from Asia to Africa, in the form of Zambia-Malawi-Mozambique Growth Triangle (ZMM-GT). In West Africa, Senegal, Guinea and Mali have already undertaken preliminary work for a Growth Triangle.
6. Design of a **Programme for Innovative Cooperation Among the South (PICAS)** in 1999, that captured results of learning experiences from a 4-month sabbatical in South-East Asia and, subsequently, became operational with UNDP assistance bringing on board the Governments of Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique and their respective private sector as well as those from Asia. NGOs/civil society, academia "Think-Tanks" in Africa and Asia: the ECA: the EU and USAID.
7. King-Akerele, Catherine Mwanamwambwa, Nkonde and Jamo, "Growth Triangles and their Potential for the IOR-ARC Region in **Trade and Investment: Issues in the Indian Ocean Rim**, edited by J. Mahender Reddy, Sterling Publishers, Pvt. Limited, 2000.

PART I:

~ The Person

Her Profile

And

Bio-data ~

8 January 2003

**PROFILE OF
OLUBANKE Y. KING-AKERELE**

Both, my interest in development and my subsequent career in this field dates back to my early days at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria in the mid-sixties, during my studies in Economics. Completing my undergraduate studies in Economics at Brandeis University in Massachusetts, in the USA, and following graduate work in Economics of Education at Columbia University and subsequently in Manpower Economics at Northeastern University in Boston, Mass., I returned to my country Liberia, as Senior Planning Economist at the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs.

As I look back at my professional development, I can identify three major phases:

- first - my early career with my own Government at the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs (1968/69, 1975-80);

- second - my period with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) 1982 – 1989;

- third - work with UNDP first as Deputy Resident Representative Senegal (1989-1991) and then as Resident Representative in Mauritius and Seychelles (1991-94); through a number of other UN system assignments, including UNIDO (1994-1996) and then back with UNDP (1996-2003).

Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, Liberia (1968/69 and 1975-1980)

The time spent as Planning Economist in Liberia was an exciting and challenging period for me. Professionally, I assisted with the development of the country's national development plan; set up the Social Planning Division, with guidance of an ECA Expert, Dr. Peter Omari; headed the Manpower Planning Division of the Ministry and played a key role, as national counterpart to a UNDP/ILO Adviser, Mr. A.N. Ambo, in the preparatory work and actual implementation of the first ever National Social Security and Welfare scheme in Liberia. Subsequently, I became Deputy Director (1979-1980) of the National Social Security and Welfare Corporation, established to implement the programme.

During that period, I also engaged in consultancies on Women in Development for the international system resulting in the publication of three of my studies by the Africa Training and Research Centre for Women of the Economic Commission for Africa namely, "Traditional Palm Oil Processing – Woman's Role and the Application of Appropriate Technology" in Sierra Leone, Cameroon and Ivory Coast; "Women Workers in Ghana, Kenya and Zambia" and "Women and the Fishing Industry in Liberia" with a comparative perspective from Ghana.

The work in Liberia was also pace-setting. I was one of a group of young professionals working in close association with the Harvard Advisory Team of the Ministry. I covered the entire country at three different periods, notwithstanding the rough terrain, in the course of fulfilling my duties. Not only could one see the results, which is what mattered, but it provided an opportunity to become acquainted firsthand with my country's problems and participate in finding solutions to them, including a certain amount of political activism, which will be detailed in an upcoming publication entitled "The Grooming of an African Woman Development Practitioner and a modern day Pan-Africanist."

I also became interested in Human Rights during this period and began studying Law part time during the evenings at the University of Liberia, completing the first year of the three-year LLB programme in 1981. Indeed, I was one of four young professionals who formulated a Petition and submitted it to the Legislature of the Government of Liberia, challenging the Legislature for the first time ever in the history of the country, when the Government removed through a Joint Resolution of both House and Senate, the first woman judge Emma Shannon Walser, from the Bench, because she had the courage to call on Government, viz. the issuance of a writ of Habeas Corpus, to show cause for the arrest of opposition leaders in the wake of the Rice Riots in 1979 in Liberia – the precursor to the 1980 coup d'etat.

Indeed, this was a period when Senior Liberian Women Officials who occupied key roles in the Government, and were known for their independence; courage; intellectual fibre and action served as my mentors and models. As such they influenced my development tremendously. These included individuals such as Mary Antoinette Brown Sherman, President of the University of Liberia; Judge Emma Shannon Walser, first Woman Judge in the Liberian Supreme Court; and Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, then Deputy and subsequently Minister of Finance; twice Opposition Presidential candidate, challenging the military dictator Samuel Doe, for which cause she was to be imprisoned, and later the warlord Charles Taylor. Highly regarded as an investment banker and finance expert internationally, Ms Johnson-Sirleaf was later to serve as my Boss, as Director of UNDP's Regional Bureau for Africa and Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations.

United Nations Development Fund for Women (1982-1989)

On joining the United Nations in 1982, I first worked as Programme Management Officer and then as Deputy Director of UNIFEM and Head of its Africa Programme. I worked with a most fascinating and committed woman – Dr. Margaret Snyder, UNIFEM's first Director. Indeed, I would say, a woman who made UNIFEM by the sheer **strength** of her commitment to **The Cause**, of Women in Development dating back

to the First UN Conference on Women in Mexico, when the concept of a Fund, initially known as the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Women was born, in 1979. It was not easy, I can assure you. If anyone deserves a star – she does! She also had tremendous experience in East Africa, having earned her Ph.D from University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. From her I learnt the significance of consultations and learnt that “one has to make things happen”, that UN Resolutions for example, just do not happen.

We were only two professionals for the longest. As such, my responsibilities were worldwide, with a dynamic team of women professionals from all over the globe serving as consultants joined us in creating UNIFEM. Among those were the late Danielle Bazin from Haiti who was at ECA and who contributed significantly to the evolution of women in development in Africa as one of the pioneers in the Field; Misrak Elias from Ethiopia (currently UNICEF Representative in Jordan) Elizabeth Lwanga from Uganda (currently UNDP Resident Representative for Swaziland); Jacqueline Kizerbo from Burkina Faso to whom, highest tribute is due, and, who opened UNIFEM's first Regional Office in Senegal. She played a critical role in the pioneering work of UNIFEM's mainstream initiatives that began in Africa, starting with the first efforts at the Chad Round Table Conference; from ECLAC there was Vivian Mota of Dominican Republic; Irene Santiago from Philippines; Mariama Djibo from Niger; Nana Apeadu from Ghana who pioneered UNIFEM's work with Refugees, Peace and Human Rights; Ruth Engo of Cameroon who assured UNIFEM's contribution to the African Recovery Programme during the Famine in the Horn of Africa in the late '80s; Thelma Awori from Uganda (former UNDP's RBA Director); Martha Cabal from Colombia, who headed the LAC Section of UNIFEM, and Thoraya Obaid of ESCWA (currently Executive Director of UNFPA).

This was also the period that saw me serve as the secretary to the UN General Assembly's Consultative Committee on the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) comprising representation of five regional groupings that constituted the decision making body of the Fund. It also saw the transformation of the Fund; the struggle for its final movement out of the UN Secretariat, as part of the Division for

Advancement of Women based in Vienna and the negotiations with UNDP for associate status with UNDP – A negotiation in which I was an active participant; the conceptualisation and pioneering work of UNIFEM in design of its mainstreaming strategy for incorporating women in broader development programmes, recognising the centrality of women to the development process, led by Margaret Snyder, myself and the team of consultants referred to earlier; a new UNIFEM mandate emphasising both support to women specific projects and the mainstreaming dimension that was, in fact, endorsed at the Nairobi World Conference on Women in 1985, a full ten years or so before the Beijing World Conference in 1995 adopted the process of mainstreaming thereby bringing an added dimension to development work. My paper on “An Exercise in the integration of Women into the Development Plan of Zambia” presented at ESAMI, Arusha, Tanzania in 1981, speaks to this issue.

We also brought on technical specialist to UNIFEM – Mariyln Carr from ITG in London and from Ethiopia, Tecki Gebre-Medhin, (a former project Director in Swaziland) to promote revolving loan funds (today’s micro credit) programmes of the Fund. Those were ground breaking times as regards innovations. We started UNIFEM’s offices in Senegal, Mexico and, for the SADC region in Harare, Zimbabwe. Indeed, we were honoured to have played a major role in the development of UNIFEM having helped to lay the foundations of the Fund under Margaret Snyder, its first Director, and subsequently played an important role in assisting its second Director Sharon Capeling-Alakija (currently Executive Secretary of the UN Volunteers Programme), in her introduction to and work in the UN System.

Finally we coordinated the evaluation of UNIFEM’s programmes for the 1985 World Conference in Nairobi on Women at which the formidable and now late Dame Nita Barrow of Barbados was the Convenor of the NGO’s Forum. Dame Nita was to prove yet another influence on me through a subsequent interaction during her service as Permanent Representative of her country to the United Nations when she chaired the initiative to honour the first African Woman President of the UN General Assembly, H.E. Angèle Brooks, Liberia’s Ambassador to the United Nations.

UNDP (1989 – present)

The third phase in my career began in 1989, when I became a part of UNDP's field presence. This was to prove yet another challenge. My experience both in Senegal, where I served as Deputy Resident Representative (1989-1991) and Mauritius and Seychelles (1994-1996) proved determinant. The critical role of the UN field presence was driven home.

There was both the development and political aspects of that role. We recall arriving in Senegal in the aftermath of the 1989 clashes between Senegalese and Mauritians and the bloodshed that was involved, while UNDP's programmes were to contribute to rebuilding of relationships. How well I recall the "Blue Sheeting" along the borders of Senegal – Mauritanian signifying the UNHCR refugee camps; then there was the problem of the Casamance separatist movement in Southern Senegal and the charges of Human Rights violations against Senegal in the General Assembly – An issue which we were directly associated with, in defense of the government through our work with the then Minister of Internal Affairs, Famara Sagna. An opinion submitted on the matter by myself was actually quoted in the General Assembly Debate on the matter.

In the Indian Ocean, we were able to participate in some dynamic and successful economies, as Resident Representative for Mauritius and Seychelles. The synergies resulting from working together in Mauritius with new partners (like academia, the private sector, the Rotary, the *Jeune Chambre Economique* and the NGOs) in the delivery of UNDP's technical assistance proved both rewarding and catalytic. We contributed to putting in place some very exciting initiatives – many of which are continuing today. My period of service saw the initiation of the Mauritius Vision 2020 and UNDP's support thereto, the first in Africa, thanks to the commitment of the Bureau's Director Ms. Johnson-Sirleaf and support of the Deputy, Ms. Anne Forrester, African American, former US Ambassador to Mali and several times UNDP Resident Representative to Lesotho and Ghana – and a true daughter of the continent, one who was deeply committed to Africa; the Mauritius Education Sector Master Plan; as well as the introduction of and initiation

of the Model UN Programme and the Otto Essien Young Professionals Training Programme which we spearheaded and is highlighted in this book.

For Seychelles, there was the Donor's Consultative Meeting; the Environment Programme and the negotiations for the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, as well as innovative TCDC's programmes between Senegal and Seychelles; between Turkey and Seychelles were amongst highlights of my tour of duty. But most memorable of all was working with the indomitable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Economic Planning and Environment, the late Danielle de St. Jorre, to whom this book is dedicated. How well do we recall her commitment to the **Cause** of small Island developing states and their need for special considerations and of course, her champion, of the promotion of the "Creole Festivale" which remains renowned, worldwide.

UNIDO (1994-1996)

On secondment to UNIDO from UNDP, serving at one of the highest professional posts in the system at the D-2 level and the most Senior African at UNIDO, I was one of eight Managing Directors, at the second rung of management in charge of Country Strategy and Programme Development Division (CSPD). This was a major Division of UNIDO, with responsibilities for developing the Organization's regional and country support strategies and for monitoring the status of technical cooperation and other services. Regional programmes encompassed Africa, Arab countries, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean. Cooperating with implementing divisions, CSPD designed integrated service programmes, ensuring that due consideration was given to the specific needs of the least developed countries (LDCs) and the integration of women in industrial development. The Division was also responsible for establishing and maintaining a quality management system for UNIDO services. It coordinated field representation and served as the focal point in UNIDO for matters related to UNDP programmes and UNIDO Country Directors (UCDs).

That period saw enhanced and new relationships between UNDP and UNIDO and the establishment of relationships with Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the MERCUSOR countries and UNIDO, as well as initiation of efforts to attract South Africa to join UNIDO. It also was one that saw major reforms implemented at UNIDO. That experience will be documented further elsewhere in the earlier mentioned upcoming publication on the grooming of an African Woman Development Practitioner but here I wish to simply pay tribute to Nancy da Costa, my Assistant who contributed greatly to my work there by her unwavering support.

Thus, the net results was an extraordinary broadening of my professional exposure, involving chairing Joint Committees between UNIDO and the former Soviet Union countries of the CIS; between North Korea and Vietnam and UNIDO; between Eastern European countries and UNIDO. My keen interest in South-South cooperation can be said to date back to that period.

Back to UNDP in 1996, as Chief of Eastern and Southern Africa Division of the Regional Bureau of Africa in New York, I had oversight responsibilities for 14 UNDP Country Offices – namely, Ethiopia, Eritrea; Uganda; Kenya; Cameroon; CAR; Equatorial Guinea; Chad; Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe; Rwanda, Burundi; Congo DRC then Zaire; Congo (Brazzaville). The team supporting me as Division Chief deserves high recognition namely – Eric Kashambuzi (currently with External Relations at UNDP headquarters) of Uganda, and a prolific writer/publisher on Development in Africa; Gbaranga Gasarabwe of DRC (now Resident Representative in Djibouti); Modibo Toure of Mali (now Resident Representative in Chad) and Ibrahima Djibo, (now DRR in Senegal). Together, we pioneered and advanced the DEX modality in Rwanda, introducing negotiating skills training from Mauritius to the Government officials of Rwanda at the highest levels.

Of significance during this period was backstopping efforts by UNDP to support the reconciliation processes in Central African Republic (CAR) with the assistance of then former military leader, of Mali, H.E. Tumi Toure (currently President of Mali),

which development earned UNDP positive acclamation in the UN Security Council. Tribute is due to my late colleague from Senegal and Resident Representative to (CAR) at the time, Pierre Ly who earned the confidence of both the mutineers and the Government of CAR; indeed he was recommended for receipt of a UN Honour for that; which it is hoped he might still be awarded posthumously; the putting in place of UNDP's support for the late President Mwalimu Nyerere, to serve as Intermediary in facilitating dialogue in the Burundi Peace Process; the efforts at reconstruction in Rwanda and Round Table Conferences for Rwanda and Congo (Brazzaville); dealing with the political breakdown of civil Government in Brazzaville; backstopping the Evacuation of the UN System for which we recall the role of the then UNDP Resident Representative, Dominique McAdams, who received a UN honour for that, as well as the efforts to secure peace and stability in the Great Lakes region (reference the efforts of the UN Department of Political Affairs towards "a soft landing" as it was called at UN headquarters, in the wake of the then imminent demise of the late President Mobutu of Zaire and rise of the late President Kabila; participation at high-level meetings at UN Headquarters representing the Africa Bureau, on the UN Secretary General's Advisory Committee on the Great Lakes crisis, chaired by Under Secretary General Prendergast.

Following my second tour of duty in New York and before assumption of posting in Zambia (November 1998 – present), I undertook a four months' sabbatical in South East Asia, (supported by UNDP's Learning Centre) which proved a major learning experience. That experience has been summarised in one of the papers in this volume – "Individual Learning as a pre-requisite to organizational Learning". It saw an unusual application of those learnings in Zambia, and elsewhere in the sub-region, as well as influences in other parts of the continent, insights on which, is also available in some of the concept papers and other initiatives contained herein. Details of my Zambia tour of duty and more on the Asian experience, will feature elsewhere as part of "Reflections on Service in Zambia", also under preparations.

In the midst of all this, I was nominated the OAU's candidate in 1997 for the post of Director General of UNIDO – a first for an African woman. That experience has been captured in one of the publications contained herein – “Positioning Africa in the Global Space: Reflections of an African Woman”, published in the Codesria Bulletin in early 1998.

Africa's Future Leaders

I cannot close without a few words on what, for me, is perhaps my greatest passion: Africa's future leaders – Africa's Youths and Young Professionals. It dates back to 1992 when I first conceptualised and operationalized the Otto Essien Young Professionals Training Programme and the application of the Model UN programme in Mauritius. Since then these programmes have either continued in Mauritius and have been initiated by the UN System in Senegal (Model UN), as a direct result of the Mauritius experience¹, and in Kenya; Zambia and recently Nigeria in the case of the Otto Essien, programme – a tribute to our late colleague from Nigeria – Otto Essien, who died in active service as Resident Representative in Namibia.

The concept papers and applications of the Otto Essien programme are also included here, while a more recent evolution of the concept, entitled “*Nurturing and Developing Africa's Future Leaders*” represents the “deepening” of this interest in developing a 21st Century African leadership - one that is, I believe, fundamental to the realization of NEPAD, if indeed, it is to prove the turning point for the continent and its peoples – a Vision, born out of “hands-on” experience spanning more than 20 years of Development Practice and service – both national and international, and one drawing upon experience from across the South, as exemplified in the landmark Programme for Innovative Cooperation Among the South (PICAS) that represents the concrete and pragmatic applications of learnings from the sabbatical experience in Asia, and is best captured in the phrase “**Walking the Talk**” of South-South Cooperation, recalling the

¹ The current Director of UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Africa, headquartered in Senegal, is Mr. Parsuramen, former Minister of Education in Mauritius with whom we collaborated closely in the introduction of these initiatives in Mauritius

Historic Bandung Conference in 1954 that saw the birth of the non-aligned movement and the Famous Walk in the streets of Bandung of the great leaders of the South, and at which my own country was represented, including participation of my Grandfather as a Member of the Liberian Delegation.

Conclusion

Finally throughout this career that has been sketched here, there has been one underlying strand – **service** – which has been inspired by two factors: **one**, a Legacy from the life and work of own parents and family background, of service at both the national (in various societal spectrum) and international levels over several generations, and **secondly** the Grace of God which has been manifested in both my personal and professional life.

Here, I want to quote a British Olympic Star, whose name regrettably I do not recall, but was interviewed over the BBC some time ago. He said,

“One’s talent is not yours, but from God and is to be used to help others for God’s glory. One must use God’s gift to the maximum for God’s glory.”

Thus, the Glimpse into my Professional Life through the Papers that follow in the next two parts of this book can be no better captured than in the words of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians when he said:

“Let your enthusiastic idea at the start be equalled to your realistic action now – be leaders in your realistic actions.”

2 Corinthians, Verse 10-11