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## Zambia, a nation without vision

By Senior Chief Mwamba Kanyanta-Manga II

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A vision stands for 'intelligent ability to foresee the future; an insight to imagine the future; Doorway to the future; determines destiny and marks and distinguishes intellectual capacities of different people. And this was why King Solomon declared: 'Where there is no vision, people perish.'

Chairman Mao related to the vision of the will as all-powerful, even to the extent that (in Mao's own words) 'the subjective creates the objective.' That is, man's capacity for both undergoing change and changing his environment is unlimited once he makes the decision for change the entire universe can bend to his will. But again, the controlling image is the sense of revolutionary immortality that confers these vaulting capacities upon the mind. And during the Great Leap, Chairman Mao declared that there was no poor soil but poor thoughts.

The conscience of a nation pertains to power, though power is a fluid concept with many tangibles. Empowerment means that people get equipped to deal with their own situations in practical and viable ways. Power is neutral until it is acquired and used, but completely without it, we just are lethargic because power enables people and enhances life.

The French sociologist, Raymond Aron defined power in terms of capacities: population, military and economic power, industrial base, territory; policies: the exercise of power by deliberate courses of action to affect the will of rivals and competitors; and motivation: the propensity to act in a certain way in international politics.

What I mean, in this case, is that we in Zambia lack the ability to translate human and material resources into tangible power. Hence we are incapable of transforming our own preponderances in the nation, population, financial and geo-strategic assets into economic power, capable of achieving social and political goals.

And we cannot, therefore, stand up and say with pride, 'we are independent.' We are not, and let no one fool you. If I feed you; decide what you are going to eat and when you are going to eat. So how free are you? I just cannot see how we Zambians are going to develop this country through begging. It is said that the face is the beggar's greatest asset and he must therefore always look miserable. In fact, I wonder if there is a single African country that can survive for over a month without donor support!

Our political luminaries do not seem to understand one great lesson: that all the difficulties and complex problems of each country can in no way be solved by another country's formula, though it may somehow try to help and only to a certain extent. This is because reality does not conform to logic. For example, the western development programmes that are deliberately imposed upon docile Africans fail to transplant successfully in Africa, just because no gardener would ordinarily transplant a fully-grown tree to a new site. Rather, he would plant a sapling or a shoot and be content to bide his time until it grows to its full dimensions.

We must lean on history in order to get a clear picture of how we have unintelligibly mismanaged the affairs of this nation. In the book Central African Witness, historian Cyril Dunn in the 1950s wrote about the aspirations of the then Prime Minister of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe): "To Sir Roy Welensky, economic development has always been the paramount objective. He believes that the federation's potential is immense, except for a shortage of oil and timber can perhaps be as vast as that of the USA itself.

He is quite sure that it can be developed only by 'the enterprise, the driving power and the initiative of the whites'...the blacks will get their fair share of the rewards as they develop the sense of the dignity of labour; once he grasps what Sir Roy calls the basic slogan of any industrial society - work or starve. The political aspirations of the blacks must be restrained, since Central Africa's economic progress would be dissipated in 'chaos, corruption and misrule' if ever Africans were allowed to assume control."

Jong- Pak, the South Korean ambassador to Zambia recently said that Zambia and Zimbabwe were far much better economically than his country in the 1950s and 1960s. And the former French ambassador, Jean Paul Monchau said: "Poverty of the Zambian people is mostly unexplained if one considers the country's riches and without going into details, I do not understand why emphasis was not put on agriculture, the basis of any development strategy."

In this respect, the World Bank report in part reads: "The potential of Zambia's agriculture is often cited as the greatest untapped natural resource - the potential of agriculture growth to contribute to incomes and welfare is unequivocal: agriculture is the largest sector employer, being the primary occupation of over a half of the rural population (or 26 per cent of the total population of the country), and contributing three-fourths of the incomes to the average rural population."

What does this really mean to us Zambians? And to me it just means that there is total bankruptcy of dynamic vision for political and economic revival.

There is total lack of original thinking and lack of innate propensity, potential and power to determine our own destiny and spearhead the political and economic revolution that can lift Zambians out of the poverty mire to prosperity. There is bankruptcy of enterprising intellectualism and I just cannot understand how individuals who only become clever after events can be called 'intellectuals and geniuses.'

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