

GLOBALISATION: ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTS FOR AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Globalisation is an accepted phenomenon in most, if not all, states in the contemporary world. States are influenced by their membership of international bodies, e.g. the United Nations, the International Labour Organisation and the World Health Organization. They are also required to comply with the standards set by various supranational structures, e.g. the African Union and the Southern African Development Community. However, little attention is paid to the administrative effects of these requirements on individual governmental structures. This article introduces the issue by considering the capacity of a state, such as the Republic of South Africa, to formulate and implement policies, develop the required organisational structures, acquire and assign sufficient human resources and budget adequate funds to give effect to its international commitments.

INTRODUCTION

The world is developing into a globalising society as a result of technological advancement, economic development, social interactions and various developments in the political arena. These changes were more rapid in some areas such as in Europe through the establishment of the European Union. In some continents co-operation developed more slowly as a result of political instability, economic inconsistencies and tribal differences, as in the case of Africa. However, all countries in the world are affected to some extent by the globalisation phenomenon. In some cases it may be through foreign aid, in some instances it may even be through political/military intervention as in the case of Iraq or Sudan. The co-operation between two or more independent states is formalised by way of treaties or other agreements. These formal inter-state treaties or supranational or international structures require particular administrative arrangements to give effect to the policies contained in the agreements. This discussion concerns some of the crucial administrative arrangements African countries have to consider when entering into international agreements or collaborations.

GLOBALISATION

Globalisation has come into common use in the past two decades. It is used by business concerns, political leaders, non-governmental organisations, labour unions, academics and the communication media. As will be indicated later, the users do not necessarily attach the same meaning to the term. It should be noted that the term is used in the continuous sense, i.e. as a process. It is not used as an accomplished action. The reference is, therefore not to a globalised world. Thus it could be stated that countries and communities within national states are exploring and developing the concept of a world that is becoming globalised. Therefore, it seems as though it is accepted that the process is not completed. New demands for the consideration of the effects of political, economic and social issues in one part of the world, may have an effect on one or more parts of the rest of the world e.g. the political instability in Ethiopia or Sierra Leone affects the neighbouring countries. The economic crisis in Zimbabwe has a particular effect on South Africa, Botswana and other Southern African countries.

There could be as many definitions of globalisation identified as there are international agreements or authors on the topic. Therefore, an exhaustive discussion will serve no purpose. However, some of the salient characteristics will be identified in order to explain the administrative effects of the phenomenon on African countries.



In some cases authors view globalisation as an economic phenomenon resulting in national economic systems becoming part of larger economic systems as a result of the increase in international trade, foreign investment and the flow of capital across national boundaries. A Dutch academic, Ruud Lubbers, defines globalisation as a process in which geographic distance becomes a factor of diminishing importance in the establishment and the maintenance of cross-border economic, political and socio-cultural relationships (<http://globalise.kub.nl/>). Opponents to the phenomenon view the trend as an effort to establish a global economy dominated by large conglomerates in well developed countries with no regard for the effects on developmental countries such as most African countries. This may even be detrimental to an economically constrained country in which such international enterprises operate. It is not disputed that globalisation has an economic dimension, but there are other aspects to consider.

Douglas Nelson of the Murphy Institute of Political Economy at Tulane University (<http://www.tulane.edu/~dnelson/BIBS/globalBib.pdf>) attempts to define globalisation and its implications in terms of its effects on poverty, gender, culture, political structure and its dynamics. It is a well known fact that the natural environment is not bound by the artificial boundaries determined through political bargaining during the colonisation of Africa by European countries e.g. England, France, Belgium, Portugal and Germany. Neither can poverty and the effects thereof be contained within the boundaries of a failing state such as Ethiopia. Social conscience demands that social issues be the concern of the international society. A disregard for basic human rights is no longer viewed as of concern to one political entity alone. The international community has become aware of social injustices through technological advances and a plethora of structures involving themselves in cases of economic decline, political turmoil or socially unacceptable practices such as a disregard for human rights.

Globalisation could be linked to the policies and operations of government and governmental institutions. Governments are required to participate in various supranational (e.g. SADC or ECOWAS) and international organisations (e.g. the United Nations or the WTO) to be able to fulfill its commitments to stabilise or maintain its economic sector, develop acceptable social conditions, meet environmental challenges (e.g. global warming) and establish a stable political system in the globalising world.

Considering the globalising phenomenon it could be argued that it reveals the following characteristics:

- It signifies continuous change to which most national states on the political front and commercial and industrial concerns are subjected.
- In many cases trade is no longer limited to the country of origin of particular products (e.g. China, Taiwan, India and Singapore). This is not a new phenomenon. The Phoenicians and Arabian countries were already trading with Africa centuries ago. However, in recent decades the economies of some countries have become subservient to the economic decisions of international organisations e.g. the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization.
- Investment is no longer within the political domain of only the countries with well established economies. Foreign direct investment is only one of the economic challenges facing many less developed economies and developmental states.
- National borders are not disappearing, but politically established boundaries of national states (mostly by former colonial powers) are coming under pressure as tourism, trade, environmental factors and diseases demand trans-border actions (e.g. in the case of communicable diseases). Passports and visas may be required to move across political borders, but more people travel, business is conducted by entrepreneurs in various countries and natural resources are transported and utilised in adjacent countries. South Africa, for example, established the multilateral Southern African Customs Union (SACU) in 2002 between the governments of the Republic of South Africa, the Republic of Botswana, the Kingdom of Lesotho, the Republic of Namibia and the Kingdom of Swaziland to promote economic development in the southern area of Africa. All African countries are members of various international organisations related to trade e.g. the UN World Trade Organization; related to social development, e.g. UNESCO; or to health matters, e.g. the World Health Organization.

- Rapid advancement in computer technology requires countries to co-operate to utilise and even to control the use of technological capacity e.g. the Internet. Information has become one of the most powerful resources any country has available. Therefore, access to information is vital for development, e.g. in the case of education, air traffic, health matters, policing and defence. In this regard, it would be beneficial if African countries could become a member of the World Intellectual Property Organization.
- Natural resources cannot, in most cases, be confined within political boundaries e.g. water. The earth's composition is much older than humanity. In recent decades the effects of human interference in natural phenomena have been recognised. Most countries are members of one or more environmentally linked organisations, e.g. the UN Disaster Assessment and Co-ordination Team, the World Organization for Animal Health; the African Ministerial Council on the Environment; the African Ministerial Council on Water; the United Nations Framework Convention to Combat Desertification; the United Nations Forum on Forests; the World Meteorological Organization; and/or the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- Concern for human rights has increased extensively in recent decades. With the development of trade some countries allowed labour practices to develop to the detriment of the labourers involved to increase the profit of the manufacturer. This tendency in some countries revealed the fact that a free market economy does not necessarily imply that workers enjoy an acceptable level of freedom to offer their labour in a fair manner. This prompted the establishment of international organisations e.g. the International Labour Organization (ILO). Various African countries are members of the ILO and have passed legislation to give effect to agreements under the ILO.
- Globalisation is viewed as an important factor to combat poverty (Nissanke & Thorbecke, 2007:1). It is argued that globalisation creates an environment conducive to faster economic growth and the transmission of knowledge. Although world income distribution continues to be rather unequal and some African countries are even stagnating, more transparency contributes to potential donor countries becoming aware of hardships on a continuous basis. Nissanke and Thorbecke even found that the population living on less than \$1 per day has decreased from 40% to 21% between 1981 and 2001 (Loc. cit.). This reduction could not be attributed to only globalisation, but the phenomenon has contributed to international debates on the issue and to the development of an international consciousness concerning the plight of the indigent.

From the above discussion it may be argued that globalisation has many faces. The examples quoted reveal that globalisation covers a wide variety of phenomena in the physical environment, the social environment and the political environment. Various African countries have subscribed to international conventions and treaties. Thus African countries have had to establish and maintain extensive administrative systems to manage these institutions and treaties.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSEQUENCES

Policy implications

States have to incorporate programmes in their strategic plans to comply with international requirements. Culture is not bound to the borders of a single politically determined state. African people in the past moved across the continent. Their legacies are widespread and require policies adopted by various countries to preserve their heritage. Together with the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) African countries have embarked on a road to restore and preserve African heritage (Loc. cit.). Thus again it proves that the globalisation of phenomena also has cultural effects.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is probably one of the operational areas that are the most subject to globalisation. Every country in the world is influenced by ICT. Even the most remote areas

need to be or are globally linked. It was estimated that ± 3,28 million South Africans had access to the internet in 2003 (Ibid.139). However, this development has also resulted in possible misuse or exploitation. Thus countries have been compelled to adopt policies to regulate ICT and its attendant developments. Various African countries are also members of the Universal Postal Union (UPU); the Pan-African Postal Union (PAPU); the Council of Commonwealth Postal Administrators; and the Southern African Transport and Communications Commission (Ibid.146); requiring the acknowledgement of policies determined by such bodies or agreed to in existing treaties and as a signatory to various international treaties, conventions and agreements.

The economy is an open system and is influenced by a multitude of factors in countries with which a particular country has formal or even non-formal relationships. Thus e.g. the value of currency is determined, not by how a country values the currency, but by the trust in the stability of the particular country's political and economic situation as perceived by the international community compared to other currencies. (Ibid. 277).

The statement has often been made that there is only one earth. Natural resources cannot be replenished. Once they have been depleted they cannot be replaced. Therefore, there is a worldwide emphasis on conserving the environment in its broadest sense i.e. the fauna, flora, land, sea and air. As could be expected, Africa will be involved in a variety of international organisations, agreements and treaties. Policies will have to be adopted locally and have to be integrated into international policies. The current concern with global warming is an excellent example of the effects of human intervention in nature. South Africa, as an example, hosted the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSI) in 2002 supporting the United Nations Millennium Summit Declaration's goal of halving world poverty by 2015 and to incorporate decisions taken by the world bodies since the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 (Ibid.234).

World climatic and atmospheric changes are the consequences of world-wide pollution through the so-called greenhouse gas concentrations from emissions from vehicles, factories and other industrial operations. South Africa is subject to these environmental changes and is faced with serious challenges requiring innovative policies to curb the effects. Desertification in the semi-arid areas of the country is another feature demanding attention. In this regard various African countries have signed the Convention to Combat Desertification. This Convention's aim is to assist member countries to combat desertification and its consequences globally (Ibid 258).

Efforts to counter or limit the effects of climatic change require international co-operation. In this regard South Africa is a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change. The Kyoto Protocol is a legally binding instrument through which developed countries undertake to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by at least 5% of their 1990 levels.

Diseases do not recognise human made boundaries. Therefore, the Department of Health has to acknowledge the global effects of diseases e.g. HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and other communicable diseases. In this regard the Department has adopted and implemented the Directly Observed Treatment Short Course (DOTS) as advocated by the International Union Against TB and by the World Health Organization (Ibid. 389).

Health is, in terms of schedule 4 of the Constitution, 1996 a concurrent legislative function of national, provincial and local government. This requires the co-ordination of health related policies, not only those developed nationally, but also internationally as propagated by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The rehabilitation and the proper handling of prisoners have become a source of international interest. Examples abound of non-governmental organisations world wide raising issues concerning the abuse of power where prisoners are concerned. Many countries, e.g. South Africa, have endorsed the Charter of

Fundamental Rights for Prisoners in 2005. South Africa, therefore, has to develop a programme that will result in full compliance with the United Nations' minimum standards on the treatment of offenders (Ibid. 450). In a similar manner ministers responsible for prisoner management and correctional services in the SADC countries have agreed to implement a protocol signed in Johannesburg in 2003. Policy guidelines are also developed by the South African Correctional Services to enable government to enter into prisoner transfer agreements with other countries (Loc.cit.). Thus, it could be argued that South Africa has become part of a world in which countries do not determine policies in isolation. Although politically sovereign, current practices resulting from more accessibility of countries require policies to be co-ordinated nationally and internationally.

Sustainable development on the African continent is one of the major concerns of NEPAD. The South African Department of Minerals and Energy has played a major role in conceptualising the African Mining Partnership driving the NEPAD mining agenda (Ibid. 456). As part of the African Mining Partnership, the African coastal states are sharing their expertise in compiling their submissions to the United Nations to extend their exclusive economic zones. Various memoranda of understanding have been signed in this regard. Thus it implies that South Africa has to adopt policies, taking note of those of other African countries with coastal boundaries.

Energy provision is probably one of the primary prerequisites for economic development. The Southern African Power Proclamation (SAPP) has been established to co-ordinate the planning and operation of electricity power systems among 11 SADC countries to increase inter-connectivity; facilitate cross-border electricity trading; fully recover the cost of operations; and equitably share benefits.

As far as police services are concerned, South Africa is part of the contingent assisting other African countries in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to promote democracy resulting in the successful elections in 2007. Other African countries also play a major role in the African Union's Mission in Sudan (Ibid. 492).

Social development has become of major concern to countries especially after the Second World War i.e. from 1945 onwards. It has been accepted that social issues are important building blocks for economic development and political stability. However, countries could not be left to their own devices to promote social upliftment and poverty alleviation. Failure by one country to attend to social injustices, has an impact on neighbouring and even other countries. The democratisation of most African states resulted in the eradication of social and other injustices of the past, bearing testimony to the roles of African and European countries concerning social justice world wide.

The involvement of African countries in states such as Sudan, the DRC and Rwanda are examples of global concern for socially related matters in independent states. The effects of HIV/AIDS on social conditions require African countries to participate in various international organisations to combat the pandemic. One such organisation could be cited, i.e. the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) dealing with children orphaned through AIDS related illnesses (Ibid. 546).

The SADC Protocol on Transport, Communications and Meteorology provides a comprehensive framework for regional integration across the entire spectrum of the transport, communications and meteorology sectors. This protocol regarding co-ordinated policies, endeavours to facilitate the flow of goods between and across the territories of the SADC member states (Ibid. 614).

Organisational implications

International commitments require organs of state to establish organisational structures to honour international agreements. Southern African countries recognised the country's international role in agricultural issues and established the Southern African Customs Union (SACU); the Southern African Development Community (SADC); the World Trade Organization (WTO); the International Grains Convention and various other treaties and agreements (Ibid. 96).



Financial implications

International co-operation has specific budgetary implications. In the case of World Heritage Sites, African countries have to ensure that the sites are maintained. Countries have to budget for the maintenance of such sites. The Kyoto Protocol, aimed at the reduction of GHG emissions, has a significant financial implication. Many countries simply cannot afford to comply with the requirements. An amount of US \$5 m has been donated to South Africa by the United States of America in terms of the USA South Africa Bilateral Agreement on Climate Change Support (Loc. cit). This only partly enables government to give effect to the Kyoto Protocol. However, further financial needs exist that have to be budgeted for by departments in the respective countries concerned.

As far as health matters are concerned, South Africa is one of the 29 countries that have pledged a total of US\$3,7 billion in 2006/2007 to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria over a two year period. A further US\$6 million has also been pledged for a further period of three years (Ibid.390). Other African countries are similarly required to provide funding in their budgets for these purposes.

The financial implications of the utilisation of human resources to manage the various organisations, protocols and agreements cannot be determined accurately. The reason for this is that some personnel may be directly assigned to a programme or organisation while others may only be partly involved. Thus, it is not possible to determine the time utilised for each internationally related activity and consequently the financial implications from documentary sources. Thus the financial effects are merely registered to highlight the financial effects of a globalising world.

CONCLUSIONS

Globalisation is a process that is evolving at a rapid pace. The respective governments, societies and even individuals are becoming increasingly interconnected through new technological advancements. No government can escape these developments and it is imperative that the public sector as the main guardian of society should be prepared to deal with the phenomenon and its effects on society.

Extensive administrative and managerial actions are required to deal with globalisation. This discussion was an effort to briefly indicate the administrative burden of globalisation on the public sector. (The effects on the private sector have not been attended to). It is obvious that policy formulation needs to be revisited on a regular basis to ensure that national policies and international protocols are integrated. Organisational structures within national, provincial and local government structures have to take note of international requirements and may even have to provide specifically for the actions required to meet international commitments. Similarly budgetary provision has to be made to give effect to international agreements resulting from globalisation.

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