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**A Changing Context of Public Policy**

In the broad sense, public policy aims at advancing human, national and international development. In short, public policy seeks the advancement of mankind. Irrespective of the primary purpose that have informed a policy, it is important to note that the context and content of a policy may be diversely interpreted by those to implement the policy and among the people for whom it is intended and by national and international stakeholders. Hence, pluralism, internationalism and globalism, polycentrism, and government and science are major factors that condition the context of public policy.

Pluralism entails recognition that there are diverse races, ethnicities, interests and stakeholders, among others, who view the world and the realities of life differently. The interpretations, values, ethics, beliefs and contents exhibited by each group are valid within each context. Hence, pluralism is the context of a heterogeneous society. Pluralism potentially and often leads to dialectical engagements and conflicts among adherents of competing ideas, interests and convictions, among competing dominant groups and between the dominant and minority groups. Yet, “pluralisms mark aspects of human experience, pluralism is better understood as a matter of what lies between the boundaries that mark interaction and the possibility of growth and change …”. Pluralism acknowledges the importance of significant differences, interests and contextual realities of diverse groups and seeks to capture public policy to advance inclusive societal progress and development.

In addition, it is important to note that societies do not live in isolation. In the contemporary realities of internationalization and globalization, nations are interconnected, and the world is like a global village with each independent territory impacted and affected by international realities, conventions, treaties, political economy and particularly, information and telecommunication technology (ICT). For example, international trade is framework by the conventions of the World Trade Organisation; international finance is influenced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank and other cognate organizations; the World Health Organisation and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) policy thrusts have global impact and influence on national health policies; and the International Court of Justice adjudicates cases among nations and war crimes referred to it. Most importantly, ICT revolution has advanced the interconnectedness of nations since the 1990s.

Polycentrism entails a multiplicity of economic and urban centres that promote cohesion and competition for mutual and independent urban development. Polycentricism could involve deliberate spatial planning to devolve and/or diffuse development from the bigger metropolis to the emerging or smaller ones and the extension of city development into contiguous areas to form mega cities. Polycentric urban development addresses urban challenges such as over-population, slum spread, congestion and regional imbalances.

Finally, public policy is a government initiative. Policies have mostly failed in Africa because politicians and civil servants assume they can determine policy approaches without evidence or research. But science has a place in policy making. This is the whole essence of policy research. Technology and scientific findings play a major role in contemporary policy making. In short, science plays vital roles at influencing government-level decision making on public policy nationally and internationally. For example, national and international policies on global warming and the environment, disease control, disaster preparedness, cyber intelligence and regulation, food security and dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT), among others, have been influenced by scientific findings. The intricate connection between governance and science has a critical role to play in apposite public policy making and implementation.