Democratic Renaissance in Southern Africa; An Analysis of Socio-Cultural, Political and Economic Factors.

Mufana Lipalile
University of Zambia

The rebirth, revival and economic regeneration of Southern Africa is dependent on the realisation of the vision of an African renaissance. At the core of the African renaissance are issues of democratic governance and regional cooperation. This vision draws its inspiration from the diverse cultures and economic histories of Africa which provides a framework for modern Africa to re-emerge as a significant partner in the global economy. To facilitate the revival and economic regeneration of Southern Africa a poverty alleviation strategy premised on participatory and cooperative development approaches is critical.

This approach must take into account pertinent politico-economic and socio-cultural factors that promote stability, security and economies of scale. Closely connected to this are issues of regional cooperation and democratic governance. Regional integration facilitates harmonised approaches to economic management and international trade that creates conditions which attract investors and enhances competitiveness through economies of scale while democratic governance favours the establishment of partnerships. As such the success of the democratic renaissance and economic regeneration of Southern Africa is favoured by initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and increasing Donor goodwill through external (Donor) driven initiatives such as the African Growth Opportunities Act (AGOA) in response to the alarming poverty levels prevailing in Southern Africa. For Southern Africa to develop, the discussion and analysis of factors favouring effective local participation and mobilisation of Donor support is critical and the paper will be an effort in that direction.