

It sounds depressing but there is a big silver lining to it. Once we organize the people and have them manage their God given resources, the sky will be the limit. Africa is blessed with a great future and the question is when will they, the people of this great continent, get organized and start managing this blessing. Of course slavery and colonialism were great distractions. Now, it is corruption and the lack of democracy and free trade. Sometimes it seems like a spinning wheel. Remember when President Clinton claimed Cote D'Ivoire to be an example of stability but now it is in total chaos.

Rwanda was the setting of genocide and appeared to be on the oblivion. Now, it is a very stable nation with a path to greatness. Such is the case of this continent. It is a spinning wheel where the Devil appears off and on and in very places. We, the children of Africa, need to form a winning strategy that will bring stability to the continent and nation by nation we overcome the evils of corruption, outside manipulation and exploitation of the precious minerals.

First, we need a Strategic Plan for the emergence of Africa as a first world conglomerate of nations. This won't come from the United Nations, International Monetary Fund, USAID, World Bank or even the African Union and other groups who profess to be in the best interest of the people of sub-Saharan Africa. Scrap all of them and start with a new entity independent and self-sufficient.

The first challenge is corruption. We could use the model of India which is also plagued with corruption. Yes, Asia, South America as well as Africa are plagued with full scale corruption. In India, the government official who receives corrupt payments will be fined double the amount of the money transferred. The person who gave him the proceeds will not be prosecuted if he brings the evidence forward and assists in the evidence. This is making a difference. A nation cannot achieve economic empowerment without killing the corruption industry. It defies all potential progress and will leave a nation powerless in its quest for prosperity. The key here is a government that resolves to crack down on this hideous and immoral phenomenon.

Clearing out the corruption activity will pave the way for great improvement. Africa, it is blessed with rare metals, perhaps the largest in the world. Right now China controls 97% of all the precious metals in the world. They are manipulating the markets. An example is lithium light bulbs. They hold the lithium and General Electric wants to introduce the light bulbs to the world. China tells General Electric they will sell the lithium to them but they will have to build the plant in China. Thus, the new light bulbs that will become a requirement for all of us will come exclusively from China. The sad thing is Africa has all the lithium we need but it is not excavated and processed for us. This is a great opportunity for our Motherland. To garner our natural resources and process them for the free markets – trillions upon trillions of dollars and jobs will flow and the nations of Africa will become centers of enterprise. Think of cell phones, computers, batteries, etc. the key precious metals are abundant in Africa but yet neither we nor anyone else has bothered to mine and harvest them.

There is enough African talent that has already graduated from the greatest universities of Europe and America and is ready to return to their respective nations to participate in new and thriving economies. All we need is good governance and democracy. Thus, we must be prudent and without leniency to those who transgress from good governance. The era of aid to

Africa should come to an end. Aid and easy credit loans is a drug to our Sub-Saharan nations. Feasibility studies and strategic plans should be in place along with investment from nations with the expertise of helping change African nations into a self-sufficient “bread basket” with the best innovation in Agri-business and the harvesting of its own God given resources.

This land “burps” oil and has diamonds laying casually on the surface of its land. Platinum, coltan, gold, lithium and other precious metals are abundant and they are the key to modern world technology. Africa, you have been blessed and the time for your to take advantage of that is now.

Let’s stop the greediness of China and the slick ways of DC lobbyists such as the textile industry to be content on exploiting Africa and quick changing them for what they are actually worth. It is time for strong African leaders to rise and face this madness. You own the “diamonds” but you let them treat you like “glass”. ENOUGH ALL READY!

Mr. Alford is the co-founder, President/CEO of the National Black Chamber of Commerce®. Website: www.nationalbcc.org. Email: halford@nationalbcc.org.