Top 10 of 2020 for me

To me, 2020 was 'Living in the Unknown'. Reflecting back below are my top 10 for the year:

1. Global inter-connectedness: the COVID-19 Pandemic has shown that we need each other- what happens in one part of the world has repercussions beyond the immediate borders. It also showed vividly the need for good governance and preparedness: those with sound systems and capacity quickly re-engineered themselves and put in place containment measures even though not 100% effective. Wageningen University and Research in Netherlands and University of Free State in South Africa for example quickly put in responsive measures to reposition their universities respond to educational challenges posed by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Others were not in position to do so or only responded very slowly

2. Environment health is key: It appeared to me as 'God must be crazy'. We witnessed several catastrophes- wild fires in Australia and USA, floods and waves across the world, widespread pandemics of desert locusts that devastated the Middle East, Horn of Africa and the Sahel, increased levels of green gases, amongst others. Again, we need each other, we need to develop collective responses to address these challenges

3. Africa low STI capacity: Some of the challenges highlighted in 1 &2 above brought to the fore the limited response capacity in the continent. We just need to be reminded that no country in the world has developed without the requisite STI capacity- Africa must put its mouth where the food is- in its people: build and strengthen the innovation capacity and skills development in the continent.

4. Racial inequality coupled with human brutality: What we witnessed in the USA, but also common in our ethnic tendencies including wars in Africa calls

for greater attention to address this inhuman practice. It is so sad that we as humans are so brutal and self-conceited- we don't care about others

5. Education divide: Here again COVID 19 exposed more vividly the education divide for those with resources and the disadvantaged communities even in advanced economies like the USA. Here in Africa it worsened the divide between urban and rural schools- schools in urban areas quickly embraced online teaching and learning; those in rural areas have been basically 'locked out' of education. Yet education is the foundation of development. This to me is one of the biggest challenges Africa faces today. Governments need to act now.

6. Embracing digital technology. The digital era is here, and it is those countries and individual who embrace it who will be fit for purpose. It is needed in all sectors, and for young and old. At least COVID_19 has helped push us towards digital technologies. Africa must hasten efforts to integrate digital practices. Fortunately the young generation in Africa are coping up very well

7. Your neighbour will not fill your granary. In 2014 Gracias Machel reminded us about that Mozambique saying. Little did I know I would live to see it!. It is great to hear/know that there are vaccines against COVID 19 and countries are vaccinating their people. We are still waiting for our turn in Africa! Severally Africa has waited for others to come and solve its problems even for those we can and should handle! No, No!. We have to struggle and help ourselves just as we struggle to feed our families. We must build capacity in the continent for today and for tomorrow

8. We are stronger together although some inefficiencies occur. The UK Government was able to quickly approve the COVID 19 Vaccine, and EU only two weeks later. But even then we are stronger together. We need each other to travel far or achieve economies of scale. Many issues cut across boundaries, requiring that we collaborate. We can now harness digital technology to work across the globe, and hopefully we help create better global understanding. For higher education in Africa, we need to strengthen collaboration and partnership to build response capacity for the continent.

9. Who should be telling who about democracy?. The fiasco with USA elections have lessons for all of us. Unfortunately, it has provided ammunition for unchecked tyranny and widespread violation of basic human rights in Africa and probably elsewhere
10. China is the new Global power, but what will this mean for Africa?

But then, the other sad part is that I did not realise that I am very illiterate: I have failed to understand development statistics: America is the leading and richest economy?. But then I see people lining for food? This is very confusing for me.

I just hope 2021 will be a better year for all of us

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30 December 2020