



MAKING SENSE OF THE AILING AFRICAN ‘ELEPHANT’ – NEW PERSPECTIVES FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE PATHWAY INTO THE FUTURE

P. D. Rwelamila¹

Graduate School of Business Leadership, University of South Africa (UNISA), South Africa

A befitting metaphor of the greater African Construction Industry is an ‘African Elephant’. An ‘African Elephant’ which could only be described as an ailing ‘Elephant’ – a clear description of the state of the greater African Construction Industry development – a ‘sick and limping Industry’. The works of Gale and Fellows (19990); Ofori (1990), just to mention a few, bear testimony to the challenges which were and still facing the greater African Construction Industry, acknowledged as infinitely more fundamental, more serious and more complex, and their solution much more pressing than those confronting industrialized countries of the North. The second cohort of the challenges facing the greater African Construction Industry comes from a synthesis of the nine regional position papers by du Plessis (Ed.) (2001). These challenges are well known by various stakeholders across the African continent and those interested in African development in the diaspora. Briefly this paper reflects on these challenges and embraces a paradigm shift by providing new perspectives to find a cure for this important ‘African Elephant’. The foundation for proposing the cure is premised on a more sustainable pathway into the future of the ‘African Elephant’. When we celebrate 10 years of WABER Conference, it is hoped that the objectives of this African noble grouping should be expanded across the African continent by focusing on finding new and creative ideas to achieve change in an African context. The paper strongly recommend that the proposed solutions should allow African built environment stakeholders to adopt different lenses in understanding the challenges and use appropriate tools to achieve more sustainable pathway of the African built environment into the future.

Keywords: addressing challenges, Africa, construction industry development, greater African construction industry, new perspectives

¹ Rwelapmd@unisa.ac.za