TOWARDS A
NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH AFRICA
Challenges and Opportunities

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Foreword

Since the beginning of the 1990s, many African countries have undergone radical political and economic changes. There is now widespread talk within and outside Africa about an emerging African “renaissance”. Within this new framework, we have felt a need to advance the relationship between Sweden and Africa in the context of a new partnership that transcends the boundaries of traditional development cooperation.

This anthology is the result of a process that started in 1995 with a joint Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Nordic Africa Institute seminar in Uppsala “Politics, Cooperation and African Development: Proposal for a Dialogue” and which was given a boost at the end of 1996 when the Ministry for Foreign Affairs commissioned a study on future relations between Sweden and Africa. At the end of the exercise, an independent working group, popularly called “Partnership Africa”, which had been given the task of developing the framework paper for Sweden’s Africa policy in the postcold war, post-apartheid era, presented its report entitled “Partnership with Africa” in July 1997. Listening attentively to African voices was of particular importance in the course of this review process. In this connection, two conferences were organised by the Partnership Africa group in which African invitees were the main participants. The first one was organised in cooperation with the Nordic Africa Institute and the African Development Bank and it took place in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, in January 1997. The second conference was held in Saltsjöbaden, outside Stockholm, in June of the same year.

In March 1998, the Government presented its African policy in a white paper to the Swedish Parliament. The white paper contains an outline of the broad measures that will be taken to broaden and deepen Sweden’s relations with Africa on the basis of a new partnership. Worthy of mention here are some of the important qualitative aspects of this new partnership: a subject-to-subject attitude, explicitness about values, transparency of interests, clear contractual standards and equality of capacity. For donor governments, there is an urgent need to improve the coherence of their policies. Three ideas that serve as guidelines for Sweden’s own strategy towards and in Africa are: a) change under democratic control; b) respect for African voices in the world; and c) long-term, broad-based relations between our societies.

In the course of this important process, the working group, and subsequently the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, had frequent consultations with Swedish NGOs, churches, and Africans living in Sweden. The project fuelled the debate about Africa in Sweden and Sweden in Africa, and will—hopefully—do the same in Africa. Several important steps have now been
taken towards a new Swedish policy on Africa. The presentation of the Government paper to the Swedish Parliament completed the first phase of the review process. But, the most important task remains, namely, the challenge of transforming the recommendations of the proposal into concrete action.

For the time being though, it is my hope that readers will find the papers that have been compiled in this volume useful and stimulating. The variety of views and positions the different papers represent served to animate the discussion that took place at Saltsjöbaden in June 1997 and we were all the richer and wiser for it. Let me take this opportunity, in closing, to thank all those who were part and parcel of the Partnership Africa exercise, not least, the African resource persons who so generously gave of their time and insights.

Mats Karlsson
State Secretary for International Development Cooperation,
Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Stockholm
In Search of a New Partnership for African Development—An Introductory Comment

Adebayo O. Olukoshi and Lennart Wohlgemuth

The period from the late 1980s has witnessed growing concerns as to the effectiveness, broadly defined, of development cooperation between the countries of the North and South. This concern has covered a wide range of areas from the conceptualisation of development cooperation to its content and practice. At the root of the increasingly vociferous critique of the dominant mode of cooperation is the widely shared view that it has, to a certain extent, failed to deliver meaningful and sustainable development. Indeed what seems to be the case is that as the scope and volume of development cooperation increased, its effectiveness tended to decline. Problems such as increasing aid dependence in the recipient countries, the failure of cooperation to foster the development of relevant local technical skills, the tendency towards the almost total erosion of local initiative, and the reality of aid flows tending to reinforce local power relations that are obstructive of democratic accountability are just a few of the concerns that emerged in critique of the history and practice of development cooperation. Increasing dissatisfaction in the donor countries with the poor results of several decades of cooperation was matched by an equally deeply-felt sense of frustration and anger in the recipient countries. The time for a thorough re-evaluation of the entire basis of development cooperation had clearly come, a task made more urgent by the lacklustre performance of the structural adjustment programmes that were crafted in the early eighties by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank for the purpose of stemming the African economic crisis.

It was against the broad background of all the foregoing that in October 1996, the Swedish government gave a working group in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs the assignment of drawing up proposals for “a new Swedish policy towards Africa”. The report was to be completed by 1 August 1997 and the expectation was that it would serve as a basis for a new, more grounded and relevant Swedish Africa policy which would represent a departure from previous efforts at cooperation that seemed to have reached a dead end or, at least, were in need of a radical overhaul and renewal.

In addition to the growing critique of the theory and practice of development cooperation, the Swedish government’s decision to inaugurate the
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working group was also underpinned by the formal end of apartheid in South Africa and Nelson Mandela’s rise to power in 1994. Up until that year, a central plank of Sweden’s Africa policy had been its strong commitment to the liberation of the continent from colonisation and institutionalised racism. The liberation of South Africa was, from this point of view, both a crowning glory for Sweden’s consistent and principled stand against white minority rule and colonial domination as well as the end of an era in its policy toward Africa. There emerged a pressing need for the country to fashion out a new basis for its relations with Africa given the formal end of colonial rule and apartheid on the continent. The working group, therefore, had the task of developing a working document that would help to form out a new plank for Sweden’s relations with post-apartheid, post-liberation Africa whilst simultaneously overcoming the main problems that have, over the years, weakened development cooperation as an effective vehicle for encouraging progressive/incremental change on the continent.

One principal idea that underpinned the working group’s assignment from the outset was the determination to realise its set objectives by employing an interactive methodology based on dialogue between Swedish officials and a cross-section of Africans from all walks of life. This way, it was hoped that the working group would be better able to understand the African development debate, the contemporary developmental aspirations of Africans and the African perception of the experience of Swedish development intervention on the continent. The investigative assignment of the working group thereby became a project in itself, and in time was dubbed “Partnership Africa” to emphasise the aspiration for a new Swedish relationship with the African continent that is grounded in mutual respect, transparency of purposes, a clear understanding of shared and divergent values and an equality of responsibilities in the conceptualisation/design, implementation and assessment of cooperation projects and programmes.

The terms of reference of the working group confined its purview to sub-Saharan Africa, comprising 48 of the continent’s 53 nations. Under the terms of reference, the working group was to “address itself broadly to Africa’s development problems at the outset”, thereafter focusing on four “basic themes”, namely:

1. Africa’s democratic culture, including gender equality, security and conflict management. This includes the state’s role and opportunities to boost public-sector accountability in Africa. This is crucially important to prevent conflicts and create true human security;

2. Africa in the international economy. This theme includes economic reforms, trade policy, debt issues and poverty-reducing measures. In particular, experience of and opportunities for regional collaboration should be elucidated. Africa’s relations with the EU are another important area;
3. Africa’s aid dependency and prospects for changed relations between Africa and other countries;
4. Relations between Sweden and Africa—current situation and future potential.

In line with its terms of reference and in order to elicit ideas and experience from Africa itself, the working group arranged two conferences, attended mainly by African delegates. The first, in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, under the auspices of the African Development Bank and the Nordic Africa Institute, was held in January 1997 and it dealt with the African development debate in relation to the four themes referred to above. The proceedings of the Abidjan meeting have been published by the Nordic Africa Institute under the title *A New Partnership for African Development—Issues and Parameters*.

The second conference, in Saltsjöbaden, east of Stockholm, took place in June 1997 and it dealt with examples of African reform work in the four theme areas and related this work to the possible contents of a Swedish policy. The main documentation from the conference consisted of some 25 essays written mainly by Africans commissioned by the Partnership Africa working group. It is a selection of the essays from the Saltsjöbaden conference that constitutes the basis for this book. The essays cover a range of concerns dealing with the entire political economy of contemporary Africa—the economy and within it the role of the household, factors of production such as land, the problems of export promotion, the changing nature of gender relations, and rural finance; the political system, including the problems and prospects of democratic reform, the role of non-governmental organisations, the problems of political governance, and issues of conflict generation and resolution; the broad social system, including factors affecting the health and nutritional status of Africans; regional cooperation and integration; and a review of the relations between Sweden and Africa side by side with a discussion of the broad parameters, as seen from Africa, for a possible new partnership.

One particularly interesting angle to the discussion that took place in Saltsjöbaden centred on an assessment of the scope and implications of the flow of people between Sweden and Africa in the context of the scientific, cultural, touristic, developmental and commercial flows that have taken place since the early 1960s. While no accurate figures can be put on the number of people who have been involved in these exchanges, and while few will doubt the necessity for these exchanges to be further expanded, it is clear that they have been central in shaping the ideas and outlooks of individuals and communities in ways which have been positive and that they constitute an important reservoir of assets to be used in the years ahead for changing Swedish-African cooperation. Certainly in designing a new Swedish policy towards Africa, the fact that thousands of Swedes have been influenced for life by their experiences from working in Africa—just as
many Africans have stamped their presence on the Swedish society either as visitors or citizens—cannot be lost on the policy-makers in Stockholm. The links also offer choices for building enduring civil society relations beyond the boundaries permitted by state/government to state/government relations.

As readers will find, the views expressed by the different contributors to this volume are as varied as their disciplinary and politico-ideological backgrounds. Out of the diversity of views, however, emerges a consistent plea, explicitly or implicitly expressed, for the self-articulated aspirations of Africans to be taken more seriously as the initial foundation on which to build any new partnership. Issues of equality, mutual respect, transparency on the part of donors and recipients, a willingness by both sides to learn as much as they teach, reciprocity and good will were emphasised in several of the papers and in much of the discussions at Saltsjöbaden. Neglected themes in development cooperation, such as the necessity for a framework within which to increase the sense of responsibility among donors for projects which they promote were extensively discussed and resulted in suggestions for a code of conduct to inform the work of donor agencies. Strategies for enhancing genuine local ownership beyond the lip-service that is often paid to it, were also debated at some length as were issues connected to the reform of the local African policy and political terrains in order to enhance the prospects for popular participation in the developmental process. We hope that readers will find in the papers presented in this volume, not only a small flavour of the discussions that took place at Saltsjöbaden but also the basic stimulus for continuing the search for a new, more equal partnership between Africa and the countries of the North that operate a development cooperation programme targeted at the continent.

This volume is organised into three parts. The first part, made up of four contributions, deals with broad issues centring on the struggles for democratic political reforms and human rights in Africa. For the Saltsjöbaden conference, six papers were commissioned as background material on the theme of democratic governance and they are all discussed, in a summary manner in the overview paper by Olukoshi. However, as readers will notice only three of the papers that are referred to in Olukoshi’s overview have been included in this volume. Readers who wish to obtain the three remaining papers are invited to contact the editors at the Nordic Africa Institute.

Part two of the book is devoted to a discussion of Africa’s on-going economic transition. It is made up of a total of eight papers dealing with topics ranging from resource mobilisation for development and the impact of economic reforms on rural households to the quest for export promotion in Africa and the socio-economic implications of the AIDS pandemic. Steve Kayizzi-Mugerwa’s paper, which opens that section of the book provides a summary of the intellectual and policy issues arising from the various papers.
The third and final part of the book is devoted to a discussion of the framework and ingredients necessary for the building of a new partnership. It is made up of eight papers, two of them in the form of letters written by Angela Ofori-Atta and several others detailing some practical experiences derived from efforts at developing Swedish-African cooperation/exchanges. This section of the book closes with the comments made during Mats Karlsson’s presentation in which he attempts to establish the basic parameters on the basis of which Sweden might forge a new partnership with Africa. Read together with Ofori-Atta’s letters they give an insight into the kinds of questions and possible answers that were debated in Saltsjöbaden on the building blocks necessary for a new partnership between Sweden and Africa. This confrontation of ideas is a good example of the process upon which the whole “Partnership Africa” exercise was based.
PART I

DEMOCRATIC REFORM IN AFRICA

Challenges and Opportunities
Introduction

The period since the end of the 1980s has witnessed a resurgence of popular domestic pressures for democratisation in various parts of Africa. These pressures for democratisation have been complemented by a series of interrelated developments in the international system which, on the whole, have created a more conducive environment for political reform in Africa. Of these developments, perhaps the most significant is the end of the superpower Cold War as we once knew it. The end of the Cold War meant that the rival ideological blocs had less pressing geo-political reasons for obstructing domestic pressures for political reform and almost unconditionally propping up unaccountable “client” regimes on the African continent. This, together with the swing of popular international opinion in favour of political change in Africa even led many Western governments to introduce a “new” political conditionality into their relations with the countries of the continent. The spread of multi-party politics in those erstwhile socialist countries that made up the Soviet bloc in the aftermath of the collapse of the monopoly on power enjoyed by the communist parties served as a further boost to the local struggles within Africa for political reform.

In response to the pressures from within and from without to reform themselves and open up their national political spaces, most of the single-party or military-dominated governments of Africa conceded the introduction of multi-party systems as one way of ensuring electoral pluralism. Furthermore, all over the continent, new non-state, independent sources of information, mostly in the form of newspapers and magazines, proliferated to provide alternative sources of news to those provided by the official media. In several Francophone African countries, popular pressure compelled the incumbent single party/military regimes to convene sovereign national conferences which had control over the transitional process and rewrote the national constitutions. In other countries, constitutional clauses limiting the freedom of association and organisation and outlawing parties other than the ruling party were repealed. Partly as a consequence of this, associational life received a major boost as various groups took advantage of the political liberalisation process to organise themselves politically or otherwise.
As a consequence of the reform measures which African governments were compelled to implement, the political map of the continent underwent radical changes in the period from the end of the 1980s onwards. Whereas in 1989, when the Berlin Wall collapsed, 38 out of 45 states in Africa were under one party or military rule, by 1990, well over half of them had either held or promised to hold multi-party elections. Between 1990 and 1994, 31 out 42 sub-Saharan African countries that did not already have a multi-party political framework embraced one variant or the other of the system and held competitive elections on the basis of the system. Of the 31 competitive elections held in the period to the middle of 1994, 14 resulted in the defeat of incumbent governments, some of them dominated by people who had been in power since their countries attained independence. Only in a handful of countries—Nigeria, Algeria, Sierra Leone, and the Gambia did military intervention obstruct the political reform process. South Africa, long the leading African pariah in international affairs on account of its institutionalised racist apartheid system, was itself ushered into a new respectability built on a negotiated, non-racial plural political system that is based on one person one vote.

Debating the Democracy Question in Africa

For some commentators (Colin Legum, 1990, for example), the political changes that had taken place in Africa represented nothing less than a “second liberation” for the generality of Africans. If the first liberation was from the clutches of colonialism, the second was from the exercise of unaccountable power by Africa’s post-colonial authoritarian rulers. The significance to be attached to the political reforms that have taken place in Africa since the late 1980s is not, however, something about which there is a great deal of unanimity among African researchers. There is concern expressed among some scholars (Shivji, 1989; Ake, 1994, 1996) that the popular aspirations of Africans for participation in decision-making and for representative and accountable government have been reduced to multi-partyism as if it is only through a multiplicity of parties that meaning could be given to electoral pluralism. These scholars take the view that in Africa’s situation of social and economic underdevelopment, there has to be more to democracy than a multi-party system and ritualistic, periodic elections. In any case, the mostly top-down approach which many regimes took in the promotion of reforms ensured that what many parts of the continent experienced was “engineered” change that sought to narrow the scope for the realisation of popular aspirations. For, above all else, the current “democratic” project is a class-specific project and this fact should not be ignored or underplayed. But this approach to understanding the political reform process is rejected by others (Ibrahim, 1986, 1990; Mandaza and Sachikonye, 1991; Chole and Ibrahim, 1995, for example) who argue that the real feeling of liberty and
liberation from the suffocating grip of authoritarianism should not be dismissed out of hand or underestimated. Although the experience of reform that has taken place in Africa may not be perfect, its gains should be recognised for what they are, namely, small but useful building blocks on the road to a more rounded democracy. For, it is with the reforms that a whole generation of Africans born under single party or military rule are only able to begin to experience choice based on diverse political alternatives.

Criticism in Africa of the quality of the political reforms that have been implemented has come from some of the continent’s leading social scientists like Ake (1994, 1996), Amin (1992), Mafeje (1995), Shivji (1989), Mamdani (1995, 1996), Bangura (1992) and others. The concern which they express is a continuation of an earlier debate which pitched instrumentalists against non-instrumentalists. The instrumentalists were those who during the late 1980s argued that democracy and democratisation could only have full meaning for ordinary Africans if they simultaneously led to the creation of the conditions for the improvement of their livelihood. They linked the necessity and importance of democracy and the struggle for democratisation with the benefits, material and non-material, that will flow from the process. This position was most closely identified with Peter Anyang’ N’yongo (1988a, 1988b). It was contested by non-instrumentalists like Thandika Mkandawire (1988) who make the case for the scholarly and political communities in Africa to appreciate, fight for, and defend democracy not because of its instrumental value or utility but as a political value in itself that is worth having. For them, democracy should be appreciated for what it is and not because it is merely instrumental in the attainment of development or other (supposedly more lofty or relevant) goals. This view is linked to their rejection of what Mkandawire has described elsewhere as the “candyman” approach to understanding the African state and its role in the reform process, in which the legitimacy of the state is tied rigidly, even exclusively to its capacity to provide “candies” to its citizens.

Both the instrumentalist and non-instrumentalist approaches were to be tempered by Bangura’s intervention (Bangura, 1992). Whilst agreeing that democratic values are worth defending for what they are, he insists that they should not be absolutised or turned into fetishes because no democratic system can endure which does not address the livelihood concerns of the populace. It is only by addressing people’s livelihood concerns that their confidence in democratic institutions can be bolstered and democracy consolidated. Yet the question of the conditions necessary for the consolidation of a democratic process is one on which disputes have raged. At one level, some scholars on the left and right of the ideological spectrum argue that the prospects for a stable and consolidated democratic system in Africa are bleak because of the state of underdevelopment on the continent and the crisis of accumulation that has continually afflicted it. In general, scholars taking this view tend to equate or correlate the prospects for stable
democratisation with the level of economic development; the more developed the structures of accumulation in a country the brighter are its prospects for stable democratic development. Their conclusions on Africa’s democratic prospects are, therefore, mostly pessimistic. (For more details on this discussion and a critique of the perspective, see Olukoshi, 1997.)

The position of the pessimists is however challenged by other scholars who point to the example of Europe in the inter-war years and the different variants of fascism that were produced in several countries as well as the contemporary example of the Asian Tigers and the authoritarianism that inheres in their political structures and labour regimes to show that there is no rigid linkage between the level of economic development and the prospects for stable democratisation. Similarly, India, which is one of the poorer countries in the world has been able, in spite of its economic and social difficulties, to sustain formal democratic political institutions. The optimists argue that developed economies could produce authoritarian political regimes as much as developing ones. They also reject the economic determinism of the pessimists, arguing that every historical situation produces struggles for democratisation which, depending on the balance of social forces, might give birth to outcomes that advance popular participation and rights. These scholars are, therefore, of the view that African countries can deliver democracy in spite of their economic underdevelopment. But between the pessimists and optimists, others have pointed to the need to distinguish between democratic struggles and the consolidation of democracy, a distinction which is particularly relevant for the current conjuncture in African history. According to Bangura (1992), for example, while it is possible to have democratic struggles as a constant fact of life in Africa, this should not be confused with democratic consolidation which would require, among other things, a stable system of accumulation.

The fact that the wave of pressures for democratisation that was witnessed in many parts of Africa took place in the context of an ongoing experience of structural adjustment has also generated a debate of its own. At one level, the questions posed have centred on the issue: can an adjusting political economy produce/sustain a “genuine” democratic transition? This issue strikes at the very heart of the political deductions which some scholars have attempted to make from the economic logic of structural adjustment. These deductions centre on two propositions. The first of these is that, all things being equal, the promotion of economic rationality will feed into a process of political rationalisation that, in turn, will be beneficial for emergence of open, democratic systems which do not owe their vitality to patron-clientelist networks. The second is that economic adjustment will lead to the birth of a new bourgeoisie that is not linked to the state by patronage but is rather drilled in the ways of the market; this new bourgeoisie will, in turn, move Africa away from patronage politics towards democracy (Diamond, 1988). These positions are, however, hotly disputed.
by many African researchers who argue that structural adjustment has had highly repressive and authoritarian political consequences. Not only is the programme an external imposition, its austere policy thrust also requires the repression of popular opinion in order for it to be pushed through. This is all the more so as the programme is widely unpopular in Africa and the conditionality clauses used by donors to enforce it encourage accountability to external agencies but not the local population. Moreover, the authors of the adjustment programme have relied on authoritarian regimes for its implementation. Thus, according to this view, adjustment policies cannot contribute to democratisation (Mkandawire and Olukoshi, 1995; Bangura, 1992).

How then does one explain the wave of struggles and agitation for democratisation witnessed in Africa from the late 1980s onwards? Several African researchers (Bangura, Mustapha, Olukoshi, Mkandawire, Mamdani, Shivji, etc.) argue that it is popular rejection of unpopular adjustment programmes which took a heavy social toll and undermined the basis of the post-colonial “social contract” that explains the immediate domestic context of the resurgence of struggles for democratisation on the continent. Thus, rather than adjustment leading to democratic outcomes in a positive manner that is organic to the gains which its authors claimed would flow from it, it is in fact struggles against the negative economic, social, and political consequences of the programme that resulted in popular agitation for political reform.

Yet, the elected governments of Africa have persisted with the implementation of the adjustment programmes in what some perceive as the greatest threat to the on-going quest for political reforms. On account of this, some scholars (Mkandawire, 1996) have coined the concept of “choiceless democracies” to describe those African countries that have clung to structural adjustment in spite of having newly elected governments which, in some cases, rose to power on the back of popular anti-adjustment sentiments. There is a widely-articulated view (Mkandawire, 1996) that elected African governments might do well to seek ways of charting alternative economic paths that will not undermine the democratic gains resulting from the fragile political transitions over which they are presiding. In this regard, a renewed debate has started on the prospects for and problems of the institution in Africa of developmental state projects which are also, by definition, democratic in outlook. While some see a contradiction between the developmental state (which by definition is interventionist and “strong”) and democracy, others insist that such a project is possible in part because the continent’s recent political history is a history of the failure of authoritarian rule, but also because Africa’s multiple pluralism has of necessity “condemned” it to democratic modes of governance even if political leaders do not recognise this fact (Mkandawire, 1996; Olukoshi, 1996).
During the course of the early 1990s, Mamdani launched a new angle to the debate on the content and quality of the on-going experience of democratisation in Africa. At one level, he drew attention to the fact that Uganda was vigorously attempting to develop a non-party “democracy” separate from the prevalent experience in Africa where most countries had already equated pluralism with multi-partyism. Yet, a pluralistic political order need not necessarily be multi-party in order for it to be representative; indeed, incumbent regimes might make nonsense of multi-partyism simply by financing their friends and collaborators to establish them. This is what Mobutu did in Zaire and took the sting off donor pressure on himself and his regime. Although the Ugandan experience is recent, it deserves to be watched closely for potential lessons which it might bring to the African democratic experience. In this regard, Mamdani identified two trends in the current African quest for a transition from authoritarianism.

The first consists of the institutionalisation of structures of political representation which do not necessarily involve or deliver participation and those that place emphasis on popular participation over representation through multi-party politics. Critics of the Ugandan “model” (Ssenkumba, 1996) however insist that it is a contradiction in terms to speak of democracy without multiple political parties that can freely contest elections. They raise doubts about the utility of the Ugandan experience given that there are distinct political associations in that country which, though not recognised officially as parties, fulfil that role in de facto terms.

At another level, Mamdani (1995, 1996) launched criticisms at African social scientists whose notions of democracy are heavily influenced by those developed not out of the African historical experience but in the West. According to him, African researchers have uncritically imbibed Western notions of democracy such as the rule of law and civil/human/citizenship rights which while being meaningful in the context of the history of Europe, are essentially meaningless when applied in rural Africa where the bulk of the people live. What does it mean to struggle for the rule of law in a rural setting in which the local chief is the accuser, the prosecutor, the executioner and the final court of appeal for the ordinary peasant and his/her household? This exercise of absolute power in which executive, legislative and judicial powers are embodied in one person/institution is not uncommon in rural Africa—indeed, it was central to the bifurcation of the colonial state and the inauguration of decentralised despotism—and yet researchers have not made much of an attempt to capture this in their discourses on democracy, especially with regard to the now-fashionable reference that is constantly made to an idealised civil society. In the end, the democratic rights about which most African researchers have been talking are little more than the rights of an urban or urban-based minority which is also the constituency that profits the most from notions of human and citizenship rights derived from the Western historical experience. After all, it was those rights
that were, on racial grounds, denied the elite that led the nationalist struggle for independence and once those rights were available to that elite and the urban classes, the need to free the rural populace from the despotism of chiefly power that is perpetuated in the name of “tradition” has been neglected.

But against Mamdani’s plea for the development of a democratic discourse derived from Africa’s historical experience, other researchers (Ibrahim, 1990; Chole and Ibrahim, 1995, for example) have pointed out that the democratic ideal is a universal and indivisible one with attributes that are also universally applicable to all contexts where oppression and unrepresentative government are still the norm. Although a case can be made for greater attention to be paid to local peculiarities and priorities, this still cannot detract from the essential universality of the democratic experience. That experience is itself the product, at any given conjuncture, of the totality of the struggles of all peoples from all parts of the world. The democratic ideal is, therefore, not the monopoly of any culture or historical experience; it is the common heritage of humankind. Africans should not shy away from claiming that heritage for the purpose of enriching their political experience. Moreover, Mamdani’s account on the bifurcation of the state and the relegation of the rural populace to the status of subjects in contrast to urban-based citizens to whom the idiom of rights derived from European political history is relevant has also been challenged by scholars like Michael Chege who insist that the sharp dichotomisation between the urban and rural posited by him are as unacceptable as the account he presents of the relationship between chiefs and the rural populace.

The dispute between the “particularists” and the “universalists” has been refracted into the response which the introduction of the “new” political conditionality by Western donor countries has elicited. Critics of the new conditionality range from those who reject it on nationalistic grounds to those who do not see any prospect of external pressure bringing about or sustaining meaningful political reform without a credible domestic constituency to fight for those reforms and those who think that the donor agenda for reform is incompatible with the local popular agenda for change. Supporters of political conditionality point to the useful role which donors played in pressing some of the most recalcitrant authoritarian regimes in Africa to bow to local popular pressure and introduce multi-party politics. Scholars falling into this category see a complementarity, at certain points at least, between local struggles and positive, “well-meaning”, and sustained external pressure. Moreover, they argue that but for donors and international observers, many of Africa’s authoritarian rulers would have striven harder to reject and suppress domestic pressures for political reform. The concern of the critics of political conditionality derives in part from their abhorrence of the whole notion of conditionality in the relationship between donors and Africa and their fear that once it is accepted that external powers
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It is the same broadly similar lines of disagreement that have greeted the World Bank’s programme of governance which the institution devised as part of its contribution to the quest for “good” government in Africa. While some welcome the Bank’s emphasis on transparency, openness in the governmental process, the rule of law, the free flow of information, and predictability, seeing these attributes as essential to the prospects for democratic consolidation, others insist that the Bank’s proposals are little more than an exercise in public relations since the adjustment programme which it promotes only reinforces the structural imperatives that drive leaders into authoritarian ways. Moreover, the Bank’s governance programme has been dismissed by its African critics as an attempt at blunting the political edge of the popular struggles for democratisation in Africa by replacing them with technocratic notions that are meant to “save” a discredited programme of structural adjustment. Yet, the mode by which the programme has been introduced to African countries and is being managed is hardly transparent or open. Thus, what the Bank claims to want to achieve in the arena of political governance in Africa is not complemented by its own practice on the continent. The position has also been argued that the governance question in Africa is not essentially a technical or accounting problem but a political one. Thus what is called for in Africa is not “good” governance but democratic governance (Mkandawire, 1996; Olukoshi, 1996).

One issue which at present dominates the current discourse in Africa about the quest for democratisation on the continent relates to the resurgence of ethnic and religious identities side by side with the opening up of the political space. Whereas some commentators, a minority, see this development as the product of the democratisation process, others insist that the process merely provided a vent for the open articulation and expression of identities which post-colonial African governments hitherto had vigorously suppressed as part of their highly authoritarian nation-building projects. In this regard, the latter category of scholars argue that it is not the democratisation process that produces a resurgence in ethnic and religious identities; rather, it is the decades of authoritarian rule and its legacy. Still others point to the role which repressive economic policies like structural adjustment have played in encouraging the resurgence of ethnic and communal consciousness on the back of state retrenchment and the collapse of the public social infrastructure. A few other scholars however insist that even if a correlation is established between democratisation and ethnic and religious consciousness, there is nothing that suggests that those forms of consciousness are inherently inimical to democracy. If anything, properly
managed, they could feed into the process of formation of a civic identity that is essential and complementary to the construction of a democratic order. (For a summary of this discourse, see Adekanye, 1995; Olukoshi and Laakso, 1996.)

Related to the question of ethnicity and religion in the democratic transition is the issue of how to manage the state under the changing political conditions of the 1980s. In this regard, most of the debate in Africa has pitched federalists against centralists. Jibrin Ibrahim, for example, has vociferously argued the case for the adoption by African countries of decentralised, federal systems that will accommodate and cater for local autonomy. He goes so far as to equate federalism with democratic governance and Jacobin centralism with authoritarian rule that is out of tune with the realities of an Africa where identities are being recomposed in a manner that demands flexibility, decentralisation and local autonomy. His view is both qualified and reinforced in certain respects by Wamba-dia-Wamba who has advocated constitutional and political mechanisms that will allow the populace to make “democratic demands” on the federal state. But scholars like Neocosmos insist that there is nothing inherently democratic about a federal system just as there is nothing inherently authoritarian about a centralised system. The democratic content of any arrangement will have to be a product of local struggles. He also cautions against what he sees as an uncritical celebration of ethnicity; it could, improperly handled, produce political monstrosities that will roll back the democratic gains of the people (see Olukoshi and Laakso, 1996, for the details of these and other contributions on this issue).

The place of civil society in the African democratic transition is one which is very widely acknowledged by various categories of scholars in Africa. But whereas some see civil society as a whole as an arena of democracy and freedom, others warn that it is more complex than that, containing democratic and anti-democratic forces. Furthermore, while many define civil society in opposition to the state, Mamdani, Wamba-dia-Wamba, and others caution that approach might lead to wrong conclusions about the democratic transition since the state and civil society inter-penetrate each other, existing as they do in a relationship that is complementary and contradictory (Mamdani, 1990; Mamdani and Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1995). The state, for example, can and does intervene in the arena of civil society to organise support for its projects and attempt to mould political outcomes. It is precisely because of this that moments arise when the forces for democratisation in civil society are weakened and at other moments, they gain in strength. Other scholars (Adekanye, 1995, for example) have concentrated their attention on the ways in which factors such as ethnicity, religion, clan, and gender mediate relations in civil society and shape responses to democratic processes.
Discussions about the future of democracy in Africa have been dominated by a review of Africa’s immediate post-independence experience and South Africa’s recent democratic transition. The dominant theme that appears to be emerging centres on the view that a disconnection is occurring in South Africa between the political movements that were at the forefront of the liberation struggle and the social movements that underlay them (Neocosmos, 1996, for example). This process, which South Africa is beginning to experience, is but a replay of the earlier experience which the rest of sub-Saharan Africa underwent after the struggle for independence was won. The decline of grass roots politics and the rise of statist politics represents one of the enduring dangers facing the quest for a meaningful democratic order in Africa that is at once popular and participatory. This of course suggests that the notion of South African exceptionalism ought to be treated with scepticism as it tends to obscure more than it reveals about the prospects for sustaining political change in that country.

On a final note, it is perhaps worth noting that there are a number of issues, the most important of them centring on gender, generation, and the processes of “globalisation”, which are still largely under-studied in the African discourse on democratisation. Most African researchers would however agree that they deserve closer attention and should be enquired into; in fact, several continental research organisations like CODESRIA, SARIPS/SAPES Trust, and OSSREA have established networks dedicated to examining these questions in the context of the on-going quest for an enduring foundation for democracy in Africa. Also not sufficiently researched by African academics is the relationship of the military to the democratic process, a question which is of extreme importance given that in most countries, the military constitutes the single biggest obstacle to the institutionalisation of democracy. The question of how to subject the military to the authority of elected politicians and re-orient the institution to keep out of politics and upgrade its professionalism is probably one of the most important challenges facing most African governments. It is an issue that deserves urgent scholarly and policy attention if the reversal of the transition to elected government is not to become a renewed feature of political life in Africa.

Agents and Institutions of Democracy in Africa
—A Synopsis of six Essays

All of the six papers which were prepared for the democratisation panel of the Partnership Africa conference of June 1997 reflect several different aspects of the concerns which have dominated the intellectual discourse on democracy in Africa. The papers commissioned focus their discussion on two issues, namely, the institutions and agencies of democracy and democratisation in contemporary Africa. The institutions and agencies on which they focus are varied and include opposition parties and associations, the media,
the judiciary, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including women’s groups. Several of the authors note the wide-ranging changes which have taken place in Africa in the post-Cold War period; one of them Ebrima Sall, notes that for the first time since the 1970s, there are now more elected leaders participating in the summits of the organisation of African Unity (OAU) than unelected ones. Their concerns touch on the relationship between the universal and the particular, the “traditional” and the “modern”, the local and the regional, the state and civil society, the executive and the judiciary, and the state and the media in the on-going quest for the reconstitution of the foundations of politics in post-colonial Africa. In this respect, the essays offer a fairly comprehensive coverage of the main issues that are germane to a detailed understanding of the scope, promise and limits of the contemporary African democratic project.

The Role and Place of the Opposition in African Politics

The assessments which the authors make of Africa’s contemporary quest for political reform vary from the moderately optimistic to the moderately pessimistic. Joseph Diescho, for example, notes on the basis of his evaluation of the experience in Southern Africa, that although the end of the Cold War provided a historic opportunity for the re-casting of opposition politics away from the East-West conflictual terms in which they were posed (for example, RENAMO versus FRELIMO, UNITA versus MPLA etc.), and although most of the countries in the region are now formally operating multi-party political dispensations, the prospects for the dawn of a new era of democratic politics, based on the existence of a robust opposition, are still very poor indeed. Diescho advances several reasons for this assessment: the severe incapacity of opposition parties in Southern Africa to mobilise the resources, material and human, necessary for keeping them active; the extensive capacity enjoyed by the state and its ability, derived from this, to co-opt most people through the dispensation of patronage; the co-optation of senior opposition figures into the ruling party/elite through the offer of senior governmental office, sometimes as part of a process of national reconciliation; the inability of most opposition parties to carve a clear and distinct identity for themselves vis-à-vis the ruling party; the culture of fear and silence that is evident in many countries in spite of the facade of multi-partyism, which culture is reinforced by the “traditional” African respect for elders; the ethnic undertones that are central to the national political process and which are often deployed against the opponents of the ruling elites; the error, committed by many of the opposition activists of projecting an anti-liberation movement image of their parties in a region where the memories of settler colonialism and institutionalised racism still run deep and where association with the historic project of liberation still confers a great deal of popular legitimacy; and the popular instinct, summarised by Diescho under
the notion of the “politics of entitlement”, to continue to reward the leaders of the liberation struggle who, after the achievement of freedom, take on new roles as “fathers of the nation”.

But beyond the above-mentioned reasons which Diescho adduces for the travails of the opposition, he draws attention to what he considers to be the most important, overarching factor constraining opposition politics and the prospects for democratisation on the basis of political pluralism. According to him, the Western notion of the loyal opposition is one which is non-existent in “traditional” Africa and in African culture; Africans “... experimenting with democracy ... have no experience with the kind of opposition necessary to strengthen a republic” and the “... whole practice of opposition is alien to the universe of thought in African societies”. Furthermore, “… there is no neutral word for opposition in existing African languages. To oppose in African languages means something bordering on permanent disagreement with a degree of hostility”. The applicable words in Southern African languages that approximate the Western notion of opposition “... do not include the element of loyalty, namely to criticise in order to improve, refine and make better ... by providing an alternative. The opposer wants to “destroy” the system, the leader of the system “protects” him/herself against the destroyer. ... Both the message and the messenger are thought to be doing wrong. To oppose them, therefore, means to get them out of the playing field, to eliminate them”.

Little wonder then that for many ordinary Africans, there is very little desire to side with the opposition; it is also a central reason why the opposition is not viable. This is reinforced by what Diescho describes as the African identity which is “... based on “belonging to” rather than “differing from” the collective. Differing could and does have severe personal, spiritual and material consequences”. Matters are also not helped by the low level of education prevalent in most African countries and the authoritarian legacy of colonialism and institutionalised racism which treated every form of dissent as destructive of the existing political and social order. The colonial legacy also created an incongruency between the “African self” and the “colonial personality”; this situation was not redressed in the post-colonial period through a restoration, by the leaders of the continent, of Africa’s pre-colonial past. Thus it is that the only real, discernible sources of opposition in Southern Africa today are the foreign governments, represented by their diplomatic missions, whose support provided a boost to the ruling liberation movements during their years of struggle and the organised, mainly foreign business sectors that are central to the market economies which various regimes are attempting to construct. Incumbent governments find it hard to ignore these unofficial sources of opposition because of the leverage, mostly economic, which they enjoy. This, according to Diescho, is likely to be the situation for a long time to come. In order for the political opposition to have a chance at all, there would have to be a major shift in the frame-
work within which politics is conducted, including a willingness by the ruling party to commit “class suicide” and the systematic education of the populace in ways of thinking and acting that will be conducive to oppositional activity.

The Media and the Promotion of Democracy and Human Rights in Africa

If, for Diescho, the opposition has practically no chance of making a difference in contemporary African politics, David Lush examines the mixed fortunes of the media in the context of the recent efforts at political liberalisation. Noting that the media and media practitioners played a central role in the post-Cold War, post-Apartheid struggles for democratisation that unfolded across the continent, he points out that the “new” political order on the continent has nevertheless not produced a qualitative transformation in the experience of media practitioners. Repressive practices of various kinds have continued to be unleashed against the free, independent media in spite of the re-birth of multi-party politics. Strategies which regimes have employed against the independent press have included arrests and detention of editorial staff, the imposition of laws aimed at curbing the freedom of the press, the implementation of direct and indirect forms of censorship, the levying of huge, discriminatory import taxes on the inputs required for keeping the independent media functioning, the introduction in some countries of newspaper sales taxes that work against the private press, the prohibition of public institutions and agencies from advertising in the private media as a strategy for undermining their financial viability, and the denial of journalistic access to information available to public officials on the grounds that they are classified material.

According to Lush, the government-inspired constraints faced by the media in many African countries have not been assuaged by a range of other problems connected to the nature of the press and the way the journalistic profession is practised by many of those involved in the trade. These problems include the low and/or declining professional standards among journalists (including the neglect of the responsibilities associated with freedom), the failure of the free press to develop adequate structures for accounting to the reading public, the difficult economic environment within which the media must seek to operate, the susceptibility of sections of the independent media to extremist ethnic propaganda (especially in charged situations of conflict as was recently witnessed in Rwanda), susceptibility of media personnel, most of whom are poorly paid, to corrupt inducements, the factionalisation of media workers along various lines, including state versus privately employed practitioners, with adverse consequences for their capacity to mobilise themselves for the defence of their self-interests, the inability of the media in most countries to forge
credible links with other civil society groups, the urban bias of the media and their inability to establish a meaningful rural presence, and the withdrawal of donor funding for the independent press in the wake of the formal end of apartheid and its destabilising consequences in Southern Africa.

Lush notes that with the exception of South Africa where an independent, publicly-nominated and -screened board was appointed for the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) a year before the 1994 all-race elections, in most other parts of the continent, incumbents used their control over the state-owned media to build up propaganda advantages for themselves in the multi-party elections which they scheduled. By the same token, these governments barely tolerated the independent media and spared no opportunity to squeeze them, using all means available.

Apart from the limits imposed on press freedom by African governments, the problems posed by insufficient levels of professionalism and the adverse economic climate in most countries of the continent, the experience of media liberalisation has also been marked by a general failure to seriously take on board and reflect the interests of women, including female journalists. Thus, for all the explosion that has been witnessed in the number and range of independent media organisations, there remains a persistent gender bias in the media sector. Furthermore, the liberalisation process has not been accompanied by the development of public service journalism, especially among broadcasters. Most of the so-called independent broadcasters who have been licensed by governments to operate are very closely linked to the ruling elite and observe an editorial policy that primarily focuses on the broadcast of music and religious sermons while assiduously avoiding news and related information. The community media sector, arguably as central to democratisation as local government, remains highly underdeveloped in much of Africa.

Lush observes, with concern, that the advances which have been made in the fields of telecommunications and information technology have largely eluded the majority of Africans, with the consequence that telephone, telex, internet, fax, and postal services on the continent are among the most expensive and inefficient in the world. This state of affairs has adverse consequences for the development of the media and the freedom of expression. It was in a bid to assuage this state of affairs that the Media Institute for Southern Africa introduced MISANET to link its members to the internet. The MISANET has also promoted networking among journalists in Southern Africa and has been a useful resource for the rapid dissemination of information on the violation of the freedom of the press in the region. It is this same spirit of developing creative responses to the constraints facing the media in Africa that led African journalists gathered in Namibia in May 1991 to adopt the Windhoek Declaration on the necessity for Africa to encourage and nurture a free, pluralistic press offering a diversity of
information, opinion, and ideas. This Declaration brought down the curtain on the state-centric New World Information Order which African and other Third World governments had pushed for; the Declaration has been adopted by the OAU, the Southern African Development Community, and journalists in other developing regions of the world. May 3, the day the Declaration was made has also been adopted as World Press Freedom Day by the United Nations. But the challenges ahead for the African media remain enormous.

The pressures from governments against media practitioners are likely to persist and, with them, the need for legal reform aimed at eliminating restrictive laws. Yet, market forces on their own cannot be relied upon to bring about media plurality, diversity and independence. A current challenge which Africans will have to meet is the creeping concentration of media ownership, the dilution of diversity, and the enthronement of the profit motive over and above the public purpose. Journalists themselves will need to take concerted steps to upgrade their professionalism and sense of responsibility. Donor countries like Sweden could play a role in strengthening the media in Africa by, *inter alia*, taking on a role in encouraging media law reform, the training of journalists, supporting independent media initiatives, promoting gender equality, and facilitating the creation of local funding agencies that could support the development of an independent local press.

The Role and Place of the Judiciary in Africa’s Quest for Democracy

Using a detailed case-study of Zimbabwe’s experience since 1980 when it attained independence, Tendai Biti focuses on the role of the judiciary in the promotion of the rule of law, human rights and democracy in Africa. He notes that in the context of the high-handedness and authoritarianism of the ruling ZANU-PF government, Zimbabweans have, on the whole, been fortunate to have a judiciary that has been willing to rule against the executive and uphold the constitution in matters that border on the rights and liberties of the populace. This has been so in spite of the fact that Zimbabwe, like most other African countries, embraced the essentially authoritarian and statist ideology of developmentalism at independence. This ideology, whilst purporting to concentrate national energies on the redressing of economic backwardness, also simultaneously provided justification in many countries for the neglect of civil liberties, human rights, and political pluralism. The judiciary, often co-opted into the developmentalist agenda, has, in most countries opted for a cautious and conservative approach that ensures that it does not come into collision with the executive even where the basic rights of the citizenry are denied and/or violated. Fortunately for Zimbabwe, the judiciary was able to distance itself from the ZANU-PF’s version of developmentalism and in so doing, took the path of activism. While this judicial
activism has never been sufficient to prevent the high-handedness of the ZANU-PF government, it has at least offered a beacon of hope by acting from time to time as a buffer against the arbitrariness and excesses of the state.

According to Biti, several factors, including some of a historical nature, account for the willingness of the Zimbabwean judiciary to hold the executive accountable for its actions. These include the constitutional guarantee of independence conferred on it and which makes it the only body responsible for safeguarding the constitution, the enjoyment by the judiciary of the power of constitutional review, the fact that until 1994, a majority of judges came from the bar and until 1985, most of them were appointees of the pre-independence regime, and the inclusion of a justiciable bill of rights in the constitution. Drawing on the constitution, the Zimbabwean judiciary made several landmark rulings through which it attempted to prevent the government from arbitrarily detaining citizens, denying the right of the people to private property, using death by hanging as a form of punishment, delaying the implementation of court rulings that are not favourable to it, separating Zimbabwean wives from their non-Zimbabwean husbands through denial of rights of residence to the latter by the immigration authorities, and scrutinising the actions of the executive during the state of emergency declared by the government, among others. Predictably, the executive has never been pleased with the activism of the judiciary and its displeasure has been fuelled by the fact that the ZANU-PF regime has always regarded the independence constitution as nothing less than an imposed liability which it was forced to accept during the Lancaster House negotiations.

Biti observes that in responding to the activism of the Zimbabwean judiciary, the government’s approach in the first few years of independence consisted of routine political denunciations, often in parliament, of judges with ministers claiming that the bench was dominated by “unrepentant” appointees of the ancien regime who were bent on preventing the will of the “people” from prevailing. From the late 1980s however, there was a change of tactics on the part of the executive whereby public attacks on judges were replaced with an even more insidious form of attack on the independence of the judiciary, namely, the routine introduction of constitutional amendments directly aimed at overturning all landmark rulings which the government and the ruling party found to be unacceptable. Thus using its big parliamentary majority, the ZANU-PF government has systematically attempted to blunt the effectiveness of the judiciary and to oust its jurisdiction in several important matters that bear on the rights of the citizenry. It has also resorted to a host of out-dated laws inherited from the racist colonial regime which it replaced to curtail the freedom of movement, association and expression of the populace. For Biti, this development is indicative of the fundamentally weak nature of the Zimbabwean constitution which allows for ambiguity through the concept of parliamentary sovereignty, con-
tains a bill of rights which is not however entrenched, and supposedly represents a fixed “ground norm” which, however, is not constant.

Reflecting on the experience of the Zimbabwean judiciary, Biti draws a number of lessons on the possibilities and limits of the role of the judiciary in the democratic process. He argues that while an independent and active judiciary is important for any democratic process, it is erroneous to place all hope on that one institution. This is because where it does not opt to be docile, the work of the judiciary can always be constrained by a powerful ruling clique operating a weak constitution and determined to do everything, legal and extralegal, to perpetuate itself in power. A strengthened constitution that is protected from arbitrary legislative amendments might also help as would a bill of rights that is entrenched but in the end, “...the greatest safeguard against abuse and dictatorship is not the court but mobilised civil society itself”. This is all the more so as the state in Zimbabwe, as in the rest of Africa, constantly shifts the legal baseline to suit itself. In such a context, it is useless to speak of the rule of law since the law itself is substantially unjust. The solution to Africa’s democratic crisis therefore lies “...more in politics than in the law”. Donor countries like Sweden will do well to bear this in mind and channel their support to the civil society groups that are in the thick of the local political struggles against authoritarian rule and for far-ranging constitutional and legal reforms. Such support for pro-democracy civil society activists should not, of course, preclude assistance to the judiciary in the form of training, books, and equipment; it only emphasises the essentially political nature of the struggle for democracy in Africa.

Women in the Struggle for Democracy in Africa

J.A. Thomas, drawing on the experience from Sierra Leone, attempts to underline the central role which African women have played in the quest for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the transition from authoritarian to democratic rule. According to her, Sierra Leonean women have a fairly long history of self-organisation aimed at increasing their representation and voice in the political process of their country, increasing their presence in the structures of government, improving their levels of literacy, and raising their profile in the national economy. In spite of these efforts at self-organisation, Sierra Leonean women have generally continued to be disadvantaged and under-represented in the affairs of their country. For example, in the period up to 1996, only 3.5 per cent of the members of parliament were women. Similarly, prior to 1992, only two women held full cabinet positions. In spite of this, women’s groups were undaunted and their role was enhanced by the situation of instability that developed in the country following the onset of a civil war that pitched rebels organised under the banner of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) against the government,
and armed forces of Sierra Leone. The war developed in the context of the deteriorating economic situation in the country, the collapse of the country’s social and physical infrastructure, the spread of corruption, and widespread popular dissatisfaction with the ruling All People’s Congress (APC).

As the war spread throughout the country (with the exception of the capital city, Freetown), Sierra Leonean women mobilised themselves into a movement for peace which called vociferously for a negotiated settlement between the government and the rebels. The women were fired by the evidence of generalised suffering associated with the war which began to come into the open; they also noted that women constituted the majority of the nearly one million displaced persons and 300,000 refugees that were camped in Liberia and Guinea. Thomas points out that the women’s groups that responded to what was a veritable state of national emergency lobbied both the government and the RUF and pressured the international community through representations to foreign embassies to support their plea for a cessation of hostilities and the restoration of peace. They also enlisted the support of religious, community and youth groups. Public activities which they organised in support of their cause included seminars, debates and marches. The persistence of the women and the weight of the pressure which piled on the military eventually resulted in the declaration of a cease-fire in the middle of 1995. The cease-fire was followed with plans for a return to constitutional rule and once again, women took a frontline role not only in campaigning for free and fair elections devoid of violence but also attempted to upgrade their representation in the political process.

When the Mada Bio military regime which displaced the Valentine Strasser regime that had itself come to power in 1992 through a coup against the APC government attempted to scuttle the return to elected government, women were among the most vociferous in condemning their machinations and insisting on the need for the elections to be held as scheduled. In the run-up to the elections of February/March 1996, women’s groups took on a frontline role in educating voters and encouraging women not only to exercise their voting rights but also to seek elected office. They also played an active part in the elections as well as serving as polling agents and presiding officers. It is partly thanks to the enthusiastic vigilance of the women that the elections were largely free and fair. It was, according to Thomas, the extensive monitoring and facilitation role which most of the activist women took on that partly accounts for their limited representation in the contest for parliamentary seats (they constituted only 6 per cent of the parliamentarians even though they are over 50 per cent of registered voters), party positions and paramount chieftaincies. Still, the elected government responded to the generalised increase in the political activism of Sierra Leonean women by creating a Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs, the first of its kind in the history of Sierra Leone. The experience at self-organisation and popular mobilisation which women developed between
1991 and 1996 has certainly increased their self-confidence and it is a source of encouragement to them that they can, with self-confidence, take their own destinies into their hands as well as insist that those in power should listen to their views and address their concerns.

Non-Governmental Organisations in the Struggle for Human Rights and Democracy

The role which NGOs can play in defending human rights and supporting the process of democratisation constitutes the focus of Chrysogone Zougmore’s essay. Drawing heavily on the experience of the membership-based Burkinabe Movement for Human and Peoples’ Rights (MBDHP) which was set up in May 1989 and of which he is Secretary-General, he attempts to show how in the context of Burkina Faso’s guided transition from prolonged authoritarian rule to multi-party electoral politics, his organisation has played an active role in articulating and defending the human rights and democratic aspirations of the populace. The activities which the MBDHP has embarked upon for this purpose have included campaigns aimed at sensitising the people to their basic rights, the evaluation of all laws with a view to assessing their implications for human and peoples’ rights, support for victims of arbitrary action by the state and its agencies, and campaigns for the freedom of the press. It has also helped to establish popular networks across Burkina Faso from the village-level to the national-level for daily action in defence of democracy and human rights. Through these networks, it has been able to raise its active membership to 15,000, making it a genuinely popular organisation. The grassroots activists of the organisation assist the local, largely illiterate population in a range of matters centring around their rights.

In order to bring the Burkinabe constitution nearer to the populace, the MBDHP has translated the document into the four main local languages in the country. It also runs annual training programmes for its grassroots activists in order to enhance their skills in identifying and managing problems that concern the rights of the populace. Similarly, it facilitates a host of conferences and seminars and in February 1996, decided to open a “rights shop” which is located in Ouagadougou and serves as an identifiable public point of reference available free of charge to individuals seeking advice, information, and training on matters pertaining to human rights and law enforcement in Burkina Faso. Plans are at an advanced stage to open two other such shops in Koudougou and Ouahigouya. Zougmore also points to the important role which the MBDHP has been playing in liaising and networking with other NGOs and civil society groups interested in the advancement of democracy and human rights. The success which it has recorded in this regard has helped to enhance its profile as a respected and credible voice, which respect and credibility it has deployed to good effect in lobbying the
government on a range of political and economic issues relevant to its mandate. Its election observers have been active participants in the national and municipal elections that have been held in the country since 1991; it has also investigated police and military brutality against the civil population, most recently in Garango where two student demonstrators were killed by the police and Réo where a peasant boy was murdered by the law enforcement agencies, an act which sparked off communal riots. In sum, the MBDHP has become the main national watchdog focusing on the state of human rights and civil liberties in Burkina Faso and it has recorded tremendous success in its self-assigned role.

Emerging Regional Approaches to the Promotion of Democracy

The rapid spread of political reforms in sub-Saharan Africa in the period from the late 1980s has resulted in the growth of interest in the prospects for a regional approach to advancing democracy. This issue forms the focus of Ebrima Sall’s essay and he argues that there are two levels at which a regional approach is developing. The first level involves the re-orientation of existing regional organisations like the OAU, the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to enable them take on a role in the democratisation process, with implications for the principle of non-interference in the affairs of neighbours which was once held to be sacrosanct by African countries. Unable to stay above or stand aloof from the wind of change that has been blowing across the continent since the late 1980s, these regional organisations have taken a keen interest in creating structures that enable them to observe elections, offer electoral assistance within the limits of their resources, establish and/or rejuvenate structures for conflict prevention and management, and engage NGOs active in the campaign for democracy. The OAU, for example, which formally does not have the promotion of democracy as one of the objectives outlined in its charter decided in 1990 to commit itself to “...further the democratisation of [Africa] ... and ... the consolidation of democratic institutions ...”. By May 1997, the organisation had not only set up a Conflict Management Centre but had also observed over 60 elections and referenda across the continent. Similarly, ECOWAS, through ECOMOG, has taken an active part in the restoration of peace to Liberia and the organisation of elections aimed at returning that country to a constitutional path.

At the second level, the movement towards political reform in Africa has, according to Sall, given impetus to the formation of new regional civil society organisations. These organisations include associations of professionals such as the West African Journalists Association (WAJA), AAWORD, the association of female African academics, and AAPS, the
association of African Political Scientists. New pro-democracy NGO networks have also emerged across the continent, including such well-known groupings as APRONET, FEMNET, Gerrdes-Africa, Nairobi Peace Initiative, the Africa Leadership Forum, WILDAF, and CLADDO, among others. Furthermore, trade union federations such as the Organisation for African Trade Union University (OATUU) have built a democracy component into their activities for the benefit of the continental trade union and labour movement. At the same time, non-governmental research centres such as CODESRIA, SAPES, OSSREA, and AACC have invested considerable energy in studying the process of transition from authoritarianism to democracy, the pre-requisites for democratic governance, the trends in constitutionalism which are emerging across the continent, and the challenges of democratic consolidation in the context of continuing economic decline, among others. Through their research networks, they have assisted Africans to develop comparative insights into the constraints and opportunities associated with the current political conjuncture on the continent.

There is no doubt, according to Sall, that Africa has made some significant advances in the field of political reform but he stresses also that the process of change continues to be constrained by a variety of factors, not least among them, the fact that in some cases, the full potentials of the emerging regional approach for extending the frontiers of democracy have been stymied by the fact that some of Africa’s regional hegemons are themselves under authoritarian (military) rule. He cites the specific example of West Africa where Nigeria, by far the most important regional player, is ruled by a military government that is distinguished by its high-handedness. Apart from this, regionalism is also limited by the financial difficulties that constrain the activism and campaigning power of the groups that have embraced a regional focus. Matters are not helped in this regard by the continuing economic and social crises in much of Africa and their adverse implications for the quest for political reforms on the continent. Furthermore, the national context within which the regionalist approach to democratisation is developing is a constraining factor in the sense that some national authorities persist in trying to restrict the freedom of expression, assembly and research in spite of their formal embrace of political pluralism. Clearly then, the full potentials of a regional approach to political change are yet to be realised; donor countries like Sweden can assist in accelerating the positive trends which are emerging by supporting the governance and capacity building programmes of the inter-state regional organisations, regional NGOs, and independent national electoral and constitutional commissions. Above all these however, Sall calls for the sharing of experiences between Africa and Sweden with a view to fashioning alternatives to neo-liberalism; that will be the one of most important contributions which Sweden can make to the African aspiration for a
popular, participatory democracy within the framework of a developmental state that is also, by definition, democratic.

Coming to Grips with the Democracy Question in Africa

There is no doubt that the various essays summarised in the foregoing paragraphs offer very interesting insights to the problems and prospects of democratic change in Africa. In responding to them, I point only to very general issues which tie up with other questions that have been raised in the growing literature on transition to democracy on the continent. In this regard, the first main issue I would like to underline, and I do so in agreement with Ibrahim whom I cited earlier, is the fact that democracy never has been and never will be the monopoly of any one culture or people. On the contrary, it is my view that democracy is essentially part of the broad consciousness of all peoples and cultures and to the extent that democracy essentially entails notions of social justice and participation by people in decisions that affect their daily lives, to that extent democracy is universal and is also at the same time a universal heritage. Being universal does not preclude local specificities to the way democracy is built and sustained in particular contexts; indeed, to the extent that no two national histories and no two cultures are the same, to that extent, no two democracies are exactly the same in design and in practice. The institutions of democracy always embody and reflect the specific historical circumstances of every democratic country and what may be seen as acceptable and even natural to one democracy (for example, the notion of a constitutional monarchy) might be seen as completely abhorrent to another (for example countries like the United States and France that are fiercely republican). Even the distribution of power between and within the executive, the judiciary, and the legislature, the nature of the electoral and party system, and the structure of accountability are products specific to the historical experiences of different countries.

Of course histories and cultures are not insulated from one another and external influences; that is precisely why they are not static. It is also why it is thoroughly misleading to claim that the values of modern democracy are exclusive to one particular culture. To the extent that the entire history of humankind has consisted in part of across-the-board borrowing by peoples from one another, to that extent the values that we associate with democracy today are in fact a universal heritage to which all peoples can justly lay claim; they are not the monopolies of one people. This is all the more so as there is no finite end to democracy; it is constantly renewed and enriched as experience is accumulated locally and globally about what is just and what is unjust. Thus, once again, it is not helpful to argue that some countries have reached the end of the road as far as democracy is concerned; quite apart from the fact that democracy is not finite, it is also open to reversals.
and erosion that pose fresh challenges of renewal. Following from all of this, I think it is as profoundly misleading to claim that democracy is organic to one culture as it is fallacious to assert that some cultures, by their constitution, are not open to democratic forms of governance. To argue that democracy is constrained by culture simply because notions such as the “loyal” opposition that are thought to be central to a functioning democracy are absent from indigenous languages is to be extremely simplistic in a manner that also smacks of a certain cultural imperialism. Languages evolve and as they do, they take in new vocabularies; surely, the English, French, German or Hausa words for democracy were imported into their vocabularies. Furthermore, there have been several leaps forward in our definition of democracy since the word was first applied in its Greek original: after all, democracy in ancient Greece excluded participation by women and slaves.

I have devoted some time to discussing history, culture, the particular and the universal in order to underline the point that great care must be taken in handling assistance to African countries in the area of democracy. The temptation to embark upon the wholesale exportation of institutions and practices on the assumption that what is described as “Western” democracy is the ideal towards which we must all strive and against which all else must be measured and evaluated has to be scrupulously avoided. Similarly, the idea that the “Western” can simply be equated with universalism or that the universal is a substitute for the “Western” must also be jettisoned. For, while there are elements of the “Western” that contribute to the universal, these elements cannot be regarded as the universal. The cause of democracy in Africa will not be served by such an approach which for too long has dominated the history of Africa’s relations with the West. This approach was initially captured by the crude and racist notions of the “white man’s burden” and his “civilising mission in Africa”. It has continued, through different refinements, to this day. Has it not been the practice of many aid donors, for example, to insist that their own national technical accounting standards be adopted by recipient governments as a condition for support? Assistance for local initiatives aimed at extending the boundaries of democracy ought not to be at the expense of evolving national institutions and associated values in the recipient countries.

The question of strategies for consolidating democracy in those African countries where the initial steps towards political reform have been undertaken is one which has generated considerable discussion in political science circles. Several of the authors whose essays were reviewed made a range of proposals such as the need for strengthening of civil society groups, defending the freedom of the press, promoting human rights, and enhancing the participation of women in the political process as some of the ingredients that are indispensable to the success of the quest for a democratic order in Africa. At a general level, these are important points but I would argue that perhaps the most crucial factor for the sustenance of democratic reform and
governance in Africa lies in the enthronement of a popular sovereignty that touches the daily lives of the populace, gives life and meaning to the notion of citizenship, and goes beyond the constitutionally defined form of rule. This is, of course, not to say that the constitutionally prescribed form of rule is not important—far from it. It is rather to insist that the constitutional order will not endure for long if it is not accompanied by concrete steps aimed at ensuring that democracy is not merely seen as an abstract notion that has no meaning to the daily lives of the people but a lived experience that is worth defending. This is partly the reason why several African commentators on the prospects for the consolidation of democracy in Africa have suggested the notion of developmental democracy as a useful working tool, a democracy which combines democratic constitutionalism with popular participation and close attention to the welfare aspirations of the populace. This, of course, has implications for the kinds of economic policy reforms which donors use their leverage to promote in Africa. Quite often, donor commitment to the promotion of democratic reform is cancelled out by externally-imposed market reform projects that require strong arm tactics by the state to be implemented and which contribute to the re-birth and/or reinforcement of bureaucratic authoritarianism.

One other issue arising from the literature on strategies for consolidating democracy in Africa relates to the emphasis which is placed by most scholars on non-state actors and the need to support and strengthen them. This is, of course important but I do not see this as necessarily precluding support for the project of state renewal that is clearly called for in many African countries. The sharp decline which state institutions have experienced in many countries, to a point where they are even unable to carry out their basic functions, suggests that their rehabilitation and renewal is as integral to the success of the task of democratic consolidation as is support for NGOs. Here, I am in agreement with those scholars who advocate the need to see state-civil society relations not in terms of one-sided opposition but in the context of a dialectic that simultaneously involves contradictions and complementarities. The case for the integration of state renewal into the overall democratic project is made all the more necessary as the effectiveness of NGOs in engaging the state will be helped if there is a state to be engaged. At the same time, the tendency to assume that NGOs are by definition democratic simply on account of the fact that they are non-governmental ought to be carefully re-visited; there are NGOs that are essentially undemocratic in their internal governance and which are a liability to local democratic struggles. Structures of NGO accountability to their members and to the public are areas which tend to be neglected but which are deserving of closer attention.

There is increasing concern among several African scholars and activists about the growing importance of the regional dimension to the democratic prospects of the countries of the continent. This is particularly so with re-
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The negative impact which undemocratic regional hegemons like Nigeria and Mobutu’s Zaire can have on the prospects for democratic consolidation in the countries that are their immediate regional neighbours and whose affairs they influence heavily. It is perhaps not a coincidence that West Africa, where Nigeria is the most important player, has also been the region that has experienced the most extensive signs of the beginning of the reversal of the democratic process with military coups d’etat in Sierra Leone, the Gambia, and Niger. The incapacitation of Zaire by the Mobutu kleptocracy certainly eased the way for the anti-democratic forces of the Great Lakes region to perpetrate the horrendous atrocities to which we were all witnesses. It seems quite clear that democracy will be constantly endangered in Africa if the different regional hegemons are themselves undemocratic. What this calls for is the need for the pro-democracy groups of Africa to increase their regional networking as a means of safeguarding the gains they have made in their local spaces. Their approach should be to assume that the endangerment of democracy in one country is tantamount to the endangerment of democracy in all. Where the country in question is the regional hegemon, their concern should assume even greater urgency for action. Sall is substantially right when he urges that networking on a regional scale among pro-democracy groups should be supported by the sections of the international community interested in promoting democratic reform in Africa.

In concluding this essay, I would like to emphasise that we need to understand that democracy cannot be packaged and exported like every other commodity. External assistance can help, and it should be offered without strings whose import is questionable, but the main task of building and consolidating democracy must belong to locally-rooted democratic forces whose autonomy and choices should be respected. It is no use for donors to attempt to supplant the local bearers of the struggle for democracy; such an effort will only be attended by failure if not in the short-, then in the long-run. Through public manifestations and other forms of activism, ordinary Africans have demonstrated their commitment to democratic ideals even if their rulers have been less than enthusiastic in initiating and/or upholding democratic reforms. The popular enthusiasm for democracy is enough ground for some optimism although the task of removing recalcitrant rulers and the structures of repression that sustain them will be a tough one. To the extent that authoritarianism anywhere on earth is an affront to democrats all over the world, there is a role for the international community to play. But in view of past experiences and the enormity and complexity of the tasks ahead, there is also the implication that the donor community has as much to unlearn as it has to learn about the best ways of supporting change in Africa. The process of change itself is not one that is short-term in nature; this is particularly so with a project of democratisation that is developing after a prolonged period of authoritarianism.
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References


The Role of the African Media in the Promotion of Democracy and Human Rights

David Lush

Truth can only emerge through the comparison of ideas, the competition of different opinions, and the equal hearing of as many viewpoints as possible. Truth is not the monopoly of a single person, a body of opinion, a doctrine, or a political party. Truth is the result of the universal presentation and exchange of ideas.

(Pius Njawe, Director and Publisher of Le Messager newspaper in Cameroon.)

Introduction

On May 3, 1991, a conference of African media workers officially brought the curtain down on the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), a global media policy which, for more than a decade, had sought to invest control of news and information in the hands of the governments of developing countries. The aim of the policy was to redress the imbalance between the flow of news and information from the developed countries of Europe and North America to the less developed countries in the South. However, this period also witnessed the wholesale abuse of human rights, including media freedom and free expression, with the African media controlled and misused as little more than a propaganda tool in the one-party/militaristic politics of the Cold War era. Rather than progressing during this period, African nations stagnated and declined—politically, socially and economically.

With the experiences of the NWICO era still fresh in their minds, the architects of the Windhoek Declaration—African editors, publishers and broadcasters, many of whom had been at the forefront of the democratisation process which was now sweeping through the continent—argued that the free flow of a diversity of news, information, opinions and ideas through a media independent of governmental, political or economic control was a prerequisite for development: “Consistent with Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the establishment, maintenance and fostering

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of an independent, pluralistic and free press is essential to the development and maintenance of democracy in a nation, and for economic development.\(^2\)

The example of these African free press pioneers has since been followed by their colleagues in Central Asia, Latin America, and the Arab States.\(^3\) African governments, too, have recognised and adopted the 1991 Windhoek Declaration on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press; Information Ministers of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and subsequently those of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have adopted the declaration, while the United Nations General Assembly adopted the decree in 1993 and made May 3—the anniversary of the Windhoek Declaration—World Press Freedom Day. But so far, this commitment by African governments has, in most cases, proved to be little more than a pledge of convenience. While democratic elections have been held throughout much of the continent, and multi-party systems of government have been put in place, media freedom and free expression, considered to be the cornerstones of democracy, continue to be abused—by governments and media workers alike. The experience of Southern Africa, the region of the continent with which the author is most familiar, alone goes to show that it takes more than the holding of free and fair multi-party elections to bring about tangible democracy.

Media and Decolonisation

The African media has played a significant role in the democratisation process, helping to bring about firstly the demise of colonialism and apartheid, and then one-party dictatorships. Liberation movement leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere started out as journalists, and used their media skills to promote their revolutionary nationalism. But they were politicians first and journalists second. Even before Tanzania gained independence, Nyerere was setting the tone for a quarter-century of censorship and media manipulation which followed:

Too often the only voices to be heard in ‘opposition’ are those of a few irresponsible individuals who exploit the very privileges of democracy—freedom of the press, freedom of association, freedom to criticise—in order to deflect the government from its responsibilities to the people by creating problems of law and order ... The government must deal firmly and promptly with the trouble makers. The country cannot afford, during these vital early years of its life, to treat


\(^3\) 1992 Alma Ata Declaration, 1993 Santiago Declaration, 1996 Sanaa Declaration. Source: UNESCO.
such people with the same degree of tolerance which may be safely allowed in a long-established democracy.4

With leaders such as Nyerere considering media freedom and other human rights to be a mere “privilege”, they had no qualms about using the media for propaganda purposes. Once the nationalist struggle had been won, they argued it had to be consolidated, which in turn warranted more propaganda. Those who rocked the boat with criticism and differing viewpoints were then easily portrayed as “counter-revolutionary” and “unpatriotic”. Tanzanian publisher, Ndimala Tegambwage, explained in 1989:

Those who had the audacity to declare themselves in opposition were branded ‘political malcontents’ and ‘power-hungry’, and were either condemned into exile or

\[\text{Julius Nyerere, “A Century of African English” as quoted by Ndimala Tegambwage in} \]
\[\text{Southern Africa Political and Economic Monthly, October 1988.}\]
‘disappearance’. Constructive ideas became the preserve of those few in power. Workings of governments were shrouded in secrecy, while people’s participation remained an empty slogan as the people were severely denied information.5

Thus a cycle of fear, silence and unaccountability was set in motion which resulted in further control and censoring of the media with little resistance from media workers, the public, or the governments’ supporters in the international community. Indeed, media workers often were—and remain—willing collaborators, self-censoring their work and turning a blind eye to what they feel those in authority consider “un-newsworthy”. As veteran Zimbabwean journalist Geoff Nyarota points out, under such circumstances corruption and the abuse of human rights thrive, and it was only through foreign media such as the BBC that these “undemocratic practices” came to light. “Demonstrations by teachers in Harare in 1991, riots in the Copper Belt of Zambia in 1982, prisoners dying in prison in Malawi—these were BBC reports while the journalists of southern Africa stood aside and watched as spectators”.6

Less compromise has been shown by the so-called “alternative” media which challenged and contributed to the downfall of the apartheid regimes in South Africa and Namibia. Newspapers such as The Namibian, New Nation, Weekly Mail, South and Vrye Weekblad campaigned vigorously against apartheid and the human rights abuses committed in its name, speaking out where other media remained silent. Just as the alternative media contributed to the downfall of apartheid, so the mainstream media also helped to prop it up. Consequently, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission has ordered an investigation into the media during the apartheid era in order to understand how the climate was created in which human rights were abused so easily and on such a broad scale7 during this period. Although the alternative media was sympathetic to the respective liberation movements, these publications were not their mouthpieces. When liberation came, those few titles which survived the sudden drying up of donor funds, on which the alternative media relied, continued to take a critical look at the new regimes; a stance which has also resulted in their sometimes being branded as unpatriotic or counter-revolutionary. In an interview with the government-owned New Era newspaper, Namibian President Sam Nujoma

labelled the country’s media as “the enemy” and “reactionary”—the echo of Nyerere more than 30 years previously.

The Media and Africa’s Second Liberation

At around the same time as apartheid rule began to crumble in Namibia and South Africa, an explosion of privately-owned newspapers and magazines heralded the collapse of one-party dictatorships in a number of African countries, ushering in a new, democratic era. But this democratic honeymoon has been short-lived for the continent’s media. Seizing the opportunity opened up by the ending of the Cold War, a few bold journalists began publishing their own titles which, often for the first time, openly criticised the incumbent dictatorships and threw a spotlight on their abuses of human rights.

When these new, private media proved popular, others followed, and the authorities were unable to suppress this upsurge of free expression. Malawi was a typical case in point. Six months after then-Life President Kamuzu Banda announced the holding of a referendum on the political future of Malawi, more than 20 newspapers and magazines were publishing in a country which had previously only been served by two titles, both owned by Banda. A similar proliferation of privately-owned media—both print and electronic—was seen in Tanzania following reform of the constitution in 1992 which ended 27 years of one-party rule and paved the way for multi-party elections three years later. Within a year of the constitution being changed, more than 40 news publications had appeared in Tanzania.

As Tegambwage explained at the time: “It was very difficult in the past for people to voice their ideas. Now everyone seems to have something to say, and they are looking for the avenue through which to express it”.

In a very short space of time, a culture of freedom of expression and media freedom was established. This was exploited by political opponents of incumbent regimes, who also attacked government corruption and the abuse of human rights, and pledged to uphold freedom of expression, media freedom and other human rights should they be voted into power. However, once elected, these same people have not struggled to live up to their promise, particularly when confronted by continued outspoken criticism from their opponents, as well as the media. No sooner had President Frederick Chiluba been voted into power during Zambia’s multi-party election in late 1991 than he was speaking of the need for the media to be

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8 New Era, December 6–8, 1996.
10 “Flash-Food of Titles”, news article in MISA Free Press, 6/93.
“responsible”, pointing out the danger of the media “saying the wrong thing”.\(^\text{11}\)

In the years which followed, Chiluba’s government and its supporters have increasingly resorted to out-moded legislation inherited from their one-party and colonial predecessors, as well as naked intimidation in a bid to silence the media, the private press in particular. In 1993 the independent Media Reform Committee, which was formed with the government’s approval, submitted recommendations for legislative reform required to bring Zambian law in line with international human rights standards on media freedom and freedom of expression. The committee recommended constitutional amendments which would enshrine media freedom in addition to the existing right to free expression. The report also listed 23 laws which infringed on media freedom and thus needed to be repealed or reformed.\(^\text{12}\) To date, the government has failed to act upon the recommendations. Instead, it has increasingly used several of the 23 restrictive laws listed by the committee against the media.\(^\text{13}\)

In February 1996, the Speaker of Zambia’s National Assembly went as far as to sentence three journalists to indefinite imprisonment for contempt of parliament under the terms of legislation dating back to British colonial rule, which had originally been used to silence Zambian nationalists campaigning for independence.\(^\text{14}\) This, resolved the United Nations Human Rights Committee the following month, was in breach of both the Zambian constitution as well as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Zambia has acceded.

Equally out-dated legislation has been revived by other democratically elected African governments, which Amnesty International (AI) has accused of “criminalising dissent”.\(^\text{15}\) In January 1995, AI reported that criminal charges such as sedition, contempt of court, subversion, criminal defamation, and possession of classified documents were increasingly being used against non-violent opponents and critics—including the media—by governments eager to “keep their democratic credentials intact”. Those on the receiving end of such charges, AI reported, were often those “at the heart of efforts to build strong civil societies founded on respect for human rights”.

Many of today’s leaders—themselves products of the NWICO era—continue to insist that African leaders should receive unqualified respect, and are above public criticism, a view which puts them at loggerheads with

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\(^{11}\) Adewale Maja Pearce, “Cautionary Tales”, Index on Censorship, 4/95, p. 159.


\(^{14}\) “Contempt Laws out of Order”, article in MISA Free Press, 1/96.

journalists, among them Fred M’membe, Editor-in-Chief of The Post in Zambia:

Very few African leaders ... can differentiate between a critic and a traitor. In most cases, they see no difference between an intellectual seeking to exercise his/her freedom of expression, and a rabid political opponent who not only has arms cached away, but also has thousands of troops in a neighbouring country. When people say it is alien to our African culture to criticise leaders, they forget that in our traditional past even chiefs or kings were the subject of satirical orations and ribaldry. Even the ruthless Zulu dictator Chaka could be criticised openly.16

Media and Elections

Having campaigned for democracy, the media can contribute to consolidating the process by ensuring that democratic elections are free and fair. On the other hand, the media can also be used to influence the outcome of elections in favour of one party or another. This has been of particular concern when elections have taken place in countries where the media has been—and remains—largely government controlled. South Africa must be one of the few African countries where attempts have been made to make the state-controlled media more impartial PRIOR to the holding of maiden democratic elections. Even in South Africa, with its relatively developed privately-owned print and electronic media, the former state-controlled South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) radio and television had, at the time of the country’s first all-race elections in April 1994, an unprecedented audience share. In 1994, the SABC’s 22 radio stations broadcast in 11 different languages to 23 million people while SABC TV’s three channels reached an estimated 7 million viewers, which underlines the broadcaster’s potential influence on the election process.17

During the apartheid era, the SABC had become a government propaganda organ saturated with state security personnel.18 Therefore, in 1993, a year before the elections, the government-appointed board of the SABC was replaced by a new board made up of people nominated by the public and selected by a panel of legal experts at open hearings, during which members of the public were able to challenge candidates.19 The appointment of the new board was followed by the employment of new SABC executives.

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charged with ensuring greater SABC impartiality in the run-up to the election.

Although then-President F.W. De Klerk vetoed seven of the new board members chosen by the selection panel, and criticism was levelled at the appointment of two of the new executives because of their supposed bias towards the opposition African National Congress, the attempts to neutralise the SABC in the run-up to the election seemed to work. In its final report on media coverage of the 1994 election, the independent Media Monitoring Project commended the SABC and the media as a whole: “Overall the media recognised the importance of the election, and aided the democratic process by according it extensive coverage. In giving access to a variety of views, the media contributed to a climate favourable to a free and fair election”.

Such concerted efforts to ensure the impartiality of a national broadcaster owe their success to a strong and sustained campaign over a five-year period by civil society organisations and opposition parties, something which has been conspicuously absent in other democratic transitions. During the United Nations (UN) supervised run-up to Namibia’s independence elections in 1989, the state-controlled South West Africa Broadcasting Corporation (SWABC), a mouthpiece of the colonial South African regime and the only broadcaster in the country, was left unchanged. As a result the SWABC was able to continue with its propaganda largely unchecked. Monitoring of SWABC broadcasts carried out by an independent non-governmental organisation, NPP 435, highlighted the corporation’s bias in favour of the South African regime—and the political parties it was backing in the up-coming elections—at the expense of the liberation movement, SWAPO. “Our findings are not inconsistent with the effects of a concerted plan (by the SWABC) to discredit the (independence) settlement process and polarise the Namibian population with a view to the destabilisation of a future independent Namibia”, concluded the NPP 435 research.

Similarly, Malawi’s state-controlled media was overtly biased in favour of the government of the day during the campaigns for both the 1993 referendum on the country’s political future, and the multi-party elections held the following year. UN and government guidelines for the holding of the referendum, which outlined the need for media freedom and impartiality, proved largely ineffective. Meanwhile, the ruling FRELIMO party’s dominance of the media prevented the free flow of information during

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23 “Democrats are Denied Free Voice”, MISA Free Press, 6/93.
Mozambique’s multi-party elections in October 1994.\textsuperscript{24} This was despite a constitution guaranteeing freedom of expression, press freedom, and freedom to information—as amended in 1991—and the introduction in the same year of a relatively progressive Press Law legalising the private media and providing for the state-funded media to be run “in the public interest”, free from government interference.\textsuperscript{25} According to Article 19, the state-funded Radio Mozambique demonstrated an “in-built bias” towards FRELIMO during the election campaign. The station was only separated from the Ministry of Information on the eve of the elections, up until when FRELIMO’s Secretary of Information and Propaganda, Manuel Tome, was also the station’s Director-General. However, Article 19 felt the main cause of media bias was the “sheer lack of democratic experience by Mozambican journalists, whose only reference points have been the experience of censorship under colonial and post-independence Marxist-Leninist rule”.

Besides outlining the policies and goals of the various competing political parties, another task of the media during these first democratic polls was to explain the elections themselves, particularly in South Africa and Namibia where most of the electorate was voting for the first time in their lives. However, research suggests that the media is unable to fulfil these roles properly, and not just because of bias. In its report on media coverage of the 1994 South African elections, the Media Monitoring Project (MMP) identified a lack of professionalism amongst the media as a reason for its failure to respond to the “challenges” of the country’s first democratic election.\textsuperscript{26} In particular, the MMP criticised the media’s frequent lack of analysis, the “passive, obedient and unquestioning” reporting of some sections of the media, frequent technical problems which undermined the SABC’s credibility, and the selection of news stories which “often betrayed the racial classification of their audience and did little to promote unity”.

Analysis by researcher Staffan Darnolf of press coverage of Zimbabwe’s 1995 general election campaign found that even the privately-owned press, which was generally hostile to the government, failed to devote a single article to explaining the policies of the opposition parties.\textsuperscript{27} “Since none of the newspapers (private or state-controlled) contained any relevant political information”, Darnolf concluded, “it was impossible for the voters ... to make an informed decision on polling day”. After the 1994 Mozambican elections, monitors from the Association of West European Parliamentarians Against Apartheid (AWEPA) partly blamed the media for a lack of voter education during the campaign: “This put a substantial burden on polling station staff, 


\textsuperscript{25}“Media Law in Mozambique”, MISA Free Press, 1/95.

\textsuperscript{26}MMP Final Report, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{27}Staffan Darnolf, “Letting Down the Electorate”, MISA Free Press, 6/95.
who had to explain the voting process to each voter. The way they did this varied substantially from one polling station to another and the quality and style of the explanation had a clear impact on blank and invalid votes.\textsuperscript{28}

Defining Media Freedom and Free Expression

Occurring as quickly as it did, there has been little debate around the boundaries of this newly-emergent culture of freedom, which some have taken to be absolute. As a result, the understanding of media workers—and thus their audiences—of these freedoms and the human rights they stem from is often limited. Visiting Malawi shortly after the 1994 elections, South African journalist Bruce Cohen described what he termed a “media free-for-all of surreal proportions”: “Most newspapers in Malawi are not interested in mundane matters of fact, evidence, rebuttal or attribution. They find far more satisfaction in using their pages as a rough canvas for raging brush strokes of rancid insult and wild propaganda, signing their vitriol ‘a reliable source’.\textsuperscript{29} Former BBC and Reuters correspondent in Malawi, Mike Hall, concurred: “Training is crucial. Journalists, for example, have little understanding of libel laws, let alone the need for balance. News sense is at best eccentric, and at worst nonsensical, while newspaper design is often non-existent”.\textsuperscript{30}

The freedom of expression vacuum created during the democratisation process has also been exploited to horrifying political ends. Six of the 30 or so newspapers set up in Rwanda during 1991, and the one private radio station, Radio-Television Milles Collines (RTML), were dedicated to promoting extremist ethnic propaganda.\textsuperscript{31} When concern was raised about the extremism of the media, then-President Juvenal Habyarimana defended them in the name of media freedom. Shareholders in RTML had close ties to the ruling elite, with the result that the radio station was able to broadcast nation-wide using the same transmitter network as the state-run Radio Rwanda. So, what on the surface appeared to be a diverse media landscape was in fact made up of largely government-aligned private media with a common mission. “The problem illustrated by the example of Rwanda is that of pluralism going off the rails”, concludes a 1995 UNESCO report on the media’s role in the Rwandan genocide. “The opening of Rwanda to pluralistic expression ... was immediately side-tracked, primarily due to the programmed manipulation of public opinion by the circles of power”.

\textsuperscript{28} “Media Constraints Remain”, \textit{MISA Free Press}, 1/95.

\textsuperscript{29} Bruce Cohen, “Don’t Let the Facts Ruin a Good Story!”, \textit{MISA Free Press}, 10/94.

\textsuperscript{30} Mike Hall, “Make or Break Time for Malawi”, \textit{MISA Free Press}, 10/94.

\textsuperscript{31} Report on the “Media’s Role in the Rwandan Genocide”, prepared for UNESCO by Reporters Sans Frontiers and the French Centre for African Studies.
The Rwandan genocide has forced media workers to examine closely not only the role of the media in the bloodshed, and the extent to which media freedom and free expression can be taken, but also how the media can prevent such atrocities happening again. The instinctive reaction of many is to legislate against such gross violations of free expression—referred to as “hate speech”. But others fear legislation against something as undefined as the hate media could then be used for much broader censorship, including the silencing of government critics.32

Legislation already exists in most countries outlawing incitement to violence and murder, and these laws should be adequate for curbing hate speech. Instead, media self-discipline and professionalism is the key to eradicating hate media, argues Tom Mshindi, Managing Editor of Kenya’s The Nation newspaper. “There is a major need to help indigenous organisations in Africa to grow up and exert themselves, and to re-educate those who work in those (hate) media”, says Mshindi, citing the example of Kenya where a tradition of media professionalism and the existence of a “fairly independent and fairly free” press has helped contain ethnic conflict. “In many ways the tragedy we are seeing (in Rwanda) is the tragedy of weak media unable to stand on its own when faced with authoritarian governments”.32

However, many African countries lack this tradition of media professionalism. Throughout much of its existence, the African media has been censored and has self-censored, thus compromising any professional standards and ethics it may have adopted. Only now are independent-thinking role models beginning to emerge to teach and guide the next generation of media workers. The private media which mushroomed during Africa’s second liberation have not had ethical benchmarks and professional parameters to navigate them through an industry in which many were becoming involved for the first time. Having been rigidly controlled by governments and politicians for so long, the media also lacked self-regulatory mechanisms to enforce professionalism and accountability.

If the media remains unaccountable to the public, it is unlikely to earn the public’s trust and respect. This, in turn, threatens to undermine media freedom itself, which makes the training and up-grading of media workers’ skills essential if media freedom is to be sustained, as veteran South African journalist Allister Sparks pointed out: “Freedom of media is a terribly fragile thing because ordinary people don’t understand its importance. The most important thing in the never-ending struggle to sustain media freedom is to win and keep the support of the public”.33 Only when media workers understand and respect media freedom and other human rights can they

33 Speech by Allister Sparks on receiving MISA Press Freedom Award in Malawi, October 11, 1996.
hope to promote public understanding of these rights and freedoms through the media, Sparks said.

For the media to demand accountability, it too must be accountable, just as in the same vein, for the media to be pluralistic, it must reflect the diversity of the societies in which it operates. More than half of all Africans are women, and yet women are seriously underrepresented in the continent’s media, particularly in decision-making positions. Women journalists tend to be ghettoised into producing the women’s pages or programmes, as Priscilla Mishairabwi, Executive Member of the Federation of African Media Women, explained: “Exclusive interviews with the president are given to male journalists. A woman who is ambitious will not be able to survive the newsroom scene.”34 According to Greta Rana, Chairperson of International Pen’s Women Writers’ Committee, the censorship of women media workers and writers is largely silent: “Sometimes gender-based censorship has nothing to do with what a woman has written, but rather her work just does not get published.”35

In this respect, William Bango, Head of Print Media Training at the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism in South Africa, said the African media simply reflects the existing power relationships in society, rather than trying to promote a shift in the balance of power: “Social responsibility and today’s journalism are not compatible”.36 Yet, Gwen Lister, Editor of The Namibian newspaper, has argued that women are also not doing enough themselves to make the media more representative: “It alarms me that many media women forums shy away from discussing democracy and media freedom. Women’s rights are meaningless unless they are applied in a democratic situation which recognises gender equality, and which promotes media freedom”.37

These problems are compounded by the fact that media workers throughout the continent are poorly paid, which makes the profession less attractive to highly-qualified people. It also makes media workers susceptible to compromise, bribery and corruption. Furthermore, the continent’s media workers are often divided and poorly mobilised. In Zambia, for example, journalists from the state and private media camps struggle to find areas of common interest on which to work together.38 Links between the media and other civil society organisations also remain tenuous in many countries, making them ill-equipped to be effective watchdogs of those in

35 Article by Greta Rana published in the March 1995 edition of International Pen’s Center to Center Newsletter.
authority, and thus to promote human rights. Human rights organisations in the Great Lakes region—Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania—have complained about the media’s inadequate and sometimes reckless coverage of human rights issues, while journalists criticise the lack of relevant and newsworthy information being provided by their human rights counterparts. In a bid to build a more effective partnership, media and human rights organisations in the region have agreed the need to: improve networking; address human rights issues affecting displaced people and refugees; promote media freedom and media ethics; advance the human rights of women; and improve the research and documentation of human rights abuses in the region.

But such bridge-building initiatives are already being pre-empted by some governments wary of civil society groups, and increasingly intolerant of outspoken criticism—justified or otherwise—by the media and non-governmental organisations. Zimbabwean officials increasingly brand outspoken civil society organisations as “opposition”, and have passed legislation which gives the authorities powers to interfere with the running of non-governmental organisations. The Zambian government has also drafted legislation for the setting up of a mandatory media council for regulating the country’s media, while invoking legislation to investigate and freeze the finances of some NGOs. In 1993, the Tanzanian government initiated similar legislation for the establishment of a mandatory media council which it hoped would “encourage ... a sense of responsibility and public service” among media workers, but which journalists saw as a bid by the government to further control the media.

Included in the draft Media Professions Regulations Bill was provision for the government to license media workers; anyone wishing to publish or broadcast would have needed government-approved academic qualifications and/or long-standing media experience. This, Secretary-General of the Tanzania Media Women’s Association (TAMWA), Pili Mtambalike, argued at the time, would seriously curtail freedom of expression: “(We are) trying to empower groups which do not have a voice, yet those groups do not usually have exposure to (media) training. They should be able to write their own views; the problem is that the bill will not allow them to”. Following national and international outcry at the proposed bill, the Tanzanian gov-

39 Final communiqué of the Workshop on Media and Human Rights organised by the Africa Bureau of Inter Press Service (IPS), the Kenyan Human Rights Commission (KHRC), and the Human Rights and Peace Centre at Makerere University, and held in Kampala, Uganda, February 17–22, 1997.
41 See article referred to in footnote 38.
42 “‘Draconia’ Bill Published”, news report in MISA Free Press, 8/93.
43 See article referred to in footnote 42.
government finally shelved the draft legislation in July 1995 when Tanzanian media workers formed their own, self-regulatory media council with a view to making the media more accountable to the public.

Economic Constraints on Media Freedom and Plurality

For democracy to thrive, the authors of the Windhoek Declaration contend, then independent, pluralistic and free media must also thrive. However, for economic as well as for political reasons, it is increasingly difficult for independent and private media to survive once the euphoria of multi-party elections has died down. The demand created by the upsurge of private print media during Malawi’s transition to democracy prompted a prominent business person, Rolph Patel, to invest in a newspaper printing press, providing publishers for the first time with an alternative to the only other newspaper press in the country, owned by then-President Kamuzu Banda. But no sooner had Malawi’s first democratic elections been held in May 1994 than newspapers began to die like flies. Most could not compete in the saturated market as the public’s post-election appetite for newspapers declined. Patel became a minister in the newly-elected UDF government, and called in US$260,000 collectively owed by the papers to his printing company, which had readily granted credit to the largely anti-Banda press during the election campaign.44 Many publications could not afford to pay. In March 1997, just eight titles continued to publish, most relying on some kind of political patronage to survive in a country where the vast majority of the largely-illiterate population lives in the rural areas, out of reach of the newspapers’ urban distribution networks.

Advertising is the key to the survival of most private media—print and broadcast—in Africa. The liberalisation of economies which has accompanied the democratisation process should, in theory, create a greater advertising market for the media. However, in reality, on-going economic hardship has restricted the ability of businesses to advertise. The problem is compounded by the low purchasing power of consumers, which limits media sales and thus the ability of media to attract advertising.45 Besides, with economic liberalisation still in its infancy, governments and parastatal industries continue to control—or at least to influence—the largest advertising budgets, and this power is often used as a weapon against critical media. In August 1996, the Cabinet in Lesotho issued a directive ordering all government ministries and parastatal companies not to advertise in the privately-owned MoAfrika newspaper because of what the directive termed the paper’s “negative stance” towards the government.46

44 See article referred to in footnote 30.
45 See article referred to in footnote 38.
In many countries, advertising is also taxed, along with other inputs to the media production process. The launch of Mozambique’s first privately-owned newspaper, Savana, was delayed because the publishers had to raise almost US$100,000 in duties on imported computers and other equipment needed to start the paper; the government-controlled media was exempt from paying such duties. In February 1996, media workers in Botswana protested at the government’s introduction of a 10 per cent sales tax on newspaper sales, saying that the levy would “greatly threaten the viability” of the private media, which was already paying duties on newsprint and other printing materials. Again, government media was exempt from such taxes, which the government justified by arguing that the private media made profits, and, therefore, had to either absorb the taxes or pass them on to their customers like any other business.

Deregulation of Broadcasting

Therein lies the dilemma of promoting media diversity in a free market economy; market forces are not necessarily going to ensure the plurality of media voices required to promote the development of democracy. As part of the democratisation process, a number of countries have “deregulated” broadcasting to allow for the setting up of private radio and television stations. However, with the exception of South Africa, this process has not resulted in a real diversification of broadcasting voices, as Richard Carver, Africa Programme Consultant for Article 19 explained in 1995:

Whenever there is discussion of ‘freeing the airwaves’, priority is always given to the liberalisation of broadcasting law and the licensing of commercial broadcasters. Breaking the government monopoly of broadcasting is clearly essential. Yet the evidence from East and Southern Africa suggests that the legalisation of commercial broadcasting is not sufficient to guarantee a plurality of voices on the airwaves.

Governments have tended to retain control of the licensing process, and those granted licenses have generally been commercial or religious organisations with links to the ruling elite. The need to survive and make a profit on advertising revenue alone has dictated that the former broadcast mostly music—with little news and information—to predominantly urban audiences, while the latter have had the resources to ignore market forces and basically focus on promoting their specific religious message. So it has remained the prerogative of the old, state-run broadcasters, with their gov-

47 “Import Tax Still Threatens Media”, MISA Free Press, 8/93.
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...government subsidy, editorial departments, and nation-wide transmitter networks to provide the public with news and information. Unfortunately, governments have been reluctant to relinquish control of the national broadcasters, which to a greater or lesser degree have continued to be pro-government and ruling party mouthpieces with little or no editorial independence.

Three years since coming to power, the democratically-elected UDF government in Malawi still retains direct control over the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), and appears reluctant to pass new legislation which, as currently drafted, would establish independently-appointed boards to run the MBC. Editorial interference resulting from the government’s direct control of the Zambian National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) is compounded by a chronic lack of resources which makes any kind of news coverage—let alone impartial and analytical reporting—difficult.

On coming to power at independence in 1990, Namibia’s SWAPO-led government went to great lengths to stress its commitment to press freedom and the independence of the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation. The 1991 Broadcasting Act regulating the NBC, and the 1992 Namibian Communications Commission (NCC) Act, which set up a body to grant licenses and frequencies to private broadcasters, were heralded as proof of this commitment. However, the Broadcasting Act failed to enshrine the corporation’s independence as it left the appointment of the board and top executives in the hands of the Minister of Information. In April 1995, the first, ostensibly-independent, post-independence board was replaced by an entirely new set of board members, 70 per cent of whom were either active SWAPO members and/or high-ranking civil servants in the SWAPO government, none of whom appeared to have any experience of broadcasting. Two months later, a government official entered the NBC newsroom and ordered that unedited footage of a Presidential press conference be played in full on the evening television news bulletin. While NBC management protested, the newly-appointed board remained silent, and increasing political interference in the NBC’s editorial affairs has been noted since. The Minister of Information also appoints members of the NCC, the first Chairperson of which was an active SWAPO politician. The ruling party owns and part-owns several private radio and television stations.

50 “No Change”, article in MISA Free Press, 4/96.
51 See article referred to in footnote 38.
Public Service Broadcasting

Clearly, the so-called liberalisation and deregulation of broadcasting in Africa has so far done little to promote independence and diversity. This suggests that the issue of broadcasting reform has to be looked at more closely, and mechanisms for ensuring broadcasting diversity and the independence of state-funded broadcasters still need to be put in place. As Richard Carver pointed out:

What is needed is for all those concerned with freedom of expression and a plurality of opinions on the airwaves to reclaim the largely discredited notion of ‘public service broadcasting’. This acknowledges the fact that there are a variety of important aspects of broadcasting in Africa—public information, education, use of indigenous languages and even, to a large extent, news coverage—which will not be attractive to a private commercial broadcaster and which, if done at all, will have to be paid for out of public funds. What is needed, then, is to ensure that public funds are spent in a manner which benefits the public, rather than the government.\(^{55}\)

Even when the necessary structures to allow for independent public broadcasting have been put in place, as they have been in South Africa, funding remains a stumbling block. The South African Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) was established through legislation passed in 1993 to regulate broadcasting in the country, in particular to allocate broadcasting frequencies and approve broadcast licenses. The IBA is state-funded, but independent of government, its funding being approved by parliament and not a ministry. As well as regulating private broadcasting, the IBA also oversees the SABC, and one of the authority’s first major tasks was to hold an inquiry into the future of public broadcasting. This recommended that public broadcasting should be funded through a mixture of commercial and state sources; advertising and sponsorship, license fees, grants from government and parliament, and the selling of products and leasing of facilities.\(^{56}\)

The South African government has been reluctant to fund the SABC because of other pressing funding priorities, and for fear of being seen to compromise the corporation’s independence, while the number of paid-up television licensees has decreased dramatically, eroding another of the SABC’s sources of income envisaged by the SABC.\(^{57}\) Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health has given the SABC until the middle of 1997 to drop tobacco advertising, one of the corporation’s biggest sources of advertising revenue. In March 1997, the corporation announced it was going to have to shed 1,400 jobs in a bid to save US$100 million, with some of the SABC’s more produc-

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57 See report referred to in footnote 7.
tive and creative people likely to be included in the job losses—just when competition from recently-licensed or about-to-be licensed private broadcasters is about to become tougher.58

Whilst relying on commercial sources of income, a public broadcaster is always going to be split between satisfying market demands and fulfilling its public broadcasting function, the dangers of which were pointed out by NBC Director-General Dan Tjongarero. On taking up his post in August 1995, Tjongarero stressed the need for state subsidy to “insulate the NBC from the pressures of the market place”, adding that “press freedom will not only mean the absence of prior government censorship ... but also freedom from the pressures of the market place”.59 This dilemma will never go away until public service broadcasting, with its mission to inform, educate as well as to entertain, is viewed as an essential service which, like other essential services such as health and education, the state has a duty to fund. However, editorial independence must somehow be maintained if public service broadcasting is to be just that. For both these requirements to be met, those who administer public funds, as well as the electorate they are accountable to, have to come to understand that media diversity and the free flow of information is central to democracy and economic development.

Community Media

A similar funding dilemma faces the third pillar of the fourth estate—the community media. Like the local government system, the community media is, in theory, essential to the democratic process because of its closeness to the public it serves, and hence its ability to voice and reflect the needs and aspirations of that constituency. But these audiences vary in their ability to pay for and sustain the community media, which, it could be argued, is needed most in the poorest communities which do not have access to more mainstream media. According to Aida Opoku-Mensah:

Essential conditions of people’s self-empowerment are access to, and the use of the resources that enable them to express themselves freely and to communicate these expression to others, to exchange ideas with others, to inform themselves about events in the world, to create and control the production of knowledge and to share the world’s resources of knowledge. Community media can therefore serve as a mechanism for closing the gap between the information-rich and poor, and its importance as a tool for people’s self-empowerment cannot be over-emphasised.60

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60 Paper delivered to a Workshop on International Experiences of Community Media in Development, Johannesburg, August 1996. Opoku-Mensah is the Director of the Panos Institute’s Southern Africa Bureau based in Lusaka.
Delegates to the Media Institute of Southern Africa’s (MISA) “Community Voices Conference” held in Malawi in October 1996 called on southern African governments to concern themselves with the “sustainability and funding of the community media sector”. In particular, the conference encouraged governments to put in place “enabling legislation” for the “sustainable and independent development of community media”, while donors were urged to “recognise community media as an integral part of the development process” and to integrate community media into development programmes.

People’s definitions of what exactly constitutes “community” media in Africa vary. “Community media should not be defined in the abstract, but in relation to a particular purpose, particular social conditions and a particular ethic”, noted Professor Guy Berger, Head of the Department of Journalism at South Africa’s Rhodes University. The IBA in South Africa defined community radio in largely geographical terms, those of promoting and reflecting “local” culture, character and identity. While the IBA sees the role of community radio as increasing “access to a diversity of voices on the air” and assisting in “creating a diversity of broadcasting ownership”, nothing is mentioned about the criteria for ownership. South Africa’s National Community Media Forum (NCMF), on the other hand, emphasised the need for community media to be owned by “the community through its representatives”. The NCMF also added a political dimension to its definition, which is to service “disadvantaged communities”, be they geographical or an interest group. Berger himself emphasised the need for community media to have an “active audience”: “Media that sees its audience as simply customers to make money off, i.e. a commercial agenda, or as dumb animals needing to be developed, i.e. a developmentalist agenda, are not community media ...”. Berger also stressed the need for a “progressive agenda”: “For community media to count ... it needs community journalism too—and journalism with the particular liberatory and human rights ethic that goes with this ... . Community media must be participative, but it also still needs to stand for something progressive and to treat this as its supreme guiding principle”. This last element is essential if a culture of democracy and human rights is to be nurtured at a community level.

61 Resolution on Sustainability and Funding of Community Media, passed at MISA’s Community Voices Conference held in Mangochi, Malawi, October 7–11, 1996.
64 “Strategy Towards an Enabling Environment for Community and Independent Media”, NCMF Submission to Comtask, May 1996.
65 See paper referred to in footnote 62.
Telecommunications and Information Technology

Advances in information technology have brought about a convergence between media and telecommunications, with the result that the latter has now become a freedom of expression issue. In December 1995, the Zimbabwe Supreme Court ruled that the state-owned Post and Telecommunications Corporation’s (PTC) monopoly of telecommunication services was a violation of the constitutional right to free expression, and could not be justified in a democratic society.66 The Zimbabwean government justified its monopoly by saying it was necessary to ensure that rural areas and other marginalised communities were provided with telecommunication services. Yet, despite its monopoly, the Zimbabwe PTC presides over one of the worst-maintained telecommunication services in the world, and marginalised communities remain without basic telephone services. The same is true throughout Africa, where—according to forecasts based on current figures of telephone access—75 per cent of the continent’s population will never make a phone call.67 To follow the Zimbabwe Supreme Court’s argument, 75 per cent of Africans are, therefore, being denied their right to free expression.

Telecommunications throughout Africa are amongst the most expensive but most dilapidated in the world, making communication—and thus the free flow of information—around the continent very difficult. The Internet, and electronic mail (e-mail) in particular, are increasingly being used to overcome this problem, and thus promote a regional and continental flow of information considered necessary for development and democracy. Since 1994, the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) has been linking its members around the region to the Internet, and this network—called the MISANET—is used for communication and the exchange of news. MISA Director Methaetsile Leepile has said: “As a result, there appears to be a heightened level of regional consciousness among the region’s newspapers that are on the ‘Net. More and more of these papers are reporting about events taking place in neighbouring countries, with the local angle also benefiting from MISANET’s exchange of between 150 and 200 stories a week”.68

Internet is succeeding in spite of the continent’s crumbling telecommunications networks. In the long term, the effective deregulation and liberalisation of telecommunications is needed to ensure that Africa does not miss out on the information age.69 However, pressure is being put on developing

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67 “International Telecommunications Union Annual Report 1995”, as reported by Inter Press Service.
69 Roland Kuchel, “Reform or Bust”, MISA Free Press, 2/96.
countries by the World Trade Organisation to liberalise telecommunications before adequate debate has been given to the consequences of such a move, prompting fears that only wealthy urban-based business people will benefit, and not the rural poor. Senior Zambian telecommunications engineer, Edwin Hanamwinga has said: “Developing countries are rushing into legislation enabling liberalisation without thinking through the requirements for their people. Legislation will favour Western companies and not the interests of the millions of poor people who have never made a phone call”. With media and the public at large becoming increasingly reliant on telecommunications as the tool for communicating, such a development would do little to consolidate media plurality and freedom of expression.

Given their relative simplicity and cheapness, some new communication technologies have the potential to empower marginalised communities and contribute to their development. Healthnet, an e-mail network of health workers in East Africa, has saved lives as it allows doctors in remote areas to get quick answers to difficult diagnoses from better equipped hospitals in the cities and towns. By using e-mail to distribute information on media freedom violations, MISA has been able sometimes to help reverse these violations by initiating timely international protest campaigns. And when the February 5 1996 edition of The Post newspaper was banned by the Zambian government, the text of the banned edition was re-published on a computer in the USA, where it was out of the jurisdiction of the banning order and could be read around the world via the Internet.

The Panos Institute argues that there is little doubt that telecommunications, for example, can help improve living standards in developing countries: “The benefits of good communications flow through all aspects of development. Whether it is health, education or food security, telecommunications offers many new opportunities”. However, there is a danger that such opportunities could be nipped in the bud by governments eager to restrict the use of new communication technologies. With Africa being increasingly swamped with Northern media through satellite and now the Internet, governments are resorting to arguments of the NWICO era to justify moves to limit their impact on the premise of “protecting indigenous culture”. Non-Aligned Movement Information Ministers meeting in Nigeria in September 1996 pledged to seek a “re-activation of the concept of the

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70 “Telecom’s Liberalisation—By-passing the poor?”, article published by Panos Institute, March 1997.
71 “Getting Africa up to Speed”, IPS article published in MISA Free Press, 1/96.
74 See article referred to in footnote 70.
New World Information and Communication Order”. Calls such as these should be resisted. Instead attention should be paid to how these technologies can be used to empower indigenous media and their audiences, and thus provide alternatives to Northern media, rather than to restrict their use by all. The day when marginalised communities themselves have direct access to new communication technologies is still a long way off, but those who serve these communities are already using the technology for these communities’ benefit.

Conclusion

Market forces alone cannot be relied upon to bring about media plurality. The reverse is already being seen to be the case throughout the world—Africa included—where market forces are causing a concentration of media ownership, and a dilution of diversity as detrimental as that wrought by one-party dictatorships during the Cold War era. Careful consideration has been given to how best the gains made in media freedom and free expression during Africa’s recent democratisation process can be consolidated at this make-or-break time, when the boundaries of this new culture of openness are still being defined.

The reform of old, restrictive laws and the introduction of new, carefully-worded enabling legislation is vital to the process of creating an environment which will encourage the growth of independent and pluralistic media conveying news, information and views from genuinely diverse sources. Furthermore, on-going training is also needed to enable media workers to build and understand this environment. But above all, there is a need to promote an understanding throughout all sections of society that the upholding of human rights in general, and of media freedom and freedom of expression in particular, is vital to the development process. Human rights need to be seen as integral to the achievement of more obvious priorities such as the alleviation of hunger and unemployment, and the provision of housing, health and education. As Gwen Lister pointed out, just as economic decline and the “crisis of state” forced many African countries to embrace democracy, so these same conditions could, should they continue, push the continent back into authoritarianism and one-party rule.76

It is significant that Swedish organisations sponsored many of the meetings and conferences which led up to the formulation of the 1991 Windhoek Declaration, and such facilitation of dialogue will no doubt continue to help Africans work out the dimensions of their new democratic culture.

75 “Non-Aligned Officials Resume Call for NWICO”, World Press Freedom Committee Newsletter, November 1996.

However, as I have illustrated, the development of this democratic culture is dependent of the long-term financial sustainability of a broad range of media operating in harsh economic and political environments. Some of these media organisations—by their very nature—require on-going subsidy which will not compromise their independence in order to survive. In this respect, economics and human rights merge, and media freedom and freedom of expression cross into the realm of business and commerce.

From a distance, the Swedish government’s development programmes seem not to be designed to allow this cross-fertilisation of what appear to be viewed in Stockholm as two distinctly separate sectors. A more holistic view of media and human rights development in Africa therefore needs to be taken by Swedish policy makers. From my experience, Swedish support of the African media tends to be specifically project-oriented over a short or medium term period, with little consideration given to the encouragement of these initiatives’ long-term self-sustainability. While obviously still insisting on high levels of accountability, Swedish cooperating partners could put more faith in indigenous African development agencies to use funds according to their own priorities on a more flexible basis.

Africa’s democratisation process has given rise to one-party dominated democracies, in which civil society organisations are increasingly required to play a high-profile and often outspoken role in the absence of viable opposition parties. The direct funding by foreign donors of civil society organisations sometimes results in the latter being attacked for supposedly being “foreign agents”. To avoid this and, in the process, to emphasise the central role civil society organisations have in a democracy, bilateral funding earmarked for the development of civil society groups and their social objectives could be channelled through governments to independent agencies towards the recipient organisations.

It is perhaps sad that most African governments respond more readily to protests from their Northern counterparts than they do to the demands of their own people when it comes to violations of human rights. On the other hand, there is a tendency for civil society organisations to expect foreign governments to do their bidding for them, rather than protesting these issues themselves. The importance of diplomatic pressure cannot be overestimated when it comes to upholding human rights in Africa, particularly when governments need to be held accountable to their commitments to human rights treaties in international fora far from home. But it is perhaps wrong to expect pressure to be exerted from outside before the media and other civil society organisations in the countries concerned have first applied their own pressure. Only then are human rights likely to be considered home grown in Africa rather than, as they are sometimes portrayed, a burdensome and inappropriate import from the liberal democracies of the North.
Recommendations

When reviewing its policy towards Africa, it is recommended that the Swedish government consider the following:

1. In order to promote a genuinely independent and pluralistic media, which is a pre-requisite for social and economic development, as well as the development of democracy, support be targeted at initiatives aimed at achieving:
   a) Reform and repeal of media legislation which does not conform to international standards on media freedom and freedom of expression.
   b) Development, through exhaustive consultation, of carefully-worded legislation and other mechanisms which will create an enabling environment for the growth and long-term sustainability of genuinely independent public and community media.
   c) The long-term sustainability of other independent media initiatives.
   d) Greater understanding of media freedom, freedom of expression and other human rights issues among media workers, other civil society organisations, government, and the public at large.
   e) Cooperation between media and other civil society organisations.
   f) Higher standards of media professionalism and accountability.
   g) Greater representation of women and members of other under-represented groups in decision-making positions within the media.
   h) The adaptation and use of new communication technologies with a view to empowering African media and the audiences they serve by improving access to and distribution of diverse and independent news and information.

2. More Swedish development funds—unilateral, bilateral and multilateral—be channelled into indigenous, independent development and funding agencies promoting the above. While maintaining the highest levels of accountability, these indigenous organisations be afforded greater flexibility in allocating these funds to relevant projects.

3. Swedish cooperating partners take a more holistic view of development by taking into greater account the link between economic development and the sustainable promotion of media freedom, freedom of expression and other fundamental human rights.

4. Swedish cooperating partners continue to facilitate conferences, seminars, workshops and other fora which enable Africans from throughout society to debate and thereby establish the dimensions of their democratic culture.
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The Judiciary, the Executive and the Rule of Law in Zimbabwe

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Introduction

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, democracy and the rule of law have become issues that are now in vogue. This is welcome news to the majority of the people of Africa who, for years, have wallowed under one-party or sanitised Stalinist regimes that have no regard for human rights and pluralism. Zimbabwe, a small landlocked Southern African country that attained majority rule in 1980 has had more than its fair share of bad governance, de facto dictatorship and human rights abuses.1 However in all situations of decay and abuse, certain institutions remain beacons of hope and consistency, acting as a buffer against state excesses. One such institution which has played that role in Zimbabwe is the judiciary. In the absence of meaningful opposition parties and a strong and buoyant civil society, the Zimbabwean judiciary has played a significant role that cannot be ignored in maintaining the survival of the remnants of the rule of law.

This essay is devoted to a close examination of the role of the judiciary in post-independence Zimbabwe. In doing this, the essay will seek, among other things, to trace the:

a) place of the judiciary in the constitution of Zimbabwe;
b) conflict between the Executive and the Judiciary;
c) limited nature of judicial activism; and
d) strength and role of non-legal or judicial factors in the process of democratisation.

1 The situation of bad governance in Zimbabwe has received a lot of international media coverage. However, for a thorough scholarly analysis of the issue, see Per Nordlund’s PhD Thesis, Organising the Political Agora: Domination and Democratisation in Zambia and Zimbabwe, University of Uppsala, 1996. See also Jeffrey Herbst, State Politics in Zimbabwe, University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1990; and Astrow A., Zimbabwe: A Revolution That Lose its Way. London: ZED Books, 1983.
The essay will also attempt to show that whilst a strong and independent judiciary is necessary for the rule of law, its existence alone does not guarantee the survival and consolidation of genuine democracy.

The Place of Judiciary in the Constitution of Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe, like many African countries, has a standard Westminster constitution that was agreed at Lancaster House, London, in 1979 by the warring parties, namely, the guerilla movement that came together under the umbrella of the Patriotic Front and the internal government led by United African National Congress leader, Bishop Abel Muzorewa and Rhodesian Front leader, Ian Douglas Smith.

The constitution pays respect to the doctrine of separation of powers. Chapter IV of the constitution provides for the Executive which includes a President, Vice Presidents and Cabinet Ministers. Chapter V details the structure of the legislative organ, the Parliament, and Chapter VIII of the constitution provides for the establishment of the Judiciary. In terms of Section 79 of the constitution, judicial authority is vested in the Supreme Court, High Court, and inferior courts such as magistrates courts. Section 79B of the constitution is important in that it gives express guarantee to judicial independence. The head of the judiciary is the Chief Justice.

From a rule of law point of view, the Supreme Court is important in that it is the only body that safeguards the constitution itself. Section 3 of the constitution proclaims that the constitution is the supreme law in the country and that any law that is contrary to it shall be declared null and void. It is only the Supreme Court that is vested with powers of dealing with the legality of laws or applications in respect of abuse of human rights.²

Judges of the High Court and Supreme Court are appointed by the President after consultation with the Judicial Services Commission, set up under the terms of Section 90 of the constitution. Up until 1984, the majority of judges in this country came from the Bar.³ Further more, up until 1985, the majority of serving judges were individuals who had been appointed to their position before the country’s independence in 1980. This situation never pleased the post-independence government, led by the ruling ZANU(PF) and would later on lead to some of the conflicts that are described in this essay.

² The High Court does have jurisdiction to deal with the legality of subordinate legislation such as Statutory Instruments. There are many examples of cases where the High Court has struck down offending provisions in Statutory Instruments. See Marumahoko v Chairman Public Service Commission et al. 1991, (1) ZLR 22(HC).
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The Courts and the Rule of Law

At independence, the driving ideology of the ruling parties that inherited state power in Africa was developmentalism. Faced with the high expectations of their people after sometimes protracted struggles for liberation, most governments came to define the challenges facing them exclusively in terms of development. Issues such as a bill of rights, individual freedoms, and political pluralism were of little or no concern to a state intent on playing a Bonapartist role in the context of its initial determination to expand social/welfare infrastructures such as schools and hospitals as part of its developmentalist vision. Developmentalism, and its adverse implications for political liberties in post-colonial Africa, have been succinctly explained as follows:

The central element in the dominant ideological formation in post-independence Africa has been what we call the ideology of developmentalism. The argument of the ideology is very simple. We are economically backward and we need to develop and develop very fast. In this task of development we cannot afford the luxury of politics. Therefore politics are relegated to the background while economics come to occupy the central place on the ideological terrain. The whole ideological discourse among factions of the ruling class and between the ruling class and the masses is conducted within the framework of developmentalism ... The fact that politics are displaced from the dominant ideological terrain does not of course mean that politics disappear from real life. As a matter of fact developmentalism is the ideological guise under which the post-independence ruling class consolidate themselves and their alliance with imperialism. 4

The Judiciary itself is not immune to the issues and concerns that constitute the kernel of developmentalism. The court is well aware that it too must change and play a developmental role. With some reservation, the all-white High Court of Zimbabwe, in its first post-independent Practice Direction reported in 1981(4) SA 981 and written by the then Chief Justice C.J. Fieldsend, appeared to embrace the doctrine of developmentalism when it stated that:

... particularly in a changing society it is essential for the court to have some flexibility so as not to restrict unduly its power to develop the law in proper cases to meet changing conditions.

The position was put even more bluntly by the current Chief Justice, Mr Justice Gubbay, in the seminal case of Zimnat Insurance Company Limited v Chawanda 1990(2) ZLR 364(S) wherein he stated that:

Today the expectations amongst people all over the world, and particularly in developing countries are rising, and the judicial process has a vital role to play in moulding and developing the process of social change. The judiciary can and must operate the law so as to fulfil the necessary role of affecting such develop-

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ment. It sometimes happens that the goal of social and economic change is reached more quickly through legal development by the judiciary than by the legislature. It is now acknowledged that judges do not merely discover the law but also make law.

It is this consciousness of the developmentalist concerns of the government that has led the Judiciary in a large number of African countries to be cautious, conservative and erratic. This point has been well made by C.R.M. Dhlamini in his book *Human Rights in Africa*, published by Butterworths in 1985. According to Dhlamini:

"The attitude and approach of the judiciary towards the protection of fundamental rights in Africa in general has not been one of enthusiastic support of judicial activism, but rather one of caution or conservatism. Not only have governments succeeded in refuting complaints of infringements of fundamental rights, but the courts have also been reluctant to declare legislation passed by parliament unconstitutional. There have no doubt been exceptions, but they have been few ... The courts have shown a reluctance to reach decisions which are politically controversial. In this way they have attempted to eschew conflict with the Government, which is understandable because they unlike government do not have armies to enforce their decisions."

Examples abound of this overt support by the courts to ruling regimes, particularly in those countries with a long history of repression such as Kenya. Fortunately for Zimbabwe, historical factors, among other things, ensured that right from the onset, there was in existence, a judiciary that was not prepared to be docile. In this regard, the most obvious explanation for the activism of the Zimbabwean judiciary is the composition of the Bench itself. At independence the High Court of Zimbabwe was largely white in composition. Judges came from varied but substantially sound legal backgrounds.

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6 The Judges were as follows:

**Appellate Division of the High Court**

- The Honourable Mr Justice Macdonal, Chief Justice until his retirement on 30 April 1980.
- The Honourable Mr Justice Fieldsend, Chief Justice from 1 July 1980.
- The Honourable Mr Justice Lewis, Judge President and Acting Chief Justice, May –July 1980.
- The Honourable Mr Justice Davies, until his retirement on 24 June 1980.
- The Honourable Mr Justice Baron, appointed with effect from 8 May 1980.
- The Honourable Mr Justice Goldin, appointed with effect from 8 May 1980.

**General Division of the High Court**

- The Honourable Mr Justice Beck
- The Honourable Mr Justice Newham
- The Honourable Mr Justice Smith
- The Honourable Mr Justice Pittman
- The Honourable Mr Justice Gubbay
- The Honourable Mr Justice Waddington
Many had been exposed to natural law jurisprudence with its emphasis on superior norms and rights.

Against the background of the foregoing, it should not be surprising that a showdown was soon to develop between a judiciary concerned with individual rights in a natural law sense and a state dominated by a regime that was concerned solely with its survival in the face of various political threats and which defined its legitimacy in terms of developmentalism. This was not surprising as right from the onset, the government regarded the law judges it inherited and the Constitution it had to operate as imposed liabilities. Robert Mugabe, the post-independence Prime Minister, who is also now the President of the country, had stated way back in 1980 that:

Yes, even as I signed the document (the Constitution) I was not a happy man at all. I felt we had been cheated to some extent ... that we had agreed to a deal which would to some extent rob us of the victory we had hoped to achieve in the field.7

The first signs of conflict between the executive and the judiciary came in 1982 over the famous York brothers case. The York brothers8 were two Matebeleland farmers charged with the possession of weapons. At that time, a declared State of Emergency was in existence. Under the Zimbabwean constitution, the Bill of Rights is suspended when a State of Emergency exists which means that persons can, inter alia, be detained without trial, subject to the provisions of Detention Regulations. In the case of the York brothers, the state kept failing to comply with the regulations with the result that the brothers were released initially and later on rearrested, released again by the courts and again immediately rearrested. It was only on the third attempt that the court reluctantly accepted that the state had got it right this

8 Minister of Home Affairs and Another v York and Another 1982(2) ZLR 48(SC).
time around. The judgements by the courts in the York brothers case caused great consternation in government circles.

On 13 July 1982, while pressing for the renewal of the State of Emergency, the Minister of Home Affairs fired salvos at the courts as follows:

The manner in which our law courts dispense justice is gravely frustrating and undermining the work of law enforcement agencies like the Police. The security of the State is sacrificed at the altar of individual liberty ... recalcitrant and reactionary members of the so-called Bench still remain masquerading under our hard won independence as dispensers of justice, or shall I say, injustice by handing down perverted pieces of judgement which smack of subverting the people’s Government ... . We inherited in toto the Rhodesian statute which these self same magistrates and judges used to avidly and viciously interpret against the guerillas. What is so different now apart from majority rule? Our posture during constitutional negotiations with the British, to wit, that the judiciary must be disbanded can now be understood with a lot of hindsight ... We are aware that certain private legal practitioners are in receipt of money as paid hirelings, from governments hostile to our own order ... We promise to handle such lawyers using the appropriate technology that exists in our law and order section. This should succeed in breaking up the unholy alliance between the negative bench, the reactionary legal practitioners and governments hostile to us ... .

Needless to say there was immediate reaction to this shocking diatribe, forcing the then Prime Minister and now President, Robert Mugabe to comment. He did so in Parliament on 29 July 1982 (Hansard Col 925) when he stated:

I must say that, much as I appreciate the difficult task that our judges are faced with, and the difficult task should invoke more sympathy from this House than condemnation, the Government cannot allow the technicalities of the law to fetter its hands in what is a very clear task before it, to preserve law and order in the country (Honourable Members: Hear-hear) ... maintain peace in the country and forge ahead to build a non-racial society. We shall therefore proceed as Government in a manner we feel is fitting, in a manner which will enable us to be in control of the situation, and some of the measures we shall take are measures which will be extra-legal (emphasis added).

The statement by the Prime Minister was significant and would later on characterise the government’s own philosophy and modus operandi in the face of threats from any direction. The government would use any legal or extra-legal means to push through its preferred policies and course of action. As will be shown below, this is exactly how the Zimbabwean government tackles any potential domestic strife.

The threats by the Executive against the Judiciary did not, however, stop the latter from asserting individual rights and, in doing so, earning some respect for itself. Thus, the York brothers case did not become an isolated incident; many other occasions arose where the courts moved to protect individual liberties. During the course of the 1980s, the courts were kept busy by

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9 Parliamentary Debates House of Assembly (Hansard) col 630.
applications from detainees and they were not found wanting. The courts clearly established the rights of detainees in further cases such as that of Dumiso Dabengwa\(^\text{10}\) and those of Harper and Austin.\(^\text{11}\) There was also a flurry of major judicial activism involving the assertion by the courts of the importance of the Bill of Rights. The courts asserted the people’s rights to freedom of movement,\(^\text{12}\) expression, assembly,\(^\text{13}\) information, and conscience.\(^\text{14}\) They held and reasserted the rights of persons to legal representation and access to a lawyer in criminal cases.\(^\text{15}\) In addition, they asserted the fact that government cannot pass discriminatory legislation\(^\text{16}\) and abolished all forms of corporal punishment.\(^\text{17}\) Property rights were also reasserted,\(^\text{18}\) together with the state’s right to the compulsory acquisition of land in the public interest.\(^\text{19}\) Furthermore, the courts created a genre of prisoner rights such as the right to receive mail and the right to exercise and physical training.\(^\text{20}\)

It is not only in the field of human rights \textit{per se}, that the courts shone. In family law, through cases such as Katekwe v Muchabaiwa 1984(2) ZLR 112 (SC) and Zimnat Insurance Company Limited v Chawanda, the courts adopted and made proactive judgements. Similarly, in the field of Administrative Law, especially in the celebrated case of PF ZAPU v Minister of

\begin{enumerate}
\item Minister of Home Affairs and Another v Dumiso Dabengwa 1983(2) ZLR 346.
\item Bull v Minister of Home Affairs 1986(3) ZLR 396.
\item Rattigan and Others v Chief Immigration Officer 1994(2) ZLR 54(SC), Bryant Walker Elliot v Commissioner of Police et al. SC 41/97.
\item In re. Munhumeso 1994(1) ZLR 49(SC); Retrofit (Pvt) Ltd v PTC 1995(2) ZLR 191(SC); Sekai Holland and 17 Others v Minister of Labour SC-97.
\item In re. Chikweche 1994(2) ZLR 235(SC).
\item State v Woods and Ors 1993(2) ZLR 25(S).
\item Commissioner of Taxes v C W (Pvt) Ltd 1989(3) SA 361(S).
\item State v A Juvenile 1989(2) ZLR 61(SC).
\item Minister of Home Affairs v Bickle 1983(1) ZLR 400(S); Mhora and Another v Minister of Home Affairs 1990(2) ZLR 236H.
\item Davies and Others v Minister of Lands, Agriculture and Water Development 1997(1) SA 228.
\item Woods and Others v Minister of Local Government 1995(2) ZLR 195(ZS); Conjwayo v Minister of Justice and Another 1991(1) ZLR 105(S).
\end{enumerate}
Justice 1985 (1) ZLR 305 (SC), the court asserted its right that it could inquire into an act of State and Executive prerogatives in areas where the Executive had ousted the jurisdiction of the courts. In other words what the Judiciary was letting the Executive know was that, the Executive could not assault the concept of separation of powers by purporting to oust the jurisdiction of the courts. Put differently the courts were saying the Dicean concept of the rule of law was not the preserve of the Executive but rather that all three players in the democratic triangle of modern governance, namely, the Executive, Judiciary and state, were equal players.

With hindsight what the judiciary did, particularly between 1980 and 1986 in preserving the rule of law might pale into insignificance. The truth of the matter is that these learned persons of the bench worked under difficult and trying circumstances. This was the era when the country was virtually in a state of civil war as a result of the government’s war on the population of Matebeleland. Hundreds of people were killed by the elite North Korean-trained 5th Brigade battalion. Human rights abuses were gross, as evidenced by the high number of complaints before the courts, some of which are captured in the cases reported above. The court thus did a sterling job. Yet, these abuses took place in an environment where large numbers of the public did not know what was happening. For in Zimbabwe, at that time and to this day, only one daily newspaper exists and it was and remains government-owned. In addition, there is also one broadcasting centre which again is controlled by the state. Under this poisoned atmosphere, the judiciary became a small island of hope.

A Leopard Changes Its Spots or Does It?

In the period since the late 1980s, there has been a sharp reduction in the spate of attacks against the judiciary by the executive. In fact, in what some have interpreted, rather hastily and uncritically, as a case of the leopard changing its spots, there has been occasional praise for the judiciary by the executive. The judiciary itself has been quick to underplay the extent of the conflict between it and the Executive. But, as the examples which we will be citing below will show, the Executive’s ill-tempered and crude attacks on the judiciary have not gone away; they have simply taken a new, slightly more sophisticated form than the crass verbiage of the 1980s.

In 1985 and 1987, in the cases of PF-ZAPU v Minister of Justice 1985(1) ZLR 305 and Rushwaya v Minister of Local Government 1987(1) ZLR 5, the Supreme Court made the important rulings that the courts could interfere with the exercise of the President’s prerogative. The Executive clearly did not like this ruling. Significantly, in a departure from its previous habit, the

government did not go to the press to shout its disdain. Instead, it went to 
Parliament which is heavily dominated by members from the ruling party 
ZANU(PF)—there are only three opposition members—and passed 
Amendment No. 7 to the Constitution which, among other things, stated 
that the exercise of Presidential prerogatives could not be challenged in 
court.

In 1989, the Supreme Court made its seminal ruling in State v A Juvenile 
1989(2) ZLR 61 (SC), wherein juvenile and adult whipping was declared un-
constitutional on the basis that it was an inhuman and a degrading treat-
ment. At the same time, pending before the courts was a case where 
hanging as a method of execution was being challenged on the basis that it 
was inhuman and degrading. In response to these two developments which 
it did not like, the government, on 17 April 1991, promulgated Amendment 
No. 11 to the Constitution which, \emph{inter alia}, restated that:
a) juvenile whipping was not unconstitutional; and 
b) hanging as a method of execution was not unconstitutional.

The Judiciary was furious with this amendment. In an emotive address de-
ivered by the Chief Justice at the opening of the 1991 Legal Year on 14 
January 1991, he reacted to the two above-mentioned amendments as 
follows:

Plainly, these two amendments have serious implications for the future protec-
tion of human rights. In this connection I agree with the observations of the 
Catholic Commission of Peace and Justice that the strength of a justiciable Bill of 
Rights is that the power of interpretation is taken out of the hands of the 
Executive and Legislature and is given to the Judiciary; (and that for) the 
Legislature to cut down the scope of a fundamental right after it has been de-
fined by the Judiciary, or even before the Judiciary has exercised its judgement 
established a dangerous precedent that flies in the face of the separation of pow-
ers and the independence of the Judiciary. I believe fundamental rights provi-
sions are to be strengthened and not diminished or diluted. This concept is 
recognised under Article 31 of the new Namibia Constitution which makes it 
impermissible for its parliament to weaken any such protection.\footnote{22}

The executive was not amused by the Chief Justice’s attack. On 16 January 
1996, the Attorney General was reported in the country’s single daily, \emph{The 
Herald}, as saying he was disappointed with the Chief Justice. \emph{The Herald} 
editorial of the same date was headed “Not Judge’s Job to Change Laws” and 
contained a polite attack on the Bench.

Robert Mugabe, the country’s President was more blunt in an article 
headed “Avoid Politics—President Tells Judges” which appeared in the 
Herald of 18 January 1991. The President stated:

\footnote{22 The speech is reported in full in \emph{Legal Forum}, 1991, Vol. 3, No. 1, 5–9.}
An impression has been created that the judiciary would want to exercise their thinking on matters that are political. If certain laws are revulsive to the conscience of a judge, then that judge and conscience should not sit as a judge. Pure and simple.

In 1993 the Supreme Court made yet another internationally important ruling in the case of Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace v Attorney General and Others 1993(1) ZLR 242(S). This case held that the delay in carrying out execution was unconstitutional on the basis that it amounted to inhuman and degrading treatment. The State on 5 November 1993 promulgated Amendment No. 13 to the Constitution which declared that delay in execution was not unconstitutional. The following year, in 1994, the Supreme Court made another landmark ruling in holding that spouses of female Zimbabweans did not have to apply for residence permits in the country if they chose to reside with their partners there. The case was reported as Rattigan and Others v Chief Immigration Officer 1994(2) ZLR 54 (SC).

Another famous case that came up was the one involving the abuse of the presidential pardon in the 1990 Kombayi case. Patrick Kombayi, a flamboyant businessman contested as an opposition political candidate for the City of Gweru constituency in the 1990 General Election. His opponent was the country’s Vice President, the aged Simon Muzenda. During the run up to the election, all indications were that the ZANU(PF) candidate Simon Muzenda would be embarrassed. As a result, there was so much violence and tension in Gweru, the culmination of which was the shooting of Kombayi by a member of the CIO and a ZANU(PF) supporter. These two were later convicted and sentenced by a magistrates court, which conviction and sentence was later confirmed by the Supreme Court. A day after the Supreme Court had confirmed the conviction and sentence, the President published a Presidential Proclamation pardoning the two criminals. Not only did the President abuse his powers of pardon, but also his powers in terms of the Presidential Powers (Temporary Measures) Act Cap 10:20. This Act was designed to give the President powers to deal expeditiously with a situation requiring urgency in the interest of national defence, public health, public order and the economic well-being of the country. Yet the Act was grossly abused in the partisan interest of ZANU(PF).

In one of the lesser known cases, the parliamentary seat for the resort town of Kariba became vacant after its incumbent, Enos Nkala, had been disgraced in the Sandura Commission investigations. The Registrar-General called for nominations to be submitted by 11.00 a.m. on 29 September 1989. On the 29 September 1989, the ZANU(PF) candidate had a vehicle breakdown resulting in him failing to submit his papers before 11.00 a.m. The President then passed an emergency declaration extending the nomination times from 11.00 a.m to 5.00 p.m under the Electoral (Nomination Court) Notice S1 22A/89. This allowed the ZANU(PF) candidate to register on
time. Fortunately the said notice was declared null and void on some technicality in ZUM v Mudede NO and Another 1989(3) ZLR 62 (HC & SC).

Two further abuses of the Presidential Powers (Temporary Measures) Act merit attention. In the mid-1990s, the government was not happy with the composition of members of the University of Zimbabwe Council. It felt that the people in it were too independent, hence their failure to deal decisively with issues of student unrest. It thus wanted the council to be packed with ruling party loyalists. The problem was however that neither the Chancellor (who is the State President, Robert Mugabe) nor the Minister of Higher Education legally had powers to dissolve the University Council. To dissolve council would have required parliamentary intervention. However the President pulled a masterstroke and dissolved the council through use of the Presidential Powers (Temporary Measures) Act. He did this by simply publishing a Government Notice SI 191A/95 which unfortunately no one challenged.

The second instance where Parliament was by-passed involved the administration of the local authorities. For a long time, ZANU(PF) had paid little political attention to urban councils. However, as its hegemony nationally began to wane, it became important to politicise the Urban Councils through the introduction of elected executive mayors. Now the Urban Councils were due, mandatorily, to hold their five yearly elections in August 1995, and it made economic sense that executive mayors be elected simultaneously with ordinary councillors. The problem however was that the existing legislation at the time, namely, the Urban Councils Act Chapter 214, did not provide for the office of an executive mayor and election into it. To establish the office of an executive mayor, Parliament had to amend the Urban Councils Act. Once again, Mugabe had an answer to this problem: he simply issued a Presidential Proclamation (The Temporary Measures Urban Councils Regulations SI 148A/95) which set up the machinery for the election of Executive Mayors.

The two examples cited above are significant from a rule of law point of view. The two Presidential decrees amounted to the President usurping powers of the legislature. The long and short of it is that if the judiciary is rendered impotent in the manner shown above, and if the Parliament can be cheated via the Presidential decrees, then it is nonsense to talk of the concept of separation of powers in Zimbabwe. More significantly, it is absolute nonsense to talk of the existence of the rule of law.

The Limitations of the Judiciary

The fact that the judiciary itself depends on the Executive for the execution of its judgements underpins its weakness. This, of course, is a universal
factor and it is one which the courts accept (see the Bonus case). More than that, however, it has been shown that it is so easy to avoid the consequences of unpopular judgements by amending the law. This has been the greatest method of attack on the Judiciary in Zimbabwe in recent times. This problem is compounded by the fact that although a constitution exists with a justiciable Bill of Rights, that bill is not entrenched and as a result can be changed by a simple two thirds majority of Parliament.

Ideally, if Parliament was truly representative, there would be nothing wrong in the people’s representative amending legislation to reflect the peoples’ will. However it has been shown in thorough studies such as Jonathan Moyo’s Voting for Democracy: Electoral Politics in Zimbabwe (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1992) that election rigging is rife in the country. The cases of Margaret Dongo v Vivian Mwashita et al. 1995 (2) ZLR 228(HC), and Mhashu v Chitungwiza Municipality et al. HH 43–97 again prove the point that the election delivery system is in shambles. The Margaret Dongo case deserves some mention, and not because the writer was her counsel. In this case, Dongo, an ex-combatant, stood as an independent candidate in the 1995 general election and lost narrowly to a ZANU(PF) candidate, Vivian Mwashita. She then filed a court petition to set aside the election citing, among other things, election fraud. This was the first time that the government had been taken to court on the basis of election fraud after a general election. During the court proceedings, ballot boxes were opened and one thousand more ballot papers, more than the number of persons who had voted, were discovered. This was election fraud at its worst. Margaret Dongo won after the State threw in the towel. Since then, a flurry of court applications seems to follow every election where a ZANU (PF) candidate wins. In most of these subsequent applications, the pattern seems to be that elections are being set aside and replays ordered.

The root of the problem of the abuse of the rights of the citizenry is the country’s substantially weak constitution. It pays lip service to constitutionalism by providing for a justiciable Bill of Rights and the Judiciary’s powers of constitutional review, yet the constitution which is supposed to contain a fixed “ground norm” is not constant. Thus the game is played with continuously shifting goal posts depending on what the ruling party wants or feels like doing.

At the same time, the Constitution ambiguously allows for the concept of parliamentary sovereignty to exist by making Parliament supreme in the sense of having powers to change or alter laws including the Constitution itself with little problem. Yet, the concept of parliamentary sovereignty is discredited and in those countries such as England, where it is still retained, it is simply because the electoral delivery system works better and with a

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23 Chairman, Public Service Commission and Others v Zimbabwe Teachers Association et al. 1997 (1) SA 209(SC).
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I have a private theory of my own that the English are responsible for a great deal of muddled legal thinking on this question of separation of powers. When Chief Justice Sir Edward Coke made his famous seventeenth-century stand on the principle that the King is not above the law, he was, I think, endorsing the moralist as opposed to the positivist idea of law. His concept was, in true British fashion, regarded as being for export only.

It went abroad with the Mayflower and took root in America. But at home, with that fine English contempt for anything that smacks of logic or intellectualism (we leave that kind of thing to the French, you know), it was watered down into the concept of the supremacy of Parliament. The concept works well enough when Parliament is truly representative of the people. But in a situation where Parliament is the mouthpiece of the executive, and the executive represents a small but powerful oligarchy, a curious situation develops. The supremacy of Parliament becomes the supremacy of the executive, the supremacy of the oligarchy.24

Clearly, with the way in which power is structured in the country, the work of the Zimbabwean judiciary, the rule of law and democracy, will always remain constrained by the existence of an internally powerful ruling party and a notoriously weak constitution. To use the words of Zimbabwe’s President, against whatever the rulings of the judiciary may be, ZANU (PF) and the government “will do anything legally or extra-legally” to perpetuate their rule. It is thus not a surprise that every form of opposition has been met with legal or extra-legal reaction. The people in Matebeleland who dared to raise their heads against ZANU(PF) in the early eighties, died in thousands during the “Gukurahundi” era. Many others were detained without trial. Later on in 1987, when massacres were no longer regarded as politically correct, particularly after the enunciation of Gorbachev’s policies of perestroika and glasnost, the ZANU(PF) government changed its tactics, and coerced the Matebeleland people, represented by PF(ZAPU), to agree to a unity accord executed on 22 December 1987.

In the late 1980s, students at the University of Zimbabwe presented a real headache to the ZANU (PF) government, particularly because of their anti-government and anti-one-party state positions. The government “punished” the university community by enacting the notorious University Amendment Act of 20 December 1990 which killed the autonomy of the university in a move calculated to undermine the independent voice of staff and students. That Act did however not kill the buoyancy and spirit of the students, as students remained militant. In 1997 the government reacted by cutting back entirely any state sponsorship to new university students. The

effect is obviously to make students more conservative since many would want to put to “good” use the fees paid by their parents and relatives by avoiding being engaged in national affairs.

The emasculation of civil society is reflected again in the manner in which government treated the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU). In the late eighties, the ZCTU through its Secretary General Morgan Tsvangirai took a decisive stance against the proposed one-party state. The State reacted by arresting Tsvangirai and later on passed the Labour Relations Amendment Act 1992 which sought to dilute the ZCTU’s hegemony over the working class by replacing vertical union representation with horizontal representation.

In the period from the mid-1990s, civil society, through NGOs such as Zimbabwe Human Rights Organisation (ZIMRIGHTS), the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, became increasingly more vocal. The government has not taken this kindly and in 1995 amended the 1966 Welfare Organisation Act by baptising it with a new name, the Private Voluntary Organisation Act, Cap 17:05 and in addition gave the minister responsible for its administration wide powers of suspending and deregistering organisations. By that act, the government managed to place civil society under siege. It is increasingly futile, if not outrightly dishonest, to talk of the existence of democracy and the rule of law in Zimbabwe.

**Ante-Dated Legislation**

The function of the Judiciary has not been served well by the existence of antiquated colonial laws and legislation, the main one being the common law. Roman Dutch Common Law, which is practised in Zimbabwe is not enlightened and contains many outdated notions. For instance, it hardly recognises notions such as gender equality, worker rights, and consumer protection. It also places private property rights way above any other right, including even the right to life. The common law of defamation, with its strict liability imposition on the media, more than anything, illustrates the need for statutory reform.25

Apart from the common law, this country has a large vestige of repressive colonial legislation that is as fascist as it is abhorrent. The classic example is the Law and Order Maintenance Act Chapter 11:05.

This Act criminalises virtually all forms of civil activity such as:

a) holding assemblies, meetings or marches without police authority;

b) going on strike;
c) making any statements calculated to bring into disrepute, any state
organ including the person of the president;
d) inciting or encouraging anyone to do any of the above.

In addition, other repressive and outdated Acts whose names speak for
themselves are:

a) the Vagrancy Act Chapter 10:25
b) the Unlawful Organisations Act Chapter 11:13
c) the Censorship and Entertainment Control Act Chapter 10:04, The
Broadcasting Act Chapter 12:01 (this gives the State monopoly rights
over any broadcasts)
d) the Official Secrets Act Chapter 11:09
e) the Protected Places and Areas Act Chapter 11:12
f) the Foreign Subversive Organisations Act Chapter 11:05
g) the Preservation of Constitutional Government Act Chapter 11:11
h) the Witchcraft Suppression Act Chapter 9:19
i) the Miscellaneous Offences Act Chapter 9:15

It is obvious that the government has retained these laws as they serve it
pretty well.

The Judiciary as the Problem

The picture painted above does not mean that in all cases, the judiciary has
been uniformly and consistently active or progressive. There have been
several, but, thankfully, relatively few judgements that have restrained in-
dividual rights.\textsuperscript{26} The lesson to be derived from this is that it is not always
right to place all hope and reliance on one institution in society. The greatest
safeguard against abuse and dictatorship is not the court but mobilised civil
society itself.

The Way Forward

From the above it is clear that a lot needs to be done before the citizens of
Zimbabwe can enjoy democracy and the rule of law. However, given that
the State keeps on changing the legal base line, the solution lies more in poli-
tics than in the law. I have made the following point elsewhere that:

\textsuperscript{26} See cases such as Minister of Home Affairs v Dabengwa 1983(2) ZLR346(SC); Bull v Minister
of Home Affairs, p. 86, (3)SA820(SC); Hewlett v Minister of Finance 1981 ZLR471(SC); Granger
v Minister of State Security 1984(2) ZLR92(SC); Stambolie v Commissioner of Police 1990(2)
ZLR969(SC); Principal Immigration Officer v T O'Hara 1993(1) ZLR71(SC); and the Bonus case
above, to mention a few.
It must be emphasised however that the existence of beautiful or thorough Constitutional guarantees to freedom of expression does not necessarily entail the existence on the ground of the enjoyment and flourishing of such right. This applies to all Human Rights clauses in Constitutions. In Zimbabwe for instance, notwithstanding the existence of a clause that guaranteed freedom of movement and assembly, for years, until the Munhumeso case (1994(1) ZLR 49(S)), Section 6 of the Law and Order Maintenance Act Chapter 11:07 remained operational. Further in spite of In re. Munhumeso the Police still extra-legally control many political demonstrations. The American Constitution of 1787 had a Bill of Rights added to it in 1791 that among other things stated that all men were equal before God, yet slavery existed legally and women had the franchise as late as 1920. Objective conditions prevailing in a particular country determine the relevancy of a Constitution and the effectiveness of a Bill of Rights. In this country a lot of legal and extra-legal factors exist that militate against the full and realistic enjoyment of the benefits offered by the concept of freedom of expression and freedom of speech.

Legal restraints found in the common law and outdated statutes exist. Non-legal factors underpinned by the ideology of political intolerance are perhaps even more decisive.27

Civic society must be strengthened. Once it is strengthened then it can press for:

a) the birth of a new, genuine, and thorough constitution;
b) the enactment of necessary legislation to bolster democracy;
c) the repeal of all existing legislation that is repressive and fascistic.

Thus those who wish to help the people of Zimbabwe must simply invest in those organisations, such as ZIMRIGHTS, that are closer to the generality of the people. Other organisations worth supporting include a variety of women’s groups, Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, and opposition parties, if any. That does not mean that existing structures are to be ignored. Certainly there is need to assist the judiciary through the provision of equipment and books that could help in facilitating the work of judges.

The task is heavy, the journey is long, but the quest and goal are noble and should, therefore, be encouraged.

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27 See article referred to in footnote 25.
Introduction

For Africa, the 1990s have been years of crises, conflicts and continuing/deepening poverty. But they have also been years of widespread political change, a great deal of which has been equated with a movement towards democratisation. Indeed, it was quite a paradox for Africa to have to go through the traumatic experience of the Rwandan genocide of 1994 in the same year as it was celebrating the end of apartheid in South Africa and the accession to power of Nelson Mandela who had been one of the world’s longest serving political prisoners (Zeleza, 1996:2–5). Between these extreme and spectacular developments, there has been a whole range of other events that, at one level, suggest the persistence of major political and economic problems and the emergence of new ones and, at another level, testify to the progress made in the direction of political liberalisation, democracy and, perhaps even more important, the recognition of the popular ownership of the democratisation processes. It is important to note that the conference that led to the adoption of the *African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation* took place “during the very week when Nelson Mandela’s release ... exhilarated all of Africa and galvanised the international community” (Zeleza, 1996).

The views of scholars on these diverse developments on the continent range from what has been characterised as downright ‘Afro-pessimism’, to jubilation in the face of what is perceived as the beginnings of a ‘second independence’ or a ‘second liberation’ for Africa. It has actually been argued that the euphoria generated by the advent of new, relatively democratic regimes in the wake of the national conferences and other forms of transition that took place is comparable to that of the independence years (Perret, 1993). The high number of countries where transitions have occurred over the past decade or so shows that what has been called the ‘third wave’ of global democratisation (Huntington, 1991) did sweep across the continent.
The move from authoritarianism to democracy is a complex process that entails a number of structural transformations. The causes of these transformations are as complex as the processes themselves. In the case of Africa, as in other regions, the actors are of a wide variety, both within the continent and outside of it; they include both state and non-state actors. Not surprisingly, the expansion of democratic space has led to the emergence of new civil society institutions for the promotion of democracy and human and peoples’ rights. These institutions have, in turn, become key engines of the democratisation processes. The processes have, therefore, become partly self-propelling.

The economic conditions under which democratisation is taking place in Africa are difficult, to say the least. Given the widespread poverty and weak economic base that are among the defining characteristics of many countries on the continent, the viability of the institutions of democracy appears to be very fragile and the prospects for democratic consolidation are seen by some as being quite bleak. Yet, when the experience is considered more carefully, there are good reasons for being reasonably optimistic about the future of democracy in Africa. Besides the profound structural changes that have occurred, particularly within the continent, there also seems to be strong political will in various quarters to ensure a democratic future for Africa. Two of the most visible changes are, on the one hand, the mere fact that from being a small minority shortly after it was created, elected heads of state now constitute the majority of participants in the Organisation of African Unity’s Assembly of Heads of State.

Furthermore, civil society and community-based organisations and social movements that are conducive to the development of democracy now exist in larger numbers and are apparently better organised. The change in perceptions is equally remarkable. Gone are the days when Africa was portrayed as a child-continent which was not then ready or sufficiently prepared for democracy. Those were the days of one-party rule when democracy or certain of its constituent elements, such as multi-partyism, were seen as a threat to ‘national unity’ or an impediment to national development. Instead, democracy is now more and more perceived as constituting a remedy to conflicts (Nnoli, 1995) and, as a good lubricant to the development process. Many are, therefore, the initiatives taken at various levels to promote or institutionalise democracy in Africa.

Democracy is taken here to mean government of the people, and is, therefore, examined not only from an institutional point of view, but also from the “point of view of the application of a principle, that of equal participation of all citizens in political decisions” (Meillassoux, 1996:48). As such, democracy is both a concept and a socio-historical process (Mafeje, 1995:5). Who the “people”, or the “citizens” are and how they participate in political decisions varies over time and space, and with the evolution of social relations. Thus, depending on the specific social relations and institutional
arrangements, democracy has been characterised as being “liberal”, “social” or “socialist”.

It has, however, been argued that the very notion of a democracy of “citizens” needs to be problematised, particularly in Africa where, in some countries, citizenship has sometimes been used to deprive large sections of the people of certain fundamental rights. A classic case in this regard centres on the experience of migrant labourers who, because of the separation existing between their lands of birth and their lands of residence, are part of the “labouring community” but are not necessarily accepted as part the “political community” because they are not “citizens” of their lands of residence (Mamdani, 1995; 1996). This, however, is quite different from the exceptionalism expressed by the notion of “African democracy” which has served as a basis for the inclusion of certain clauses in the African Charter for Human and Peoples’ Rights, in the name of respect for African values.

A regional approach to democracy promotion would necessarily have to put the emphasis on continental/regional and, to a lesser extent, sub-regional processes, challenges, issues and institutions. This essay examines regional/pan-African initiatives to promote democracy, both at the inter-state level and at the level of civil societies. Although the essay focuses primarily on the role of regional organisations, it begins by examining the different categories of actors involved in promoting democracy at regional and sub-regional levels and highlights the modes of intervention of these actors. It then examines the specific issues being addressed and the ways in which different types of regional actors are trying to address them. Finally, the essay tries to identify areas where international cooperation and a partnership between Sweden and Africa could help in promoting democracy in Africa.

Regional and Sub-Regional Organisations

Attempts are ceaselessly being made at the regional and sub-regional levels to influence the on-going democratisation processes, both directly, by facilitating transitions to democracy, including the monitoring or supervision of elections and indirectly by attempts at preventing or managing conflicts, the adoption of charters (for ‘popular participation’ and on human and peoples’ rights), the promotion of human rights instruments, and campaigns for the boycott of regimes that come to power through military coups (Burundi). Even strategies for debt relief, poverty reduction and general economic and social development, which are aimed at improving the economic and social environment, can have an impact on the democratisation processes. The Lagos Plan of Action falls into this category. These, however, are areas in which the regional approach, where it exists, hardly ever explicitly relates the initiatives taken to the promotion of democracy.
Some of the initiatives that have emerged in support of democracy in Africa have been articulated at the regional level, particularly at the level of the OAU and related institutions such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). Others are the result of efforts made at a sub-regional level (ECOWAS, SADC, IGAD, ECCAS). Most of these organisations (OAU, ACHPR, ECA, SADC, ECOWAS etc.) are inter-state/inter-governmental organisations (IGOs) involving mainly governments. A number of these organisations, were, for long, confronted with deep financial and institutional crises, which put a serious limit on the extent to which they could promote democracy.

African civil society organisations (CSOs) have also been very active in the promotion of democracy at the regional level. Their numbers have increased in dramatic proportions over the past few years. Pan-African and sub-regional professional associations (AAPS, AJA, AAWORD, WAJA etc.), pan-African and sub-regional organisations and councils (CODESRIA, SAPES, OSSREA, AACC), NGO networks (APRONET, FEMNET, WILDAF, FAWE, UIDH, CLADDHO, LGDL, GERDDES-AFRICA, Nairobi Peace Initiative, ACCORD, Africa Leadership Forum, Inter-Africa Group, ENDA, FAVDO etc.), and trade union federations such as OATUU have, through research on and/or advocacy of the rule of law, respect for human rights, press freedom, the right to organise, gender equality, social justice, peace etc. been vigorously involved in promoting democracy.

Absent from this list are community-based organisations and peasant federations, which mostly operate at the local level. There has been a phenomenal rise in their numbers over the past decade or so (Rahmato, 1991; Moyo, 1995; Sall, 1995). The attempts made by these rural community organisations to intervene beyond national frontiers are quite weak and, even at the national level, they hardly ever explicitly use the language of democracy and human rights in the course of their struggles (Sall, 1995). There are a few exceptions though, such as FONGs, CNCL and Six S, among others. Yet these organisations and federations themselves and the issues they raise are at the very heart of the democratisation processes.

Of a different kind of initiative are those taken within the framework of the Commonwealth, La Francophonie and Franco-African Summits, and the Global Coalition for Africa (GCA), with regard to democracy in Africa. Finally, the decisions and resolutions taken at global fora such as the World Summit for Social Development, the World Conference on Human Rights and the Beijing Summit are also relevant to this discussion. This essay will, however, focus on African initiatives.

The Case of the OAU

The OAU is undoubtedly Africa’s leading regional organisation. It is a membership organisation whose constituent members are sovereign states.
It follows that the extent to which the OAU can promote democracy in Africa is ultimately dependent on the level of commitment of its member-states to democratic principles of government, and on the capacity and resources that the OAU Secretariat has. Unelected heads of state cannot realistically be expected to be zealous in promoting democracy. As has been noted by a prominent OAU official, in the preamble of the OAU Charter, “the Heads of State and Government speak as if our Continental Organisation is their exclusive domain rather than something which belongs to all the peoples of Africa”. Indeed, they assert: ‘We the Heads of State and Government ...’, rather than ‘We the peoples of Africa ...” (Bakwesegha, 1996:3).

The OAU is a multipurpose organisation intervening in virtually all areas related to inter-state relations in Africa. The promotion of democracy is not among the objectives specified in the OAU Charter, even though that would neatly fit into the other provisions of the Charter.

The Charter also makes little mention of human rights (Nwankwo, 1993:50). This was to be corrected by the adoption of subsequent declarations. With the adoption of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the situation certainly began to change. In fact, the promotion of democracy is among the main objectives of the African Commission for Human and Peoples’ Rights, itself created by the OAU.

The history of the OAU is actually partly a mirror-image of the post-independence history of Africa. In the first two decades of this history, the activities of OAU were predominantly characterised by an obsession with decolonisation (in terms of the completion of the process), the peaceful co-existence of independent states, the defence of African sovereignty, and development. Thus, not surprisingly, the first commissions and committees established by the OAU included a Coordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa (also known as the “Liberation Committee”) and a Commission of Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration. The Liberation Committee, set up in 1963 to give support and harmonise assistance to the liberation movements that were still engaged in the struggle against colonialism or apartheid, was disbanded, following the independence of Namibia and the end of apartheid in South Africa. While it existed, it helped to drum up support for the liberation movements “by appealing to internationally accepted rights such as the principles of racial equality and self-determination” (Imobighe, 1989:54).

Conflict prevention and management were also important areas of concern for regional organisations active in Africa. Indeed, over the years, conflict prevention and management became more and more closely related to the promotion of democracy, as internal conflicts raised issues of identity and participation. This occurred at the same time as the general political climate began to improve in a significant way. For the OAU, the turning points were the adoption of the Banjul Charter in 1980 and, later, the July
1990 “Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU on the Political and Socio-Economic Situation in Africa and the Fundamental Changes Taking Place in the World”. In this Declaration, it was stated (Article 10), among other things, that “popular-based political processes would ensure the involvement of all, including, in particular, women and youth in the development efforts. We accordingly recommit ourselves to further democratisation of our societies and to the consolidation of democratic institutions in our countries” (cited in Bakwesegha, 1996:5). In 1993, the Commission of Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration that was set up as early as 1963, the year when the OAU was founded, was replaced by a new Conflict Management Division, which is to be housed in the new Conflict Management Centre being constructed at the OAU Headquarters.

The new conflict management mechanism aims to manage both transitions and internal armed conflicts. Its main forms of intervention, therefore, range from monitoring/observing or supervising elections to preventive diplomacy. Thus, by May 1996, the OAU had been able to observe elections and referenda in well over 40 member-states, including South Africa (Bakwesegha, 1996:16; Garber, 1993:55–59). The number of elections and referenda observed by the OAU is now over sixty. The significance of these figures can be better appreciated in the light of the fact that “prior to 1990, nobody ever imagined that any member-state of the OAU would ever invite the OAU Secretary General to send a team of people to observe elections within its sovereign borders” (Bakwesegha, 1996:16). The OAU also mediates between governments and opposition parties (Congo, Gabon, Mozambique etc.) and has been instrumental in the negotiations for the Arusha Accords between the Rwandan Hutu and Tutsi which, if they had been respected, might have been able to prevent the genocide.

The OAU’s other major initiatives that are relevant to the promotion of democracy include:

– the adoption of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights;
– the creation of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR); and the adoption of the Lagos Plan of Action. It is important to note that both the African Charter and the Lagos Plan of Action were adopted at the end of the 1970s as we entered the 1980s, i.e. well before the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent general outcry for democracy.

The African Charter and the ACHPR have been the subject of intense academic and political debates. For instance, it has been argued that “Africa’s most important contribution to human rights jurisprudence is the placing of economic and social rights as a whole on the same legal footing as civil and political rights”, thus making them virtually all justiciable (Busia, 1996:26). The Charter, has, of course, a number of limitations as well. So does the African Commission. A major limitation to the African human rights system
has been the absence of an African Human Rights Court. This notwithstanding, the adoption of the Charter and the creation of the Commission by the OAU have been praised as representing major moves towards the promotion of democracy and human rights and towards rooting both in the African soil.

More general limitations to the actions and initiatives of the OAU system as a whole (including the ACHPR) include the lack of human and financial resources for the efficient running of their secretariats and implementation of their programmes and projects: most member states are in arrears in the payment of their dues, and foreign funding is not always easy to come by. The heavy dependence of the officials of the secretariats as well as the Commissioners (of the ACHPR) on the heads of state and on their respective governments also makes it difficult for them to operate as freely as they would need to. Finally, both the OAU and the ACHPR have to learn to work with civil society organisations in the effort to promote democracy and human rights in Africa. Here, the OAU could, perhaps, benefit from the experience of the ACHPR which has established a good working relationship with human rights organisations, through the granting of observer status to some of them, and by holding joint fora with them and with the International Commission of Jurists and the Africa Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies, on the eve of every session of the Commission.

Calls for such a partnership to be established between CSOs and the OAU and/or the ECA are becoming more frequent. Similar calls are also being addressed to the GCA. In all cases, the initiative has been coming from the CSOs which are becoming increasingly mobilised in the struggle for democracy and human rights, not only at national level, but also at the regional level and, to a lesser degree, at the sub-regional level.

Besides the OAU, the ECA has also been active in the search for an African alternative framework to structural adjustment, the promotion of popular participation, and in the mobilisation of support for CSOs. Sub-regional inter-governmental organisations such as ECOWAS and SADC have also been promoting peace and democracy in their respective sub-regions. Perhaps the best example here is ECOWAS, which has been active in the search for a solution to the Liberian crisis, by deploying troops (the ECOWAS Monitoring Group, ECOMOG), playing a mediating role, and facilitating elections. Here too, the regional and sub-regional initiatives to promote democracy sometimes take the form of the adoption of charters and declarations, and the setting up of special structures and institutions, sending mediators and eminent persons, etc. The initiatives also often take the form of country-focused efforts to bring peace, mediate conflicts, facilitate transitions etc. (Liberia, Burundi, South Africa etc.), except where the issue at hand involves several countries. The series of national conferences, for instance, attracted little collective attention, and were
hardly ever taken as a phenomenon or movement to be critically appraised with a view to being further developed.

The national conferences have been a major innovation and they have led to the setting up of democratic institutions that have, in some countries (e.g. Benin), successfully conducted second elections. In other places (Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone), the forces of democracy have had to reckon with the military factor which still constitutes a major obstacle to democratisation. However, more often than not, sub-regional IGOs also run into the same kinds of difficulties as the regional ones. With regard to working with CSOs, the record of sub-regional IGOs is hardly better than that of the OAU. Perhaps the only sub-regional IGO that is an exception in this regard is SADC which is being actively engaged by southern African NGOs.

CSOs have also been adopting charters and making statements and declarations. In addition, they engage in research, advocacy, training (human rights education, leadership training, training parliamentarians, etc.) and organising caucuses and NGO fora on the eve of sessions of the ACHPR or the GCA, or in preparation for world summits and conferences. They also face a number of difficulties of a financial and institutional nature. More important, however, are the restrictions on the freedom of expression, the right to association and assembly, and the freedom of research within individual countries. CSO participation in regional fora and other initiatives meant to promote democracy also restricted by their weak financial bases, and by the suspicion with which many governments still regard them. CSOs often lack the means to hold their own regional fora to discuss issues that they would wish to see on the agenda of, for instance, the Assembly of Heads of State of the OAU. Yet democracy presupposes an empowered people and an empowered civil society. The free flow of information from CSOs to IGOs and vice versa is a precondition for an effective collaboration between the two.

A regional approach to democracy promotion, in the African context should, of necessity, address issues such as the role of the state, human rights, the rule of law, poverty, peace-making, conflict prevention, popular participation, gender equity, etc. There is a need to rehabilitate politics in Africa. The political class is faced with a problem of legitimacy in many countries. One of the root causes of the loss of legitimacy is the mass poverty which serves as the basic context within which efforts at the promotion of democracy are being made. How to facilitate the self-empowerment of the people, and democratise the state while enabling it to keep its protective, regulatory and social service delivery functions, is probably one of the most important challenges of the day for Africans.

Concluding Remarks

Taken together, there has undoubtedly been some progress made in the democratisation of African state structures. The struggles for democracy and
human rights are, however, still very much “national” in character. The regionalisation of these struggles is, in some ways, part of a process which is both pan-African and global. Inter-state/inter-governmental and non-state actors have been taking a number of initiatives to promote democracy both at the national level and with regard to the democratisation of intra-African and international relations. What is still very limited is collaboration and close articulation between state and non-state actors and initiatives in the promotion of democracy and human rights at the sub-regional and regional levels. Both categories of actors are faced with numerous problems and weaknesses.

Furthermore, as long as some of the key players in the regional field, such as Nigeria, are under authoritarian rule, there will be a limit to what can be achieved both at the regional level, and within the geographical sub-regions where they are located. However, significant gains have been made over the past eight to ten years. With the progress of democracy within countries leading to the presence of more and more democratically elected heads of state at regional and sub-regional summits, regional organisations and IGOs are likely to be more open to creative partnerships and dialogue with CSOs at all levels.

For such a process to be sustainable at the national, sub-regional and regional levels, the economic conditions also have to improve. Otherwise, the leaderships of the emerging democracies might run the risk of their legitimacy being eroded, thus proving right those who say that “people do not eat democracy but food” (cited in Mkandawire, 1996:43), even though what has been called the “full belly thesis” has been discredited long ago in Africa where authoritarianism has failed to bring about development.

The list of possible areas for cooperation between Africa and Sweden in the context of a regional approach to democracy promotion is, therefore, long: funding the governance programmes of the OAU, sub-regional IGOs, and regional and sub-regional CSOs; institutional strengthening (OAU, ECOWAS, pan-African/sub-regional CSOs) and institution building (African courts, the emerging national independent electoral commissions and constitutional councils, the position of an ombudsperson in countries where there is no institution playing such a role); capacity strengthening and utilisation (e.g. to monitor, or supervise elections, etc.); facilitating dialogue between IGOs and CSOs, both at the regional and sub-regional levels; rehabilitating the state through democratisation, and advocating for debt relief and equity in international relations, among others.

This looks somewhat like a long shopping list but it is not meant to be. Perhaps the most important aspect of a new partnership between Sweden and Africa would be the sharing of experiences. Africans would certainly benefit from such an exercise. At a time when neo-liberal conceptions of politics and economics are presented to Africans as being the only ones that
exist, it is important for people in Africa to know about the existence of alternatives to neo-liberal state.

That would be in line with the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation which seems to embody aspirations for what has more recently been called a “democratic developmental state” (Mkandawire, 1995). Sweden could also facilitate exchanges of experiences between Africans and the peoples of Asia, Southern and Central America and the Nordic countries.

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References


PART II

AFRICA’S ECONOMIC TRANSITION
Introduction

Africa, it is said, is the last development frontier. While other developing areas have in the past half century seen rapid improvements in social welfare and human resource development, the African continent continues to grapple with the basics of day to day survival and the income gap between it and the rest of the world is widening. Civil wars, partly engendered by superpower rivalry, adverse terms of trade and shocks from international financial markets, not to forget the deleterious effects of bad government, have been the continent’s lot in the past decades. There has, of course, been no shortage of prescriptions or formulas for Africa’s transformation from poverty to sustainable growth, with many strategies advanced over the years. However, close to the turn of the century, it is clear that mere resilience will not enable Africa to achieve the growth rates necessary to ensure prosperity. The future lies in employing Africa’s enormous physical and human resources to generate poverty-reducing economic growth. This can only be achieved via efficient socio-economic policies.

In the 1960s, the new African governments sought to define a broad-based activist agenda for socio-economic development. However, the optimism of the 1960s quickly turned into economic and political crisis in the following two decades as debts increased, growth fell and civil wars erupted in various countries. In the 1980s, stabilisation and structural adjustment policies, backed by the IMF and World Bank, became the new policy orthodoxy. But as in the case of national development planning before it, a basis for sustainable growth and development took longer to establish than had

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1 Green (1996) has argued that while a growth rate of 6 per cent per year was thought to be necessary to ensure political and socio-economic stability and development, Africa’s average growth was hardly 2 per cent during the period 1960–1995. He argues further that other developing countries and regions, China, India, North East and South Asia, have had growth rates that were at least twice Africa’s during the same period.

2 At the 33rd OAU Heads of State meetings in Harare, June, 1997, the leaders launched the African Economic Community and decided that the focus of the regional body would henceforth be on economic issues.
been anticipated. Thus, given thirty-five years of under-performance, a period of serious re-examination was bound to ensue. The questions posed today are, however, still reminiscent of earlier concerns. How should we tackle African poverty? In pushing for growth, how should the balance be struck between modernisation and social responsibility?

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold: First it provides an overview of major themes and trends in Africa’s economic development since the 1960s, and, second, within a related context, summarises essays on the “economy theme” commissioned for the Partnership Africa Project. The essays shed light on aspects of the contemporary African reality, including the social impact of adjustment, land issues, the impact of the HIV/AIDS factor on urban and rural sectors, issues of gender empowerment, Africa’s response to market globalisation, and sustainable forms of financial resource mobilisation. The chapter proceeds as follows: In the next section, we look briefly at the various strategies adopted by African countries in the past in their search for economic development. This is followed with a discussion of the major trends in Africa’s economic performance in the 1990s. After this, a summary of the papers on the “economy theme” is presented, followed by a brief assessment of the continent’s future prospects and our concluding comments.

Responses to the Growth Challenges

The 1960s were a period of optimism in Africa. The world economy had emerged from recession at the beginning of that decade, growing steadily thereafter, with strong expansion in the demand for commodities, including cocoa, coffee, tea, gold and copper. Policy-makers attempted to redress the colonial legacy of underdevelopment by trying to remove inequalities in incomes and wealth, improving opportunities for gainful employment, establishing industries and creating a favourable atmosphere for overseas investments. In agriculture large-scale approaches were encouraged, including cooperative unions, resettlement schemes and state farms. It did not take long, however, before import-substitution policies collided with the rural sympathies of the new leaders. Governments were not able to maintain urban consumer subsidies and, at the same time, extend infrastructure and modern services to the countryside. The policy of low food prices, via controls, eradicated the incentive for market production and the incorporation of peasants into the market economy was beginning to wane in the late 1960s. Nationalisation and Africanisation of the “commanding heights” including mining companies, banks, insurance companies and manufacturing firms was another policy response to the lingering economic, social and

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sectoral cleavages. It can be argued, however, that while nationalisation was politically expedient, it often made little economic sense. Governments should instead have used the money that compensated owners to extend social infrastructure, thus enabling expansion of private sector activities, including rural production. In this way, output and employment opportunities would have been expanded.

The oil crisis of the early 1970s marked a sharp discontinuity for Africa: export prices were falling, due to world recession, while prices for imports, including intermediate inputs, were rising. These external shocks highlighted Africa’s external vulnerability, and the dangers of commodity dependence. Still, many countries managed, thanks to foreign loans, to sustain their import-substitution efforts as well as to continue subsidising urban consumers. However, a further round of external shocks at the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s led to the collapse of domestic investment, negative growth, and increasing indebtedness. The external shocks weakened the parastatal sectors, and the rest of the import-substituting industry, and production capacities fell to unprecedented levels. The parallel decline of the rest of the public sector marked the beginning of a drastic decline in formal-sector earnings. Nowhere was this more marked than in the civil service. Once the most prestigious source of modern sector employment, the civil service was decimated in much of Africa. Poor remuneration “casualised” government work and productivity of civil servants sank (Chew, 1990). A poorly performing government infrastructure compounded the problems of economic management: how was an inefficient public sector going to manage reform in the rest of the economy? The crisis was thus unprecedented in its severity and called for radical policy changes.

In 1985, African leaders met in Addis Ababa to try and find solutions to the economic crisis and Africa’s Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER) was launched. APPER re-emphasised the sectoral significance of agriculture, especially that of the food sub-sector, and the need for adequate incentives to producers, including marketing support and better supply of infrastructure. It also underscored the importance of adequate human resources in the development process, in order to meet the vast demands for skills that a dynamic development process entails. With a view to buttressing the efforts of individual countries, regional cooperation in the areas of agriculture, industry, finance and communications was also emphasised. Above all, it was necessary to adopt macro-economic policies that would help the continent to return to the path of long-term growth. Reform was thus a priority, although there was little agreement on how to proceed. While a number of IMF and World Bank programmes were underway by

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4 Nationalisations of the copper mines in Zambia did not necessarily make labour markets more harmonious: miners were not dissuaded from militant activities, while the government was unable to maintain investments in equipment and infrastructure.
the mid-1980s, they were viewed suspiciously by policy-makers and the population, especially since short-run costs of adjustment manifested themselves all too well, while benefits took longer to realise. Still, by the end of the 1980s, IMF/World Bank programmes had become the most important policy framework pursued by African governments since the concerted development planning of the 1960s.

The formulation and implementation of adjustment programmes have had three phases (Kayizzi-Mugerwa and Levin, 1994). The first phase, roughly from 1980–84, was concerned with stabilisation, which was to be achieved via demand management and devaluation. This phase also saw attempts at micro-economic reforms, including tax reforms, reduction of quantitative restrictions on trade, and improvement of public investment programmes, in order to enhance supply-side responses. The second phase, falling roughly in the second half of the 1980s, emphasised further price reforms, sectoral resource allocation, and improvements in public-sector efficiency. The impacts of structural adjustment policies, especially aspects related to public sector retrenchment led to much concern among African countries as well as the donor community. A wide-ranging criticism of IMF/World Bank policies, especially policy conditionalities, ensued at about this time. It was argued that reform policies failed to address the continent’s mass poverty and low growth, and that while the retrenchments made governments smaller, they failed to make them more efficient in delivering social services, especially to the rural areas. The call for “adjustment with a human face”, in intellectual and donor circles, received increasing attention at the end of the 1980s. It was argued that while structural adjustment could eventually create a more favourable atmosphere for economic growth, the poor needed assistance to overcome the transitory problems caused by rapid economic changes. At the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa an attempt was made to define an “alternative framework to adjustment”, which, while involving some aspects of adjustment, emphasised the necessity of national planning to arrest the decline of industry. However, this “alternative to adjustment” demanded a considerable amount of domestic and foreign funding, which failed to materialise.

The 1990s mark the third phase. It is now conceded that structural adjustment is a long-term project, and that to be successful, the growth it generates should be sustainable, that is poverty-reducing (Boughton and

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5 The debate is by now too broad to reproduce here but besides concern over increasing poverty (see for example van der Geest, 1994) another frequent criticism was that structural adjustment was causing de-industrialisation (see also World Bank, 1994).

6 A notable response was the starting, in 1989, of a project on the social dimensions of adjustment by the African Development Bank, the UNDP Regional Programme for Africa and the World Bank.

7 See UNECA (1989). This “alternative to adjustment” was not applied in any country, but the ideas influenced the formulation and implementation of subsequent adjustment policies.
Bernstein, 1993). There has been a noticeable shift in emphasis by multilat-
eral agencies and reforms now encompass “non-traditional” areas such as
gender, governance, and the environment.

Two innovations emphasised during the past decade are privatisation of
public enterprises (PEs) and development of efficient institutions. In a
broader sense, the private sector in Africa also encompasses smallholders
and the informal sector, and like their counterparts in the modern sector, in-
dividuals engaged here respond to price and other producer incentives as
well. However, with the bulk of the modern sector operating under price or
even quantity controls, it was impossible to create adequate incentives for
peasants and informal sector workers. It is thus argued that privatisation
will not only remove distortions in the modern sector, but will also
stimulate activity in small-scale agriculture and the informal sector (ADB,
1997).

The policy of privatisation remains contentious in most of Africa
(Wangwe, 1992). In many countries, there are still only a few “indigenous”
capitalists and the bulk of PE purchases have been made by foreign compa-
nies and “non-indigenous” groups, leading to the charge that privatisation
equals “foreignisation”. In agriculture, privatisation and related expansion
of activities has led to fears of land alienation. However, a more convincing
reason for having Africans participate in the privatisation drive is to ensure
that some of the benefits of a more dynamic economy accrue to an influen-
tial segment of the population\(^8\) in order to make the privatisation process ir-
reversible. A broader base for the private sector will demand the develop-
ment of entrepreneurial skills among the population. This can be achieved
via training, improved information and technical assistance, but also by
better financial intermediation. Finally, to thrive, the private sector needs
markets. But given Africa’s relatively small domestic markets, newly priva-
tised firms are constrained in their output expansion. Thus, as part of
market expansion, it is necessary to develop regional markets via increased
regional cooperation.

Reminiscent of the 1960s, Africa has returned to the theme of industriali-
sation. Many countries see the development of the manufacturing sector as
one of the important avenues for the creation of employment and the
growth rates necessary to enable the tackling of poverty. It was with this in
mind that African leaders launched the Alliance for Africa’s
Industrialisation in 1996, which was also adopted in a declaration by the
OAU at its Heads of State meetings in Harare in June, 1997. The emphasis is,
however, on fostering competitive industrial production and the develop-
ment of partnerships with other developing countries.

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\(^8\) That is to the middle classes. This raises the question whether privatisation is equity enhanc-
ing.
Let us also make some remarks on the impact of adjustment policies at the household level. At the macro-economic level, the impact of the two decades of economic turbulence and the attempts at structural adjustment on the African countries are fairly well documented. What is less known is how households and their members have responded to the economic distress and to adjustment. In urban areas, proximity to markets and social infrastructure enables households to diversify income sources. Poorer families enter low-paying, but less risky activities, while their richer counterparts go into business ventures enabled by the economic liberalisation (Maliyamkono and Bagachwa, 1990). Households headed by women were, due to lack of assets and low human capital endowment, at serious disadvantage.9

Overall lack of social services has affected the livelihoods of families, especially those in the countryside. However, some analysts see this “decoupling” of households from an inefficient central government as a form of liberation (Hoppers, 1989). In response to ineffective public sector service provision, creative energies have been unleashed in many urban and rural communities. In education, there has been increased local participation, via parents’ and teachers’ associations, in the running and funding of schools. In health, the collapse of modern hospital services has led to the mushrooming of private clinics. Still, these “local” efforts are dominated by the fairly well off, often in urban areas, while in some rural communities children have been withdrawn from schools altogether and the sick resort to local herbs for treatment. It is thus important that policy-makers monitor the effects of their policies at the sectoral and household levels and put in place measures to alleviate their negative impacts.

Performance of the African Economies in the 1990s

There are indications that after a decade of decline, African economies are undergoing a slow but steady recovery in the 1990s. In this section, we look at the main trends in economic performance during the decade and how it differs from earlier periods. We also address the question of whether this shift in performance is a result of improved macro-economic frameworks or merely of positive price and weather changes in recent years.

According to the latest African Development Report (ADB, 1997) African economies grew on average by 4.8 per cent in 1996, indicating positive per capita growth (see Appendix). This was a sharp improvement from the two previous years that recorded growth rates below 3 per cent, and much above the average for the early 1990s. There has thus been a positive trend in Africa’s growth of the past few years which contrasts with the negative performance of much of the second half of the 1980s. For

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example, of a total of 53 countries,\textsuperscript{10} 18 (34\%) had negative growth rates in 1992, while only 14 (26\%) had growth rates above 3 per cent (implying positive per capita growth). In 1996, only three countries had negative growth, while 41 (77\%) had rates above 3 per cent. Moreover, some countries such as Ghana and Uganda, have had high growth rates for much of the past decade, while maintaining a degree of macro-economic stability. In regional terms, growth poles seem to be emerging: Nigeria and the countries of the CFA-franc zone have seen strong improvement in economic performance in the 1990s, which has enhanced economic prospects for the whole of West Africa; in Southern Africa, on the other hand, more peaceful conditions and expanding economies of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), have increased optimism for the future.

Sectorally, agriculture remains an important contributor to growth, and the boom in coffee and cocoa prices in the first half of the 1990s had a positive impact on output. Still, food insecurity has remained a major concern for many countries. Droughts in Eastern and Southern Africa affected agricultural production adversely, in particular cereal output, forcing some countries to resort to grain imports and international food assistance. The manufacturing and mining sectors have registered poor to modest growth in the 1990s. The response to freer imports of intermediates and to expanding export possibilities has been slower than anticipated and the rates of capacity utilisation remain low in much of industry. It is hoped that privatisation and the new investments that have come with the change in ownership will stimulate production in the latter half of the 1990s.

Overall, macro-economic policy improvements have been important in generating sustainable growth. African inflation, though still high by international standards, has been moderated in the 1990s, thanks to lower budget deficits (see Appendix). As a measure of increasing domestic confidence, capital outflows, which reached US$6 billion in 1991 were almost insignificant in 1996. On the other hand, foreign direct investments have almost doubled since the beginning of the 1990s, reaching close to 5 billion in 1996. Though still a very small portion of total foreign investment flows to developing countries, it marks something of a trend break.

Africa’s debt burden continues to have a disruptive impact on economic prospects. In a functioning debt market, Africa’s debts would have been discounted long ago to levels consistent with Africa’s very low ability to pay. The new multilateral initiative for highly indebted poor countries (HIPCs)\textsuperscript{11} is a belated convergence to the view that debts will never be repaid in their entirety and that some drastic approaches are necessary. When implemented, it will enable countries to reduce their multilateral indebtedness.

\textsuperscript{10} African Development Bank analysis relates to its 53 “regional” member countries.
\textsuperscript{11} Only countries eligible for IDA loans, would qualify; 33 of 41 HIPCs are African.
and raise their attractiveness for foreign investment. However, the countries targeted for debt relief would only be those with a track record of reforms and some extremely needy cases in Africa will be left out of the initiative altogether. There has also been criticism of the snail-slow speed at which the initiative is being implemented, the first programme will, for instance, not come into effect until April, 1998.

Aspects of African Reality

In this section, papers on the “economy theme”, presenting “hands on” examples of Africa’s recent development experience, including sketches of recent policy trends are presented. They illustrate features of African reality, which, though crucial to policy success, are not always at the centre of mainstream discourse.

The chapter by Ringo Tenga looks at land policy in mainland Tanzania, especially in light of the pressures arising from the recent expansion of private sector activities in agriculture and other sectors of the economy. In the early 1960s, donors, including the World Bank, supported “modernisation schemes” based mainly on titling, resettlement and extension of services. The Ujamaa policy introduced by Nyerere was partly a reaction to the failure of these policies to make headway in rural mobilisation, and indicated a wish to introduce more radical and far-reaching collectivisation policies. With recent political and economic liberalisation, land issues have been revisited. A Land Commission presented its report in 1992, which highlighted lack of property rights in access, use and transactions in land as a major source of pervasive insecurity of tenure. Institutional structures for land management were identified as overlapping, and with contradictory functions, leading to a lack of openness in land transactions and administration.

It is also noteworthy, that the current Draft Land Bill to be debated in Parliament underlines women’s equality in matters of access to, utilisation of and transactions in land. Even in marriage, women would continue to enjoy separate property rights. The author notes, however, that since the laws of inheritance, as well as provisions of clan ownership, both unfavourable to women in the past, remain intact, the good intentions of the Draft Land Bill might prove difficult to realise. Still, the land debate in Tanzania provides interesting examples of the broad spectrum of social, political, and economic issues that confront African countries as they adjust to the demands of a new era. It also demonstrates the extent to which governments have been willing to go to find accommodation with their constituencies.

The paper by Rose Kiggundu discusses the differential impact of economic reforms on Uganda’s rural households. It looks at ways in which policy-makers could ensure a lasting and equitable improvement in the living conditions of the poor by combining macro-economic reforms with
directed forms of assistance to the rural population. What then has been the response of rural households to changes in the economy? The author argues that the southern parts of Uganda, with coffee production, have boomed in recent years, while the north, also politically destabilised, has stagnated.

In suggesting remedies, the author sees improvement of agricultural productivity, via better extension services, as one important way of raising rural incomes, especially of female-headed households. Since women comprise the majority of the population in the countryside, empowering them by giving them access to assets, credit and even power itself, will do much to revive rural sector production, and ensure food security. The author concludes that the benefits of economic reform in Uganda are yet to sip through to the rural areas, where, in spite of small islands of prosperity, poverty continues to be widespread. An important message is that economic reforms need to be accompanied by policies at the sectoral level to ensure that resources reach the poor.

The chapter by Pregs Govender, MP, looks at the budgetary process in the Republic of South Africa and how it impacts on women’s lives. The budget is a key policy tool for the implementation of social, political and economic policy priorities. This is why it is important to analyse the budget’s impact on such areas as unemployment, illiteracy, homelessness, and general deprivation where women and other vulnerable groups are overly represented. The budget is also the only instrument which can redress the inequalities that have been cemented by years of apartheid policies.

With this in mind, the Women’s Budget Initiative has in the past three years analysed the gender sensitivity of the budgets of the line ministries. To increase the gender sensitivity of budgets, the following steps should be taken. First, programmes in the budget should consider targeting women directly. Second, there must be changes in allocations to enable a high degree of affirmative action. Third, budgetary process must be inclusive, that is enable women’s active participation in political decisions. The author notes that some progress has been made, with ministries beginning to present development budgets that take into account women’s issues. She concludes that South Africa has the capacity, as well as political will, to arrive at solutions that ensure a gender-sensitive development strategy.

The chapter by Rene Loewenson and Alan Whiteside looks at the impact of AIDS in Africa, with a focus on the Southern African region. The disease has, over a short period of time had consequences that have gone well beyond health care concerns: the rapid spread of the disease is affecting productivity in the modern sector of the economy, disrupting socio-economic and cultural patterns in the rural areas, and diverting development efforts. In terms of human capital development, the impact of AIDS on education,
as children stop attending school due to lack of fees or perform poorly due to lack of support structures at home, are going to be serious. There has also been an increase in morbidity as the AIDS infection, with its negative impact on natural immunity, has increased the prevalence of other diseases such as tuberculosis.

At the policy level, lack of resources precludes radical solutions. However, the authors argue that efforts that make a difference need not be too expensive. Research experience shows that financial assistance extended to affected families, even in small amounts, has greatly enhanced their ability to cope. The authors underline the importance of prevention, which they argue is still the most cost-effective way of dealing with the disease. The authors conclude that though the effects of AIDS remain grim, the epidemic has opened up dialogue across society. There are now debates on the effective delivery of health care, not only for AIDS patients, but for others as well. Above all, there have been open discussions of sexuality and gender roles, as well as a coming to terms with the fact that the disease will only be combated effectively if the whole community is engaged.

The paper by Dominique Njinkeu looks at trade promotion in sub-Saharan Africa. Studies of development, the author argues, have demonstrated the superiority of “openness”, that is a system which does not promote imports, via controls, at the expense of exports, in generating growth. However, mere opening up of economies, might not suffice to develop export capabilities. To boost the quality of exports, capacities will have to be enhanced in the area of international purchasing of technologies, while business sectors need to expand into export activities. The problem of deficient market information will have to be addressed, as well as lack of efficient mechanisms for export promotion. Exporting firms must be encouraged to join international networks for trade promotion and expansion.

The role of donor agencies and bilateral partners will be to ensure that Africa has access to the global market, preventing policy reversal and reducing perceived risk, which works against export development. The author concludes that policy-makers will have to focus on improvement of the trade policy environment. In the process, regional markets should be “training grounds” for subsequent export to more advanced regions.

The chapter by Charles Abugre and Akabzaa Thomas looks at the socio-economic and environmental impacts of expanding foreign direct investment in Africa, with emphasis on mineral projects. They argue that while the opening up of the African economies has created unprecedented opportunities for international business, as well as generating revenues for host governments, the often generous investment terms, as well as the speed at which codes of investment have been drafted, have left considerable gaps.

In gold mining, for example, concessions were given out in some countries without due regard to the interests of small-scale miners. Use of capital intensive technologies has limited the level of job creation. Mining profits
have led to increasing domestic expenditures, and pressure on the balance of payments. However, the most serious effects are probably on the environment. Governments have little capacity to ensure that environmental laws are adhered to. The authors also argue for increased investment in domestically integrated mineral products such as salt, lime, and phosphates.

The note by Mariam Dao looks at the experience of the ATR organisation in Côte d’Ivoire, created by Ivorians themselves, to make it possible for people in the informal sector, and others unable to approach conventional financial institutions, to have access to credit. The author provides an example of Mrs. Aka for whom a whole set of dynamics were created by simple loans from the ATR. She now has a more secure future, pays taxes and sends her children to school. The author concludes that if the goal of policymakers is to encourage rural mobilisation for development, including raising the purchasing power of peasants and the poor in urban areas, it is important to take stock of the effectiveness of present financial institutions, with a view to making them accessible to the bulk of the population.

The papers presented indicate that Africa’s development challenges remain complex, touching on a whole range of social, economic and political issues. A recurring theme is that the problems of poverty, gender inequality, and rural underdevelopment cannot be resolved without the active engagement of the affected groups. This is especially important when addressing issues related to land ownership, and in searching for ways of limiting the spread of the AIDS epidemic as well as fighting marginalisation in rural and urban areas.

Africa’s development will continue to depend on how efficiently resources are harnessed and distributed. In this regard, policymakers must be receptive to the needs of the bulk of the population, often rural based and female. The latter have suffered from a legacy of neglect, but are yet to benefit from the recovery now under way in many countries. There is also need to respond adequately to the demands of the external sector. Economic policies need to be credible in order to attract the capital, both domestic and foreign, that will enable the economies to engage in economic diversification and to expand the export sector.

Future Perspectives

In the wake of civil war, economic crisis and hunger in Africa, it is tempting to have a pessimistic view of the continent’s future. However, the efforts made by various countries to undertake economic and political reforms in the past decade, and the progress made, in spite of immense difficulties, in generating growth, show that this pessimism would be misplaced. Let us below briefly discuss some of the factors that will be important in determining Africa’s future development.
Economies thrive on the basis of the predictability of their political, social and business environment. This is in turn ensured by the existence of efficient institutions. While Africa has never been short of institutions, most of those were inefficient and more hindrances to development than facilitators. Effective institutions are needed in human resource development, as this will be a crucial element in creating the competitive edge necessary for industrial and export development, addressing gender issues, combating poverty and disease, and caring for the environment. There is also need for institutions geared to the needs of rural dwellers, especially in the areas of preventive health care, nutrition and basic education.

If resolutions from recent fora in Africa, including those attended by the heads of states, are indicative, the development of efficient markets is a key challenge for the continent. Markets should help in resolving problems in priority areas of the economy, such as export diversification, in order to reduce Africa’s vulnerability to external shocks, and in enhancing the efficiency of the public service. It is, however, wrong to assume that markets will develop and mature on their own without a helping hand from the government. Their effectiveness will depend on the ability of the government to provide the requisite infrastructure.

Finally, regional cooperation will be a key ingredient in the development strategies of the future. Many African countries are small and cannot provide the economies necessary to sustain the large investment volumes needed for rapid and sustained industrial growth. Regional cooperation is also necessary for the removal of hindrances to trade and movement of people, and for ensuring that policies do not swing according to national whims. However, while broad Africa-wide initiatives are commendable, a more realistic strategy would be to strengthen existing arrangements as a natural platform for further expansion.

Conclusion

In the past decades, shocks emanating from international trade and financial markets, combined with the weaknesses of domestic policies, made African countries prisoners rather than masters of their own destinies. Unambiguous responses to the post-independence development challenges, especially those of adjustment, are only now beginning to emerge. Among the lessons learnt is that macro-economic stability is crucial for growth and poverty reduction. It improves the planning horizon for all actors in the economy, makes it possible for governments to undertake socio-economic rehabilitation, and to embark on export activities. However, since social services are a crucial ingredient in the welfare of vulnerable households and in the generation of human capital, African governments should continue to provide the main thrust in service provision. Gender inequalities need to be
addressed as part and parcel of development in general, but not as a special compartment.

There is also need to emphasise efficiency at the micro level. If the productive energies of the countryside are to be unleashed, better resource allocation, especially between rural and urban areas, should become a key feature of policy. Much of our hope for a developing and gradually less poor Africa rests partly on the success achieved in making the rural sector more productive and rural households richer. A modernising Africa will have to respond to the call of the global economy. Experience has shown that countries that can create a favourable domestic environment for economic activities will be able to break through in international markets. Expansion of regional markets, via closer cooperation, will for many countries, be a crucial first step.

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References


**APPENDIX**

Table A1. *Africa 1991–96: Indicators of Economic Performance (per cent and $ billion)*

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<tr>
<td>Growth (%)</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inflation (%)</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Balance ($ billion)</td>
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<td>-3.0</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
<td>-5.5</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>-9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt service (% Exports)</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Investment ($ billion)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Debt ($ billion)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>314</td>
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*Source: African Development Bank, African Development Report, (various years).*
Introduction

To make a significant impact on living standards in Africa, economic reforms must generate rapid growth. However, in the belief that levels of domestic savings are too low for the task, focus has been put on the attraction of external capital. In a period of declining official development assistance, hopes are being placed on mobilisation of substantial amounts of foreign private capital. Against this background, it has been a matter for concern that in spite of the incentives put in place by many African countries, capital inflows have been low compared to the flows to other parts of the developing world. Still, optimism regarding Africa’s economic prospects is on the increase, with some even pointing to the beginning of an African Renaissance. This is the result of the robust economic performance of Africa in the 1990s, with at least 30 countries showing positive real GDP growth since 1992. Further, there has been a decline in civil strife, and a related improvement in respect for the rule of law, as well as the strengthening of public institutions. In regional terms, many countries now appreciate the value of greater economic coordination. The Southern Africa Development Community is, for example, becoming an important vehicle for policy coordination and implementation, while the CFA-zone countries are looking for ways to strengthen their ties further.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is sought for several reasons: first it enables countries to acquire technology, especially via imports of capital...
equipment, and for the domestic labour force to acquire managerial and other skills. It also helps countries diversify exports and create new jobs (Hellrainer, 1997). Given the intensive competition for investment funds worldwide, African countries have created incentives and established the business environment necessary to increase investor confidence and attract foreign investment.

In terms of destination, FDI flows to Africa are highly concentrated, with up to 80 per cent accounted for by six countries, with Nigeria dominating, in the period 1993–95. There is also considerable sectoral concentration with most of the investments directed to oil and mineral extraction, and services, in particular banking and insurance (UNCTAD, 1997). While private capital flowed into insurance and banking services in response to ongoing privatisation, recent foreign investment in mining has largely been a response to the broad incentives introduced by governments in recent years. There has thus been something of a new “gold rush”. The improved political situation in Central Africa, especially in the Democratic Republic of Congo, is expected to boost mining further.

These developments have been complex and require careful examination. The Ogoni case in Nigeria is just one example of many of the environmental and social outcomes of a poorly managed mining operation. In the desperate bid to attract capital, there are indications that social and environmental concerns are not being properly addressed; in some cases governments consciously sacrifice them. For investments to have a sustainable impact, competing interests will need to be properly managed. The principal objective of this chapter is to highlight the policy dilemmas of mineral sector development and to suggest how corporate and government accountability could be enhanced.

Private Capital Flows to Africa

On average, private capital flows to developing countries increased ten-fold between 1983–88 and 1989–95, with sub-Saharan Africa receiving only about 5 per cent of the total in recent years. The rapid growth of private flows worldwide, now several times greater than ODA flows, strengthens the view that in the future, domestic investment will rely increasingly on foreign private capital.

Of total long-term capital flows to Africa in 1994, about 15 per cent was FDI, while the rest was ODA. Concentration of FDI flows has shifted in recent years from Southern Africa, which accounted for over 65 per cent of the stock of FDI in 1980, to North Africa. The latter accounted for about 42 per cent of total FDI flows to Africa in 1995. There are two explanations behind this shift in concentration: the first is divestment from South Africa, and the second is North Africa’s proximity to Europe and the increasing collaboration between the two regions in a number of strategic areas.
Viewed in relation to its contribution to gross capital formation, the major African recipients of FDI are: Egypt (10%), Angola (66%), Namibia (18%), Gambia (15%), Equatorial Guinea (50%). However, while the absolute value of Nigeria’s FDI receipts is large, it is small in proportion to gross capital formation in that country (UNCTAD, 1997).

In terms of sector destination of FDI, the major focus has been services (banking, insurance, telecommunications and distributive trade), mining, and construction. In Zambia, foreign private investment was almost entirely in mining. Other countries, including South Africa, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Mali and Zimbabwe also received investment in non-oil mining and prospecting. Areas of origin of the capital flows include Western Europe and the United States, represented by their leading multinationals.

Attracting Foreign Direct Investment

FDI is said to respond to both “pull” and “push” factors. Pull factors include conditions which inspire investor confidence by minimising costs and risks, and by offering opportunities for maximisation of profits. These factors also relate to political and economic reforms, including increased policy transparency, liberalisation of exchange rates and the capital account, initiatives related to debt management; the size of the local market, and the quality of the available human resources and physical infrastructure. Other factors include commodity price booms and changes in the terms of trade. Push factors relate to the business climate in the home countries, especially with regard to profitability, taxation, severity of cyclical downturns and the pressures of competition.

Recent reforms have been aimed at enhancing pull factors. Aside from the macro-economic policies mentioned above, they include institutional reforms aimed at creating an efficient bureaucracy and a legal and regulatory regime that protects the rights of economic actors and sanctions law breakers. Most important have been the writing of investment codes and the reform of tax systems.

Privatisation programmes have been a key feature of the reforms. They have helped increase government revenue and attract foreign capital. The World Bank Group has played a key role in the privatisation process in Africa. Acting mainly via its private-sector arm, the International Finance Corporation, it has been able to help prepare companies for privatisation by providing loans, and sometimes equity, and assisting in the improvement of management as well as undertaking debt restructuring, to make firms attractive for divestiture.

As part of the process of institution building, stock exchanges and discount houses were established or rehabilitated in several places, including Zimbabwe, Botswana, Kenya, Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire, and, more recently Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda and Malawi. The aim is to attract portfolio in-
vestment from both domestic and foreign sources. African capital markets remain small, however, with few listed shares. Countries are thus trying to increase regional collaboration in capital markets, which is most advanced in the CFA-zone, where a common monetary policy has been in place for decades. Another problem has been the poor performance of the financial sectors of many countries. Banks are generally weak, lending to a small, politically-privileged clientele. This has meant the growth of non-performing assets and failure to improve the quality of services. A considerable amount of World Bank money has gone towards financial-sector restructuring, the method used being, in most cases, transfer of non-performing assets into “recovery trusts” as companies or banks are prepared for privatisation.

Foreign Investment in African Mining

In the 1990s, Africa’s mining sector has undergone a revival. State control and ownership have been dismantled, with a more private investor-friendly environment being created as a result. By the end of 1995, at least 35 African countries had revised their mining codes, notably by re-defining the rights and obligations of investors, enhancing incentives and even privatising the sector. The new incentives include tax exemptions on imported equipment, liberal immigration laws for expatriates and the improvement of geological data. As a result of these measures, mineral exploration in West Africa, for example, doubled between 1993–95, and several new mines have been opened.

Following the liberalisation of the African mining industry, financial resources have been received from various sources including the World Bank Group, European Union, banking consortia, and other private investment institutions. Still, the full extent of the investment activity might not be known because companies do not always like to disclose their sources of funds. Also, for strategic reasons, many companies do not divulge the size of their exploration and mine-development expenditures. However, using available data, we can still get some idea about trends in investment flows to mining.

Mining companies used a variety of approaches to raise capital for their operations, including their own funds, rights issues, bank loans, often with the participation of the IFC (loan and equity) and the MIGA (providing political risk insurance). Exploration ventures have been funded under provisions of the Lomé Convention (e.g. those that led to the discovery of Mali’s Sadiola gold deposits), as well as geological and geophysical surveys (e.g. in Botswana, Namibia and Burkina Faso). US companies have financed their

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African operations with loans from the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, which provides, among others, political risk insurance.

There has also been increasing recourse to international equity markets, mutual and pension funds and gold loans supported by a variety of forward selling and other hedging techniques. About $8.4 billion has been raised from these markets since the mid-1980s, with Southern and West Africa being the most important investment destinations. In 1995, an African Mutual Fund was launched in London to invest in the Ashanti and Pioneer Goldfields in Ghana and mining sites elsewhere. Ghana is set to attract external investment in the gold sector, in new mine development and expansion, of up to $1bn by the close of the 1990s.

Since the development of new gold mines is cheaper than for other metals, it is expanding rapidly with improvements in technology. Companies at the exploration stage, especially the newcomers (juniors) have had more difficulty attracting investment capital than those already proven in the field (majors). New entrants, notably those originating from Canada and Australia depend heavily on international equity markets. Similarly, projects at the mine development or exploration stage attract less capital, due to the high financial risks associated with them. As a result, juniors tend to target older but abandoned properties, waste dumps or already known occurrences. This implies that they often operate in areas being worked by artisan miners or local companies that run semi-mechanised operations. This results in frequent conflicts.

Established companies such as Rio Tinto (formerly RTZ), Anglo-American, Lonrho, DeBeers, however, have little difficulty mobilising funds.

The resurgence in mining interest has led to major regional shifts in global exploration expenditure in the last five years. Latin America, Africa and the Pacific have been surging ahead in terms of global expenditures on exploration. Australia and Canada have more or less preserved their exploration expenditure shares, while there has been an unmistakable downward trend in mining exploration in the United States. Africa’s share of global exploration expenditure increased from 5 per cent at the beginning of the 1990s to 12 per cent (Table 1) by the end of 1995, and is expected to reach 15 per cent by the end of the decade. An increase of more mature exploration environments (rather than emerging ones) and government policies are responsible for the flow of increasing exploration dollars to the region.

Table 2 gives some indication of the main sources of funds for selected African mining companies. As already noted, the World Bank Group, in-

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6 See supplement “Mining in Africa” to Northern Miner, February 6, 1995.
7 See UNDESD, 1993.
8 Consultancy reports of the Metal Economist Group, various years.
cluding the IFC and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), have been important players; they are also major conduits for foreign finance to Africa. With the recent decision by the World Bank Board to channel some IDA funds to the private sector in the form of guarantee schemes, it is conceivable that some of this money will, in due course, go into mining operations. Though most fund sources are official, mainly coming from the World Bank Group, many firms have managed to get a fairly broad financing base, in some cases with a number of private institutions and investment funds participating.

Table 1. *Exploration expenditures by region* (million dollars, per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1994</th>
<th>1995</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Region</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of the World</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Exp. ($mn)</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,136</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,690</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source*: Metal Economic Group (various reports).

Table 2. *Funding sources for selected African mining companies, 1993*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Mine</th>
<th>Loan ($mn)</th>
<th>Source of Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Bogoso</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>IFC and Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>GAG</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>IFC and Bank Consortia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Teberebie</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>OPIC and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>AGC</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>IFC, West Merchant Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Lega</td>
<td>92.4</td>
<td>European Investment Bank and African Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Côte d’Ivoire</td>
<td>Fema</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>OPIC and African Growth Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>Freda Rebecca</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Gold Loan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>Syama</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>EIB and MIGA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source*: Mining Engineering, August, 1993.

Foreign Operations in Africa’s Mining Sector

Although multinationals from all regions have made significant inroads into African mining, there is a growing concentration of Canadian, Australian and South African companies. Perhaps the most important regional devel-
opment in recent years, has been the corporate push by South African companies and Ashanti Goldfields of Ghana, a subsidiary of Lonrho, into the rest of Africa (see Table 3).

### Table 3. Operators in African Mining, 1995–96

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Countries of Operation</th>
<th>Commodity Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashanti Goldfields</td>
<td>Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Eritrea</td>
<td>Gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Lonrho)</td>
<td>Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Burkina Faso</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo-American</td>
<td>South Africa, Zimbabwe,</td>
<td>Gold, Copper,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platinum</td>
<td>Mozambique, Zambia, Guinea,</td>
<td>Chrome, Diamonds,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinc</td>
<td>Mali, Zaire, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Angola, Botswana,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Côte d’Ivoire, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Kenya,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Niger, Senegal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Beers</td>
<td>South Africa, Botswana, Zaire,</td>
<td>Diamonds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHP Minerals</td>
<td>Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana</td>
<td>Gold, Platinum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zimbabwe, Guinea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio Tinto Bauxite,</td>
<td>Namibia, Zimbabwe, Guinea</td>
<td>Uranium, Gold,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(former RTZ)</td>
<td>Tanzania, South Africa</td>
<td>Diamonds, Coal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Africa, Burkina Faso</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldfield, South Africa</td>
<td>South Africa, Ghana</td>
<td>Gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AmGold</td>
<td>Sierra-Leone</td>
<td>Diamonds, Gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pioneer Corporation</td>
<td>Ghana, Guinea</td>
<td>Gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Shamrock Mining</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranger Minerals</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gencor</td>
<td>South Africa, Ghana</td>
<td>Gold, Diamonds,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Platinum, Aluminium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samax</td>
<td>Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Congo,</td>
<td>Gold and Diamonds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senegal, Ghana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trillion Resources</td>
<td>Zimbabwe, Mozambique</td>
<td>Gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Côte d’Ivoire, Senegal, Mali, Zaire, Botswana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other important minerals include: iron ore (Liberia, Mauritania, Madagascar, Sierra Leone, Swaziland and Egypt), tin and associated minerals (significant in Zaire, Uganda, Namibia, Rwanda, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa), nickel (in Burundi, Morocco, Botswana, Madagascar, South Africa, Zimbabwe), phosphate (Morocco, Senegal, Togo, Egypt, Niger, Tunisia, Uganda, Algeria), silver (Morocco, Namibia, Algeria, Congo, Tunisia, Nigeria, Zambia).
Although the commodity focus is sometimes as diverse as the number of companies engaged in mining, the main targets are precious minerals, mainly gold, diamonds and platinum. Entry strategies have mainly been through the acquisition of hitherto government-owned mines, the most notable example being Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines, parts of which are on the verge of being re-acquired by Anglo-American.

It is striking that virtually every African country has mineral deposits at various levels of exploitation. It is expected that the resolution of conflicts on the continent, in particular in central Africa and the Great Lakes region, will facilitate further exploitation of both mineral and forestry resources. It is also plausible that increasing interest among Asian and Japanese investors in African mining will lead to further expansion.

Socio-Economic and Environmental Impacts

For many countries in Africa, mining is becoming a key magnet for private and even official capital inflows. The sector is seen as a major source of foreign exchange, a conduit for advanced technology into host countries, and a generator of employment. It is also possible that the resurgence in mining activities might induce a “herd” effect for the rest of the economy, as investors begin to perceive African countries as interesting targets for investment. However, according to the Economic Commission for Africa “the mining sector is still not making a decisive contribution to the social and economic development of Africans. It is still poorly integrated with the rest of the economy, and creates few dynamics for broader regional integration”.10

For example, although mining exports increased six-fold between 1992–1995 to almost $700 million in Ghana, macro-economic aggregates such as inflation, import demand, and investment remained weak. Imports of capital and consumer goods expanded during this period, leading to a deterioration of the current account deficit.

Mining technologies are complex and difficult to diffuse to the rest of the economy. In recent operations, predominantly surface-based technologies have been used, requiring heavy earth-moving equipment, and little host-country innovation. For example, Namdeb, the Namibian diamond

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10 These were the conclusions reached by the Conference of Ministers responsible for development and utilisation of mineral resources in Africa, organised by the Economic Commission for Africa. See ECA (1995).
mining company, partly owned by De Beers of South Africa, has the largest fleet of earth moving equipment in Africa.\footnote{Cited in \textit{Financial Times} (London), 28, June, 1997.} As a rule, African countries undertake little mineral processing. While medium-sale technologies were developed for secondary processing in Zimbabwe and Ghana, distribution and assimilation within the mining community have been poor. Patent protection and capital shortage have also constrained acquisition of processing technology by small-scale mining sectors (UNDESD, 1993). Partly as a result of this, minerals are exported in raw form. Further, investment in non-metallic mining, such as lime, phosphates, clay products and salt, all of which require modest capital outlays, is yet to be emphasised.

Modern mining’s contribution to employment tends to be modest. This is largely due to the capital-intensive nature of mining operations which tend to quickly reach a state of steady output, requiring no further employment until new and rich deposits are discovered. Also miners are highly skilled workers, and employers try to minimise the costs of turnover by ensuring that they have good terms as well as security of tenure; wages in mines are often higher than average. Thus, in spite of the massive injection of capital into the mining sector in Ghana in recent years, mining employment was only about 20,000 workers in the mid-1990s (including small and artisan miners), amounting to just 5 per cent of total formal sector employment. Following privatisation and restructuring, new owners have tended to decrease rather than increase mining employment. For example, Namdeb plans to retrench up to 40 per cent of its workers by the end of the decade and limit supply of social services to its employees and the community, including management of the mining town. Similar trends can be observed in many other countries.

However, the most serious concerns with regard to mining expansion relate to social and environmental developments. There is a feeling that state interests are now so closely intertwined with those of mining companies that there is little sensitivity to social and environmental issues arising from mining activities. Since local communities lack capacity to negotiate directly with the mining companies, they often end up with poor compensation for lost land or user rights. This is a potential source of future conflict. Already low-intensity conflicts have emerged between new mine owners and host communities, as well as between large firms and small-scale miners. Tensions arise when communities are evicted from mining concessions, and relocated to marginal sites. This sometimes leads to serious disruption of family life and possibilities for income generation.

Thus, struggles over environmental resources and social justice tend to be intertwined. Mining affects the environment in a number of ways that last throughout the cycle of the mining operation. They have potentially disruptive impacts on geology, topography, land use, fauna and flora.
Operations near streams and lakes pollute water sources, while air and noise pollution is also considerable (African Development Bank, 1995). While use of poisonous chemicals such as mercury and cyanide is banned in developed countries, it is common in many parts of Africa.

Though governments have developed guidelines for regulating mining operations, enforcement is often tenuous due to lack of expertise in the line ministries, weak regulatory agencies and inadequate baseline data on which to establish benchmarks for enforcing standards. Moreover, for lack of funds, the task of preparing environmental impact assessments and management plans is often left to the mining companies themselves. Many governments have also consciously relaxed enforcement of regulations in order not to discourage investors. One should also not underestimate the power wielded by the various business lobbies, including domestic chambers of mines, in forcing the government to waive the more stringent stipulations.

Conclusions

The 1990s have witnessed a revival of the interest of international mining conglomerates in Africa, and private capital flows to mining activities have been significant. However, the role and impact of foreign investment in the sector remains contentious. Serious social and environmental consequences result from rapid mineral extraction and need to be addressed. Surface mining is, for example, laying waste large areas of potentially fertile land, and levels of lake and river pollution are often high in mining areas. Mining development thus needs to be combined with a heightened sense of social responsibility

This can be instilled in a number of ways. First, voluntary compliance should be encouraged, since it can be argued that bureaucratic controls are often difficult to enforce, and can be wasteful and distorting. Raising social and environmental awareness in host communities could also serve to put the necessary pressure on mining concerns. In this regard, the role of environmental campaigners in sensitising the population is invaluable. Still, it is only well crafted rules and regulations that provide adequate basis for government intervention. Legislation, with sanctions for non-compliance, and a mechanism for enforcement framework is important in addressing the social and environmental challenges of mining.

Let us conclude with a few words on what needs to be done: investment codes should include passages on corporate accountability to communities and to the environment. Social impact assessment indicators should be developed to monitor social effects over the entire cycle of the mining project. Stake holders, i.e. labour, local government, communities and other affected persons should be able to provide inputs in these exercises.

12 The African Development Bank’s Guidelines for Mining Projects offers a useful beginning.
Governments should establish effective and autonomous environment protection agencies, to generate independent base line data, and provide technical and organisational support to affected communities.

Finally, a new set of priorities needs to be nurtured by governments and their partners in mining. In particular, mining projects with high value added, and that are well integrated into the local economy, such as limestone, clay and ceramics, and phosphates, should be encouraged. There is thus a role for those interested in financing and stimulating investment that has a broad-based development impact.

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Export Promotion in Sub-Saharan Africa—A Review

Dominique Njinkeu

Introduction

International comparisons show that countries that have been able to compete and increase their share of international trade have also been able to sustain growth. However, despite improvements achieved by sub-Saharan African countries in macro-economic reforms, few have been able to formulate coherent import and export policies. As a result, Africa has been outcompeted in recent years in domestic, regional, and international markets. An export-promotion strategy, including national capacity-building in trade promotion and export development, is thus a policy pre-requisite. The business sector must be able to expand its export activities, and to undertake efficient import substitution without hindrance. It should, however, be borne in mind that regional markets are the best schools for learning to export internationally. Thus regional market integration and cooperation should become a key part of the domestic economic strategy. This chapter looks at the prospects for the design and implementation of efficient export-promotion strategies in sub-Saharan Africa.

Export Promotion Policies

As demonstrated by the performance of countries that followed an outward-oriented development policy such as those of East Asia, openness has been a key ingredient in promoting growth with equity. Such a policy stance can be demonstrated by the level of effective exchange rates that regimes deemed tolerable. Effective exchange rates are functions of macro-economic policy, including levels of the nominal exchange rates, export subsidies, tax credits for import duties, and the size of the import premium resulting from non-trade barriers and other charges.

A country is said to pursue an import-substitution strategy when the effective exchange rate for imports is higher than for exports. This implies that in addition to favouring local production, as opposed to imports, it reduces incentives for exports. Firms producing for the export market are thus directly or indirectly taxed. On the other hand, when no difference exists
between effective exchange rates for exports and imports, an export-promoting strategy results. Since reforms tend to reduce the gap between the two exchange rates, with a view to equalising them as the economy stabilises, they are often seen to be export-promoting. In situations where export activities are subsidised, it is possible to talk a pro-export bias. The latter might, however, be contrary to stipulations of international accords, such as those of the World Trade Organisation.

Experience from South-East Asia (Hillebrand, 1996), as well as policy analyses by Krugman (1987) and Bhagwati (1989) indicate that export promotion (EP) need not mean absence of government intervention. It can indeed be argued that selective and strategic intervention is necessary for successful export promotion. Bhagwati (1988:34) has recommended “commitment to an activist, supportive, role in pursuit of the EP strategy, providing there is assurance that it will be protected from inroads in pursuit of numerous other objectives in the near future...”. As stressed by Kruger (1995) dynamic comparative advantage can arise from a well conceived export-oriented strategy. The East Asian miracle came about partly because Asian countries exploited their unskilled labour to increase productivity. Also important was the fact that they simultaneously invested in human development, enabling them to innovate and compete. Thus they were able to exploit their static as well as comparative advantages, without unduly impeding markets. Arguments arising from endogenous growth theory also point to a role for government via strategic intervention which is compatible with market operations, in favour of a neutral incentive structure. However, in the past African governments have had difficulties intervening in a non-distorting manner. It has been difficult to find the right balance between static comparative advantages based on natural resources and labour and dynamic comparative advantages attached to high-technology niches (dos Reis Velloso, 1994).

Export-promotion strategies are thus superior to those of import-substitution because based on international market outcomes, they bring about efficient allocation of resources. Further, under export promotion, firms face comparable sets of incentives while in the import-substitution case, there are wide variations in incentives and opportunities between sectors, activities and firms. Product diversification is, however, important for the overall success of export promotion. This is because primary commodity production, as noted in the Prebisch-Singer thesis, is subject to volatile market conditions, making producer countries extremely vulnerable. There is thus a need to design and implement administrative and institutional reforms that enable firms to diversify production and exports, in order to compete in the global economy.

It is now well established that there is a strong relationship between growth in foreign direct investment and foreign trade. Foreign investment is a useful channel for importing international best practices, opening up ex-
Export Promotion in Sub-Saharan Africa

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port markets through intra-firm trade, and introducing improved policy design and implementation. It can thus serve as a mechanism for linking firms and transferring goods and knowledge across countries, with strong impacts on trends and composition of trade. An export-promotion strategy should thus encourage foreign capital inflows.

Barriers to Trade Expansion in Africa

Recent expansion of the global economy has been a result of increased trade. Thus, Africa’s poor performance in trade has led to its marginalisation (Collier, 1997). In this section, we consider more broadly barriers to trade expansion in Africa.

The continent is less open to international trade than other regions. Transnational corporations have, except for some regional concentrations, generally avoided the continent. While global foreign direct investment reached $100 billion in 1995, with 65 per cent going to Asia and 27 per cent to Latin America, only 5 per cent went to Africa. Regionally, only North Africa was able to increase its global share of foreign investment, thanks to increased investment from the European Union. But as sub-Saharan Africa’s share of foreign investment was falling, that of Eastern Europe has been rising, reaching 5 per cent in 1995 (UNCTAD, 1996).

For a number of reasons, capital flows to Africa have been limited. The region is perceived as a high risk one for investment. Turbulence in African countries, in previous years gives little assurance that there would not be sudden policy reversals. Given global competition for investment capital, foreign investors prefer to invest where market economies have a good chance of emerging, and where the probability for policy reversal is low. The return on investment is lower than elsewhere, capital flight is pervasive, with close to 40 per cent of the region’s private wealth located outside the continent. Lack of secondary markets for capital transactions makes investment decisions irreversible. Individual country attempts at setting up generous incentive structures often fail to attract foreign investment because the region as a whole has had a poor reputation for business in the past. To overcome this, there has been considerable competition between countries in offering attractive investment terms. However, “subsidised” investments cause distortions and raise the cost of production. They also encourage short-term, often speculative, investments at the expense of long-term inflows. There is thus bound to be considerable sectoral distortion, with the service and financial sectors favoured over sectors where projects have long lead times.

It is sometimes argued that encouraging the emergence of local entrepreneurs could counter external financial dependency and encourage sustainable capital generation. However, in most African countries the macro-economic situation has precluded the emergence of a large entrepreneurial
class. Incentives have generally been lacking. And domestic financial markets remain thin, rationed, and dominated by public sectors which use them to finance their deficits (Njinkeu, 1997; Njinkeu and Soludo, 1997). Given sub-Saharan Africa’s weak currencies, and the absence of forward exchange rate markets, exchange rate risk is high. Related to this is suppliers’ risk. With high input costs, numerous taxes, and other indirect costs related to complex and unpredictable administrative requirements as well as deficient infrastructure, the cost of doing business is high. Further, lack of flexibility in fiscal and production structures makes the macro-economic equilibrium of African countries much more vulnerable to external shocks (Fanelli and Frenkel, 1994; Soyibo, 1997).

The quality of public services is also low, and enforcement and regulatory agencies are weak with the result that contract compliance is poor, and business dealings and credit supply are often restricted to old customers. Even more serious is lack of social capital characterised by weak civil society, pervasive corruption and fragmented political structures. These shortcomings create a general situation of insecurity, reduce competition, and make it harder for new firms to enter the market (Fernandez and Rodrik, 1991). To operate under these conditions demands great flexibility and ability to bear risk. Commenting on firms operating in Africa, Collier and Gunning (1997:57) have noted:

... their investments are typically illiquid, ... their strategies for responding to this environment have been partly to reduce the risks and partly to accommodate them. To reduce risks, firms hold large inventories to guard against unreliable suppliers, devote a substantial share of investment to generators to guard against public power interruptions, and restrict business relationships to those firms which are known quantities. To accommodate risk firms reduce investment and enter into state-contingent contracts, although the latter further restrict eligible business partners.

Another constraint to dynamic export promotion is the limited number of exportable commodities. The market for export crops has been very volatile and in decline over distinct periods. For example the prices of coffee, cocoa and cotton in Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana and Uganda declined by close to a half between 1961 and 1990 (Reinhart and Wickham (1994). The taxation regimes have, however, impeded export diversification. Thus, although the prices of some non-traditional exports have been good in the past decade, it has not been possible to expand production by much due to the import protection still exercised by African countries (Njinkeu, 1995, 1996). Removing such protection will lower indirect and direct taxation on non-traditional exports and increase their competitiveness. A broader and more diversified export base will result.
An Export-Promotion Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa

The first component of an export-promotion strategy should be a sound macro-economic framework, characterised by fiscal responsibility, low inflation, positive real interest rates, equilibrium exchange rates, and a sound financial structure. The second component of an export-promotion strategy relates to increased focus on activities that are sources of innovation (Rodrik, 1995). This does not mean, however, that policies should be geared to picking winners; this approach failed in the past. Instead, the focus should be on stimulating productive and innovative activities among firms. Networking arrangements with foreign firms could help lock indigenous firms into a dynamic process of technological upgrading, capable of generating spillover effects in the rest of the economy. Selected schemes that have proved useful in other regions include export promotion councils, bonded houses, export compensation schemes and export processing zones.

In the search for new markets, a functioning business information framework is absolutely crucial. International competitiveness demands that African producers should be able to assess the conditions under which their competitors operate. However, this demands a number of specialised services, including commercial and technological business information collection and dissemination. In most countries these have only been recently created, are generally understaffed, and provide information to already established firms or those with close ties to the government.

There is also a need to establish a world-wide network of business contacts in order to have adequate access to global trade information. The work of the International Trade Center is useful in this respect. The ITC is a clearing house, with broad experience in trade promotion, export development and management of international purchasing and supplies. It produces publications, training manuals and other technical materials of various types related to export development and promotion. This body could assist many countries in Africa to develop competencies in product development, improvement of trade support services, as well as human resource and management development (International Trade Center, 1994).

Conclusion

To be able to take an active part in global trade expansion, Africa needs to set up a credible export-promotion strategy. The best way to achieve credibility is for the governments to lock themselves in good behaviour by pursuing policies that would be costly to reverse. It could also be possible to achieve this by abiding with international treaties such as those of the WTO or the Lomé convention. However, the initial political costs of international compliance could be high. Collier and Gunning (1997), have argued that developed countries could assist in increasing Africa’s credibility by offering debt relief, to help create a stable macro-economic environment for produc-
tion and export. There is also need for financing infrastructure in order to reduce transport costs, one of the serious barriers to trade in Africa. Related to better communications is support for institutions dealing with export-promotion: chambers of commerce, business associations, investment authorities and bureaux of standards. Further, opportunities must be created for African entrepreneurs to interact with their international counterparts.

Broader regional groupings could also improve credibility. Accords in the CFA-franc zone have, for example, helped control inflation, and to harmonise banking and other business regulations. Regional supervision of banks and other financial institutions, coupled with adequate legislation, could reduce risk, increase investment and provide a stimulus to cross-border trade. Donors and other development partners could help by increasing access to advanced markets. Past experience and global trends show that full market access is better than via systems of preferences. However, putting in place an effective export-promotion strategy requires substantial investment and capacity building. Donors should support governments that are willing to pursue efficient policies, in order to achieve positive lock in.

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References


A Note on Financing the Poor

Mariam Dao Gabala

Since the early 1980s, the majority of African countries have been implementing stabilisation as well as financial market restructuring programmes with the goal, inter alia, of encouraging greater foreign investment inflows. Privatisation programmes also appear to be attracting more foreign investors. On the basis of increased capital inflows and growing economies, much optimism has been voiced in recent years about the prospects for the recovery of Africa from a decade of decline.

However, it is an undisputed fact that the majority of the people of sub-Saharan Africa live in rural areas or on the fringes of urban centres have little access to loans in the modern financial sector, and hardly benefit from macro-economic incentives. Access to sustainable financial resources is impossible because poor people are often seen as a high-risk group. Thus, even though our countries present growth scenarios of over 5 per cent, the poor have seen little improvement in their lives. For much of the sub-Saharan African population, there has been a worsening of the quality of life.

African agriculture continues to perform poorly as peasants withdraw into subsistence farming. Today, with populations booming, experts are beginning to ask themselves just how the continent will feed its children in the 21st century. This is not for lack of adequate land; there is, in fact, still much fertile land in Africa. For example in Gabon, 85 per cent of the surface is covered by dense forest and farming accounts for only 0.5 per cent of available land, Similar patterns can be found in Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, the Congo, and other parts of Africa. Even countries that are less endowed in land could improve agricultural production by using modern inputs and production methods. What is lacking in the various efforts at increasing agricultural output is access to financial resources.

The financial and economic shocks of the 1970s and early 1980s, severely shook Africa. To survive, outside of a contracting government sector, local initiatives led to the development of “informal” savings and loans institutions, certainly nothing to do with the financial reforms undertaken by the states, but rather adapted to the needs and values of the common people. This led to many variants of the Grameen bank in Africa, including les ton-tines, caisses villageoises d’épargne et de crédit, mobile SAKA-SAKA Banque, and various other informal ways of financial intermediation and saving. They
have offered opportunities for production and income generation for households and individuals without collateral or large investment projects. How can we make these efforts sustainable? The debate today is about the durability of these informal systems and whether supporting them risks creating parallel financial channels that have little impact on economic development.

However, let me provide an example, by no means isolated, which illustrates some of the hopes raised by micro-credit programmes. ATR is a non-governmental organisation created in Côte d’Ivoire, by Ivorians, in order to provide credit for people who would normally have no access to a bank, using “a decentralised system of financing”. In order to do this, ATR received a loan of US$100,000, with its lending targets ranging from US$100 to US$1,200 per person. Beneficiaries were generally people with small businesses in the informal sector, a sector known for its ability to adapt to changing circumstances, and which undeniably creates new jobs.

In order to ensure the long-term, revolving, nature of the credit each borrower automatically becomes a member of the ATR by paying 1 per cent of the sum borrowed to a guarantee fund. This then reinforces the funds available for investment, thereby increasing the organisation’s lending capacity.

Regarding loan guarantees, people who apply for ATR assistance often do not know how to read or write and have never had any contact with a lawyer. A guarantee signed in front of a lawyer has, therefore, no meaning to these people. Rather, a beneficiary is far more motivated by taking a solemn verbal vow regarding his/her commitment vis-à-vis the ATR in front of the community. Today the ATR recovers 98.8 per cent of all its loans.

Let me give an example of the micro-credit scheme being used to promote long-term borrowing. Madame Aka, a housewife, has no formal education, and lives in Abobo-Gare, a shanty town in Abidjan. Having no money, she started by collecting palm nuts which she then resold at a small profit. Although the income was pitiful, it kept her away from begging. Madame Aka applied for an ATR loan and after being followed by one of the ATR staff, she received US$100 repayable over ten months. She was now able to buy and sell grain. Two months after her loan was received she was a beaming woman, with a wooden stand at the market, selling nuts and vegetables. She applied for and received a second loan of US$250, which allowed her to run a small restaurant, commonly known as Gargote. She subsequently borrowed US$1,000, and now manages a tourist attraction in the countryside. Her children are registered in a school. She has made a future for herself and pays her taxes. She has taken a step forward in contributing, in her own way, towards the development of her country.

In order to expand her business, Madame Aka should now be able to borrow from another form of financial institution which could lend her more money than is available at the ATR. In view of the amounts at stake,
the impact of such an example could seem insignificant. Still, the progress made by this woman in improving her prospects for income generation, and in such a short time, is extraordinary.

To conclude, since policy makers argue that Africa’s development efforts should be long-term in orientation and that production needs to be based on the efficient exploitation of our resources, we should try to incorporate the efforts of rural dwellers and the urban poor. To do this, we have to improve our ability to extend financial services to them. The conditions that must be fulfilled, such as ensuring a high sense of accountability in intermediation and repayments, or ability to monitor the individual progress of the borrowers, are not beyond the resources of African countries. Experience shows that the rate of interest is not the main barrier to lending. It is, rather, the problem of accessing long-term resources that is the real hindrance. It is important to bear in mind, that when stabilising the “official” financial markets, in order to attract new foreign investors, the well-being of the ordinary people should not be forgotten. Addressing their needs demands the creation of a parallel and non-competing financial structure, tailored to their situation. It is necessary to enhance the productivity of poor groups by improving their access to credit. A crucial first step is to encourage the development of institutions, at grassroots levels, that are able to do this efficiently. This is the best way to mobilise domestic resources in a sustainable manner.

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Socio-Economic Implications of HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa

Rene Loewenson and Alan Whiteside

Introduction

The AIDS epidemic is one of the most serious development problems facing Southern Africa, although it is by no means confined to this part of the world. More than an issue or concern for the health sector, it may significantly affect the development gains of the region. AIDS was first recognised as a specific condition in 1981. The disease is found mainly in two specific age groups, infants and adults aged between 20–40 years. This age distribution relates to its transmission mainly through sex (about 80% of transmission in Southern Africa), and mother to child transmission during birth or via breast milk (about 15% of the total), with direct blood contact through contaminated blood/blood products, or sharing needles for intravenous drug-injecting accounting for a minority of cases. AIDS has a long incubation period and HIV infected persons may have many years of healthy life, although they can infect others during this period. AIDS is fatal. This chapter aims to provide an understanding of HIV/AIDS and its consequences for development in the Southern African region.

HIV/AIDS as a Public Health Problem

Mapping the distribution of HIV/AIDS depends on reported data on AIDS cases and HIV prevalence, both of which need to be treated with caution due to under-reporting. Reports from Southern African countries estimate that between 8 per cent and 33 per cent of actual AIDS cases are recorded (ZAINET, 1993; Dept. of Health (SA), 1993; Mulder, 1996). HIV prevalence data is drawn from sentinel surveys of specific geographical sites. Such surveys are not intended to yield probability data that can be generalised or used for risk comparison. The most common surveillance data on antenatal clinic attenders, used in the region to estimate the level of prevalence in the adult population, is variable in coverage, consistency and comparability. With these cautionary statements in mind, Tables 1 and 2 provide reported data on HIV prevalence and AIDS cases in Southern Africa.
Table 1. AIDS cases in the SADC region: Reports received by 30.6.96

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<td>4,916</td>
<td>4,732</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>164</td>
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<td>455</td>
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<td>3622</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>South Africa</td>
<td>1891</td>
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<td>391</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
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<td>10,647</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>173</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SAfAIDS; SA Bureau of Census, Southern Africa Data; Loewenson/OATUU 1996. Note that AIDS case data can be unreliable.

Table 2. HIV prevalence in the Southern African region 1992–95

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>% HIV Pregnant</th>
<th>% HIV STD</th>
<th>% HIV TB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Luanda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gaborone</td>
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<td>27.8</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
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<td>Lesotho</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maseru</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blantyre</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maputo</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windhoek</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>16.13</td>
<td>19.07</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dar es Salaam</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lusaka</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Harare</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>32.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Bureau of Census, Population Division, International Programmes Centre HIV/AIDS Surveillance Data Base, June 1996. As indicated in the text antenatal HIV data is
often urban biased in collection, sometimes patchy, not always from consistent sites to infer time trends.

By June 1996, there were 166,450 reported AIDS cases in the region. If this represents a quarter of actual cases, the real numbers could be about 665,000 cases. Urban adult HIV prevalence in 1994/5 ranged from 1 per cent to 32 per cent, with significantly higher rates in people with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and TB.

These data indicate a number of important trends:

1. HIV prevalence increases exponentially when about 2 per cent of the adult population are infected. In the region at present, only Mauritius is still reported to be below this rate of infection with all other countries at various points of exponential increase. Projections on national data indicate that the epidemic has begun or will begin to plateau at an HIV prevalence of about 20 per cent of adults. Projections indicate that total AIDS cases will only decline about 8 years after HIV incidence declines, about a decade or more into the next millennium.

2. The period of exponential spread until the peak is reached is comparatively short, probably 10 years or less (a point with important implications for prevention strategies). The epidemic may then become endemic in the society. The current prevention programmes have not halted the epidemic but may have shaved a few percentage points off the peak.

These broad trends mask the fact that the pattern of the epidemic is a composite of a number of different rates and prevalence levels in different sub-groups. HIV zero-prevalence rates vary by occupational group, educational status, sex, and geographical region, with higher levels of infection found in migrant employees and the communities they relate to, in the military and people with Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) and with tuberculosis (TB) (ILO, 1995c; ILO, 1995b; Forsythe, 1992; Loewenson, 1996). HIV prevalence has been found to be up to 2.5 times higher in urban than rural areas, while geographical regions within countries differ in prevalence, such as the range from 1.65 per cent in the Western Cape to 18.23 per cent in KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa (1995 data). Surveyed prevalence levels are higher in females than males, such as the male-female ratios from rural, roadside and urban communities of Mwanza, Tanzania of about 1:1.2 (ILO, 1995), with higher levels of HIV in female than male adolescents, 15–19 years of age. In some surveys, skilled and educated groups had higher initial risk, although this rapidly equalised with other groups (Forsythe, 1992).

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1 The vast majority of these infected women have only their husbands as sexual partners.
These data indicate a significant problem in the region, distributed differently across different geographical and socio-economic groups. Mobility between areas and groups plays an important role in transmission between communities (rural/urban; countries; income groups etc.), and migration, a consistent feature of the region, for work, trade, food security, social support and other reasons, makes the epidemiology of AIDS a regional issue and concern.

Why has AIDS in Southern Africa spread to such a large proportion of the adult population? What are the features of the region that increase susceptibility? Addressing these questions requires an understanding of the complex interaction of biological and behavioural factors with the cultural, production and socio-economic environments that shape health and sexual patterns.

A brief overview of the factors in susceptibility to HIV is provided in Table 3. Some of these factors signal immediate areas for preventive health intervention: for example, poorly diagnosed and treated chancroids and genital ulcer diseases, widely prevalent in the continent, increase the rate of HIV transmission ten-fold. Table 3 also indicates a more complex hierarchy of risk environments that may enhance or undermine interventions: for example, people may not use condoms because they do not perceive themselves to be at risk, because they lack information, because culturally they cannot demand condom use (in the case of women) or find it unacceptable (in the case of men) or because social norms and economic circumstances create a perception of more immediate and pressing risks that influence decisions on sexual behaviour. The large differentials in wealth and poverty in the region influence choice and exploitation—wealth gives people (mainly men) the chance to have many sexual partners, poverty forces them (mainly women) into sexual liaisons as a survival strategy. Mobility, or the mixing of different social groups, sometimes the product of important improvements in communication, transport and regional integration, shares the consequences of the risk profile of one group with another. Understanding the interaction of these factors is important not only to determine the progression of the epidemic and the level it reaches, but to design interventions that will successfully prevent the transmission of HIV.

The perception of risk is a critical dimension in the transmission of HIV. Risk perception is mediated by a range of cultural, social and economic conditions. Given that the severe consequences of AIDS are delayed, other more immediate pressures and risks compete more strongly to shape choices, at individual, household, company and national level. If people are to take measures to protect their health, individually or collectively, they need to feel and be in control of their lives and the resources to protect their health. There is growing awareness of HIV and its implications, and yet in many settings and communities behaviour modification is not taking place. This reflects situations of both powerlessness and denial.
Table 3. Factors in Susceptibility to HIV

1. Biomedical factors
   Virus type
   Viral load (disease stage)
   Gender and age of the person
   HIV prevalence in the community from which sexual partners are drawn
   Presence of STIs (especially chancroid and genital ulcers)
   Male circumcision
   Presence of tuberculosis

2. Sexual behaviour factors
   Type of intercourse (e.g.: anal, during menses, oral etc.)
   Use of condoms
   Use of spermicides or vaginal desiccants
   Communication on and knowledge of partner’s HIV status
   Extent of alcohol consumption
   Communication on sexual practices
   Number of sexual partners/rate of partner change
   Extent of concurrent partners

3. Social and economic factors
   Perceived risks of HIV, knowledge and information on HIV/AIDS
   Gender relations and communication on sexual practices
   Cost, availability of and attitudes towards condom use
   Female employment, status, incomes, roles
   Income inequality
   Labour migration and mobility, trade related movements
   Polygamy and attitudes towards multiple sexual partners
   Urbanisation, education, overcrowding, poor diet
   Refugee and military movements
   Access to, cost of health (STI, TB, other) services, social/legal norms on STI management

4. Macro-economic factors
   National wealth, income distribution, employment levels
   Social and cultural norms and laws
   Budget allocations to and infrastructures for health, human resource development, housing etc.
   Rural urban integration, trade and transport infrastructures and systems
   Military/political crises

Source: Buve et al., 1994; Loewenson, 1996; OATUU, HSEP, 1996.

The Socio-Economic Impact of HIV/AIDS

The impact described in the next few pages is harsh. It is, however, not intended to portray a region of “victims”: much energy and effort has been
directed towards identifying, strategising and acting around the consequences of AIDS. From an initial response of denial, to a perception of AIDS as a medical problem, AIDS is progressively being recast as a development problem and an issue for all sectors. Development is about more than growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, and relates to outcomes such as longevity; standard of living; infant, child and maternal mortality; education and distribution of income.

Challenges to development in Southern Africa include managing recurrent drought, broadening the base of value added production, increasing real incomes and employment and meeting social needs. Added to this is the policy commitment towards the formation of a regional economic community that still faces many conceptual and practical hurdles.

National planners are faced with macro-economic targets, public investment needs, annual budget constraints and more recently long term ‘futures’ planning that requires a link between choices in long and short term resource allocations. Without AIDS these changes demand time, information, resources and capacity. AIDS adds a new dimension that must be measured, projected, integrated and managed in these planning processes.

This requires appropriate information, social mobilisation and leadership. The next few sections outline some of the areas where information on AIDS can be integrated into development planning in the region. Less easy to quantify but equally important is the social dimension: the people who fall ill and die are the parents and leaders in society, making it imperative that our societies renew and regenerate this parental and social leadership, to sustain the momentum of a proactive response and to provide care and role models to the next generation.

Demographic Impact

HIV has added substantially to the overall burden of ill health and mortality, particularly in the 15–50 year age group in which morbidity and mortality rates were generally lower (Lancet, 1995). Projections on excess deaths in the period 1990–2005 have been estimated for example at 1.22 million for Tanzania and 960,000 for Zambia (ILO, 1995). These deaths will cluster in the 0–5 year and 15–50 year age groups. Way and Staneki (1990) predict infant mortality rates nearly doubling in Zambia and Zimbabwe and studies estimate by 2010 an excess of 60–100 deaths under 5 years per 1,000 live births annually in the region (SAfAIDS, 1994). This adds to the existing demands for child health interventions, with malaria, measles and diarrhoea still found to exceed AIDS as a cause of child death in Uganda (Ntozi and Nakanaabi 1997).

Life expectancy at birth is particularly sensitive to AIDS because deaths occurring to young adults and young children result in a large number of years of life lost. The United States Census Bureau estimates that in the 23
most affected countries, life expectancy in 2010 will be about 20 per cent lower than it would be if there were no AIDS. Life expectancy in sub-Saharan Africa by 2020 is projected to be 43 years due to AIDS, rather than 62 years without AIDS (Loewenson and Whiteside, 1996).

At this stage it is not clear how HIV will affect fertility rates. As most births occur to women at young ages and the average age at death of infected women is 30 years, the impact may not be large. Studies in Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Uganda (Gregson et al., 1997; Ainsworth et al., 1994; Gray et al., 1997) indicate that fertility rates may be reduced by between 20 per cent and 50 per cent in infected women. This would translate to about a 5 per cent fertility reduction in a population with 10 per cent adult HIV prevalence.

While total population may not decline, HIV could significantly reduce the rate of population growth by about 1 per cent point on rates of between 1.8–2.5 per cent by 2005. In addition, the dependency ratio will change, with a large number of orphans. A study in rural Tanzania found that 9 per cent of children were orphans and 14 per cent of households had at least one orphan (Mark et al., 1997). It is projected that there will be about 500,000 orphans in Zimbabwe and one million in South Africa, signalling that the total number of orphans in the region could exceed 5 million (Loewenson and Kerkhoven, 1996; Whiteside et al., 1995).

These demographic changes will have a significant social and economic impact. They can now be projected and should thus be incorporated into planning models. While they provide an indication of the mortality impact, there will be an equally important impact from morbidity. HIV infection has, for example, been associated with a significant rise in TB, tenfold in Zimbabwe and a 247 per cent increase in Zambia between 1985 and 1991 (Loewenson and Manyenya, 1997; ILO, 1995b). The lost labour, production and increased consumption needs generated by this ill health are discussed in the next section. In this area too, AIDS will add to an existing high background of preventable and communicable disease in the region, HIV ranking below diarrheal diseases, respiratory infections, malaria, measles, perinatal conditions, trauma and tuberculosis as a cause of morbidity and mortality (Klouda, 1996).

Socio-Economic Impact

HIV/AIDS may affect economic growth through the illness and death of productive people and through the diversion of resources from savings (and eventually investment) to care (Cohen, 1993; Over, 1992). As indicated earlier, HIV/AIDS is not the only ill health problem in working age people. In past decades, the negative impact of ill health has been masked by the relatively easy substitution of unskilled labour and low levels of efficiency of production. Two things are likely to make health in general a more
serious question in the 1990s: greater demands for more efficient production, with more streamlined and in some cases skilled labour forces and the substantial increase in health costs due to AIDS. Adult death will reduce the labour force and the mean age of labour. In Tanzania, for example, by 2010, the labour force is estimated to shrink by 20 per cent because of AIDS, and the mean age of workers to fall from 32 to 28, with a shift to younger and less experienced workers (ILO, 1995).

The impact of skills losses will be greater than total labour losses, particularly for those skills less easily substituted through the labour market. There is limited empirical evidence in Southern Africa of the impact on companies of these losses. Companies have reported increased mortality and lost time and longer periods of absenteeism. Data suggest that as the AIDS epidemic gains momentum, levels of mortality in the average workforce will rise from 0.4 per cent to between 2.5–3 per cent per annum (Babbage et al., 1994; Buve et al., 1994; Smith, 1995; ILO, 1995b). These labour losses have a variable effect on productivity. In Zambia, by 1993, 78 per cent of 18 surveyed firms felt that labour productivity had not been affected and that lower output was not attributable to AIDS, and only two thought that productivity losses would be a problem for the future (ILO, 1995).

On the other hand, reports have been made of breakdowns in production, poor planning, failure to meet delivery targets and reduced product quality due to losses in skills and experience in the labour force. While the private sector, being more flexible, may be able to adapt to labour losses, this may be more difficult in the lower paid parastatal and public sector firms. The quality of socio-economic infrastructure is also bound to decline, adding to business costs (Gilbertson, 1996; Loewenson and Kerkhoven, 1996).

As structural adjustment has led to companies downsizing, some managers have not seen labour losses as a major problem, except with regard to high-skill groups. However, this impact may emerge in the medium term as mortality and morbidity increase and companies are less able to absorb the losses. In response to current and predicted losses, some companies in the region have increased in-house training and broadened their skills base. There is no general formula for this. Developing multiple skills, via in-house training, out-sourcing training and industry level training have been suggested as possible options. Equally important, but less well explored, is how the transfer of experience will be enhanced, and also how skills and experience will be spread in the informal sector and small enterprises that make up a large majority of workplaces in the region. Whatever the approaches SADC countries adopt, there will be need for sustained investments in training. Training costs to replace skilled workers (direct training and lower productivity until the skills base is replaced) in Zimbabwe were estimated in 1993 at Z$2,500 per worker. Applying this to the number of people with
HIV/AIDS in the formal sector indicated that training costs would increase from Z$1 million in 1991 to Z$5 million by 2000.

These stresses to production are one side of the coin: on the other are the increased demands on spending for health and social welfare. The health costs are the most visible and direct costs of the epidemic, as AIDS increases demands on the health services. New antiviral therapies for AIDS are currently unaffordable at about Z$30,000 annually, higher than the GDP per capita in many SADC countries. The costs of AIDS care have been estimated at around Z$200–1,000 per year in SADC countries (Mainor, 1990; Scitovsky and Over, 1988; ILO, 1995; Foster, 1994a and 1994b). The additional demand on health services for an estimated 10 per cent HIV prevalence is projected to range from 3–11.5 per cent, excluding the demands of the secondary TB epidemic, of uninfected children of HIV positive mothers, and HIV related illnesses before AIDS (Lancet, 1995, Decosas and Whiteside, 1996). AIDS treatment has consumed a large share of health spending, ranging from 27 per cent of public health spending in Zimbabwe to 66 per cent in Rwanda, projected to increase to much higher levels with the increase in AIDS cases.

These costs all dwarf the current public health spending in Africa at Z$5 per person per year (Ainsworth and Over, 1994). Health costs in companies may also be high: a Zambian petroleum refinery paid out Z$28,400 for treating AIDS and handling AIDS deaths, more than it netted in profits (ILO, 1995).

The costs to households are even higher: studies have found an average of 30–50 per cent of annual household income is spent on health costs, decreasing to 24 per cent for those covered by social security and increasing to 92 per cent for those not (Hanson, 1992). A single episode of inpatient treatment for paediatric AIDS cost households in Zaire three times the average monthly income (Ainsworth and Over, 1994).

Current spending on AIDS is probably a poor indicator of future health costs because as resources become scarce, spending will go down. It is clearly impossible for any public health system to devote 50 per cent of its resources to a disease with such a poor prognosis, especially since this disease will displace non-AIDS patients from the health care system. This displacement has been found to increase case fatality in non-HIV cases in hospitals as these cases are admitted at more severe stages of illness when prognosis is poorer (Floyd and Gilks, 1996).

Attention has been given to the need for more cost effective health care approaches, particularly home based/hospice care. Home based care has however been found to be costly in rural areas, costs in time, supplies, transport and patient care often being unaffordable to poor families (Ainsworth and Over, 1994; Banda, 1993; Chela et al., 1994; Sichone et al., 1996). Research has shown that relatively small inputs to families could make a substantial difference to coping and the quality of care, as could the adoption of a development approach that utilises community structures,
with greater attention directed to monitoring, managing and adequately provisioning support systems for home based care (Jackson et al., 1996).

Social security is a potential contributor to meeting long-term costs of AIDS. However only Zimbabwe has a national social security scheme, while Namibia is still in the process of developing one. In general the working population of the region is very poorly covered by social security or employee benefits. Linked to this is the need to generate domestic savings, which are an important source of investment in national economies. While the development of provident, pension and insurance schemes will be important for enhancing income security and domestic savings, the AIDS epidemic will adversely affect these funds.

Actuarial models of the impact of HIV/AIDS that projected changes in mortality rates and life expectancy were used to make changes in the interests of scheme viability. Assessments by Doyle (1996), shown in Table 4 below, and the Life Offices Association (LOA) in Zimbabwe indicated a significant projected impact on claims. The LOA estimated in 1995 that AIDS related death claims for Individual and Group Life Assurance were 48 and 38 per cent of total claims, respectively, with a total of Z$11.62 million paid out in definite AIDS claims (SA AIDS, 1995).

Table 4. Illustrated impact of AIDS on employee benefits (costs as per cent of salary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1995</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lump sum on death</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse’s pension</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability pension</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Doyle, 1996.

These assessments were used to set thresholds for HIV testing for insured benefits, to change the benefits offered (by removing invalidity benefits or reducing death benefit cover), or to increase the contribution rate. These changes, said to be necessary for the viability of the schemes, raise concern over the consequences of reduced coverage, reduced contributions and, thus, lower savings. There is increased insecurity for the survivors and dependants of those inadequately covered by schemes, with rising pressure on public and household budgets to meet their support. There are also barriers to employment and housing for people who no longer qualify for insurance benefits. These concerns are not yet matched by policy measures that address insurance scheme viability without leaving large groups of people without insurance cover, and unduly affecting national savings.

As mortality rises, more effort is being directed towards mapping the implied production costs, mainly among formal sector producers in Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana (Loewenson, 1996; Jones, 1996; AIDSCAP
The distribution of these costs is exemplified in Table 5 below, providing information on where mitigating interventions should be targeted. There is, however, still a significant gap in our understanding of the impact on and coping mechanisms at the informal and household sector levels.

Table 5. Distribution of impact of HIV/AIDS on companies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of cost</th>
<th>Zambia 92/93 (%)</th>
<th>Kenya 94 (%)</th>
<th>Malawi 95/96 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expatriate employment</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Service</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funerals</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaths in service</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Jones, 1996.

Studies on rural communities indicate that robust farming systems may withstand the worst ravages of HIV/AIDS, while other less robust areas with lower HIV prevalence may be more affected (Barett, 1994a). Rural households are vulnerable when they are unable to secure non-farm incomes, unable to meet high peak seasonal labour demands, highly dependent on female labour, dependent on inorganic fertilisers and credit, and unable to substitute labour by labour saving technologies or switching from labour intensive to less labour intensive crops (Hanson, 1992; Ainsworth and Over, 1994).

The impact will manifest itself in changes in food production and consumption per capita and in a reallocation of labour and time from agricultural to non-agricultural activities, the latter including caring for the sick. Death of the adult worker may lead to reduced remittances, reduced access to land, housing, assets, and farm inputs, reduced family labour and schooling, and shifts from cash to subsistence crops (Ainsworth and Over, 1994). Longer term costs may arise as widows lose rights to property (Whiteside and FitzSimons, 1992).

Within the household, there are specific groups where vulnerability to the impact of AIDS may be high. Women take on a double burden of production and caring for the sick, so their labour may be reallocated from producing income outside the home to caretaking and maintaining the family land, sometimes irreversibly disrupting women’s trading and business activities (Ankrah et al., 1991; Foster 1993a; ILO, 1995). Children, particularly orphans, may be drawn into employment in ways that undermine their
rights to education, health and social development. The Kagera Health and Development Survey in Tanzania found that orphans were less likely to attend school, especially for paternal rather than maternal orphans. They were also more likely to drop out and have higher rates of illness and malnutrition. Poverty among orphans, especially female orphans, was suggested to increase the risk of early sexual activity (Loewenson and Whiteside, 1996).

Southern African countries already have a number of strategies in place to intervene in support of vulnerable groups, for example: drought relief, “free” basic health and education services for low income groups, housing subsidies and so on. Such broad, community based strategies that link with and develop social infrastructures will also need to be encouraged to support women’s economic and social roles in relation to AIDS and to foster and provide support to orphans.

In its impact on household food security, health, education, domestic consumption and other indicators of social development, AIDS will have significant implications for development, even if its gross per capita income implications are low (Bloom and Mahal, 1995). Macro-economic models of AIDS that aggregate the costs predict GDP losses of about 0.5–1 per cent annually in the region (Ainsworth and Over, 1994). However, analysis of 51 countries at different HIV prevalence rates, controlling for other influences, indicates that HIV/AIDS has had a small and statistically insignificant negative impact on such macro-economic indicators (growth rates, per capita income). Thus the impacts are least visible at the macro-economic level and most visible at household level, with highest income urban households hardest hit (Loewenson and Whiteside, 1996).

HIV will also have a strong impact on social development, organisation and culture. The negative impact will include the losses of key people at household and organisational level (parents in socialisation of children, elected leaders, people with experience and so on) while placing increasing stress on the survivors. The demoralisation and potential to become fatalistic about death can affect all levels of society, while stresses in social systems such as education and health can undermine long term social development. Economic stress on households has been reported to increase marital instability and domestic and social violence and to undermine social cohesion (Kanji and Jazdowska, 1993). Such effects may also result from the economic and social pressures arising due to HIV/AIDS. At the same time HIV/AIDS has opened dialogue in society between parents and children, between men and women and on critical issues relating to ethical practices in health, employment, sexuality and so on. AIDS has presented an opportunity to confront gender norms and to re-examine health-service provision with a view to building stronger community, preventive and integrated models of health care. There is no systematic documentation of these trends in Southern
Africa, yet such social impact may be as profound as the impact on variables such as production, incomes and savings.

The impact of the epidemic needs to be linked to basic development indicators in the region. Structural adjustment (SAP) and liberalisation policies, low growth in GDP per capita, high budget deficits and high foreign debt ratios have been associated with reduced public spending on social services and social investments, shifts towards less secure forms of employment, reduced real growth, widening gaps in income distribution and increased economic insecurity. Some of these changes have themselves been associated with worsening health indicators: increased infant mortality (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1989), poorer nutritional status of children (Cornia et al., 1987), a decline in women’s health, education and economic security (Kanji, 1991) and poorer economic status and security among urban workers (ZCTU/ZTWU/NUCI, 1993).

These changes associated with economic reform pose new challenges. In particular they imply that demand for services will rise as resources to meet them declines. Linked to cost recovery for services previously provided free of charge is that costs are being shifted from providers to households, with potential increases in household poverty. The margin for resource and asset adjustment in poor households is small (Brown et al., 1994). For informal trades, illness of the trader, or time taken off to care for the sick can lead to a serious disruption in earnings and to sharp increases in costs, making it difficult to resume business (ILO, 1995). Farmers, particularly those in areas where cropping patterns result in periods of intense, short-term labour demand, may face serious constraints and have to shift to less labour intensive crops that could also be less nutritious or provide smaller market returns.

Many countries in the region are critically examining their paths to growth, and how to focus investment in order to reach sustained and equitable development. Investment in human resources is a key component in the development equation and there are many examples of countries where such investments have yielded significant returns (UNDP, 1996), while also satisfying the demands for improved standards of living. Can AIDS be allowed to detract from such investments, even while it will clearly increase social costs?

Responses

Let us end this chapter with a brief discussion of the responses to AIDS, in other words indicate where the choices lie. HIV/AIDS requires two major responses: continued emphasis on prevention and dealing with its impact.
Prevention

The first response is necessarily guided by the fact that AIDS is preventable, and that the larger proportion of populations in the region and in the high risk age groups are not HIV positive. Prevention thus continues to be the most important intervention.

Economic analysis of prevention activities suggests that the benefits of prevention far outweigh the costs, with benefits of avoiding future costs of STI treatment estimated at 3.5–7.5 times greater than current prevention costs of condom distribution (Mainor, 1990). Similar analysis in Malawi estimated that preventing 10 per cent of new infections through IEC, condoms, STD control would yield a 3.8:1 cost: benefit ratio, with similar gains reported in Kenya by Moses et al. (1991) and Bertozzi (1991). Despite this, the resources allocated by all sectors for prevention is inadequate to meet the need. WHO in 1992 estimated that developing countries spent Z$340 million on the care of AIDS patients, and only Z$90 million on prevention. They suggest the figure should be 8–10 times higher (ILO, 1995).

Unfortunately while preventing the epidemic makes clear economic sense, it is less certain what actually works, to what degree and where. There are too few studies that actually quantify or even demonstrate the impact of interventions. One key example is the study by Hayes et al. (1995) in rural Tanzania, which found significant reductions in HIV incidence and zeroconversion through STD intervention, without changes in sexual behaviour. Many prevention interventions focus on biomedical and behavioural interventions without adequately addressing the cultural, gender, social and economic characteristics and risk perceptions that influence them. This suggests that community based, peer motivated, sustained initiatives supported by multisectoral resource allocations may yield more impact than high profile, ad hoc inputs. Whatever the case there is a need for interventions to be more systematically evaluated and reviewed. One of the most important target groups where we need to ‘get things right’ are the youth, to re-open the window of hope in this age group.

Investing in prevention also requires foresight and willingness to focus on long term benefits of public policy. Working against this are the apparently overwhelming nature of short term problems; the lack of concrete examples for policy makers to see and the lack of clarity as to exactly what should be done. In fact, many of the national development strategies that are used for other areas of human resource development—reduction of poverty, income inequality, male-female employment, strengthening the bargaining power of women, strengthening the health service infrastructure, improved education and information, improved housing, improved conditions for

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2 The intervention covered establishment of an STD reference clinic, staff training, regular drug supplies, regular supervisory visits to health facilities and health education on STDs.
migrant workers and so on—also deal with the factors that create susceptibility to HIV. These strategies are generally accepted social goals: AIDS adds urgency to bridging the chasm of opportunity costs between their moral acceptance and their practical implementation.

Managing the Impact

As more people become ill or die, greater focus is turning to managing AIDS, promoting positive health with HIV, as well as managing the losses and costs incurred by illness and death. HIV/AIDS projections will thus need to be integrated into some of the existing policy debates in the region.

Governments and health care providers are confronted with the need to plan for the needs of patients and people with HIV related disease to ensure that the increased demand is met in a cost-effective and equitable way, balancing the distribution of resources between prevention and treatment, between private and public sectors, between AIDS and other diseases and between communities and the health services. AIDS makes it clear that it is inappropriate to subject social services to budget cuts and design features that reduce access, as has happened under a number of SAP reforms (ILO, 1993; Chisvo, 1993, 1994; Loewenson and Chisvo, 1994).

HIV and its consequences will need to be integrated into planning and resource allocations of all sectors, given the cross-cutting nature of human resource losses. In particular, sectors will need to plan for ways of investing in human resources and protecting those investments that incorporate the impact of AIDS, such as in ways alluded to in earlier sections of this paper. The donor community has an important role to play in integrating HIV/AIDS into their projects and supporting local initiatives in preventing and managing HIV/AIDS, provided their actions are governed by sensitivity to local needs and perceptions. Regional sharing of information on strategies and their impact will also be important to facilitate the development of effective responses. Specific strategies will need to be developed for the small enterprise or informal and household production sectors, including labour economising methods, technologies that improve labour returns, apprenticeship and other community based approaches for skills exchange, investment in small scale vocational and youth training, improving credit, income and savings opportunities for small enterprises, securing survivors’ land inheritance and tenure rights and developing national social security schemes and safety nets.

Added to this is the need to ensure sustained savings and domestic investment resources through appropriate structuring of savings mechanisms, to enhance and sustain support for food security and support household agricultural production among vulnerable groups, and to ensure adequate allocation and pooling of resources in private and public sectors, and in
communities to enable social support of vulnerable groups, particularly orphans.

Countries in the region have already begun to address the issue of formulating a legal framework to ensure non-discrimination in social, employment and other areas of AIDS victims. A SADC code on AIDS and employment was developed and adopted at the Employment and Labour Sector Meeting in May 1997 on the basis of national policies and codes developed in Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia and Namibia. The development of the code was motivated so that ethical principles that govern all health/medical conditions in the employment context would apply equally to HIV/AIDS, given the potential for and reality of specific discrimination emerging in the face of the gravity and impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

It is clear that there is an urgent need to manage and plan for the impact of AIDS in Southern Africa. To intervene more effectively in both prevention and managing the impact, realistic predictions of the potential effects and monitoring of the actual effects are needed. Policy makers need to devise tools and methods with which to plan interventions. As is evident from this paper, much of the response is not to do things differently, but rather to do them better, and with greater sensitivity to the causes and consequences of the epidemic. There is now adequate information for AIDS and HIV to be conceptually integrated into development planning, and particularly human development plans. The responsibility for preventing and managing AIDS does not lie on the health sector alone, nor is the solution solely to be found in biomedical interventions. To quote Nelson Mandela in his address to the World Economic Forum, “When the history of our time is written, it will record the collective efforts of societies responding to a threat that has put in balance the future of whole nations. Future generations will judge us on the adequacy of our response”.

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Women’s Budget in South Africa

Pregs Govender

Introduction

In 1994, there was much speculation about what would happen in government and parliament in South Africa. Many of those who would occupy power had never had the formal training in the areas they were now expected to lead. Yet, two years down the road there are significant success stories from President Mandela to several ministers, their deputies, parliamentarians, chairpersons of committees etc. What they often have in common is that they have taken the best traditions and lessons of activism and creatively adapted them to tackling the transformation of governance in the country.

The Women’s Budget Initiative is part of this activism. Its origins go back to February 1994, to the ANC Conference on “Putting Women on the Agenda”. There was agreement that it was necessary to ensure that in the new government, “departments must indicate the impact of programmes on the status and condition of women when requesting funds. When making their reports they must make specific reference to whether the objective spelt out in this regard had been met”. The Women’s Budget Initiative was subsequently launched under the auspices of the Joint Standing Committee of Finance, The Law, Race and Gender Project at University of Cape Town and Idasa. It provides the first serious South African attempt to examine the gender impact of key aspects of the state budget. However, research has only been possible in selected areas and there are glaring omissions, such as the land question. Increasing research input is thus a critical step in concretising the policy and budgetary changes necessary to facilitate gender equity.

Context

The budget is a key tool for the implementation of the government’s social, political and economic policies. In the apartheid era, Budget Day was the day white businessmen and apartheid’s politicians would engage in sombre discussion in the mainstream media. They were oblivious to the popular
demonstrations on the streets being met by tear gas, guns, dogs and batons. The majority had no say in how money was collected or how it was spent. The nation’s money was used to finance pass laws, enforce group areas legislation, influx control, migrant labour, single-sex hostels, bantustans, and puppet leaders. It employed an army, police and vigilantes whose work was to brutalise, rape, murder and plunder. It produced teachers who were expected to turn some children into the subservient “hewers of wood and bearers of water” and others into Christian national education’s little madams and masters. It subsidised an already cheap and unprotected labour force for business, offices, mines, farms and homes.

The broader context in which a South African Women’s Budget has been conceptualised is that of uncovering the gendered nature of the economy and economic decisions. Isabel Bakker’s definition of gender has been useful in this regard: “gender relations are social constructions (social forces and historical structure) that differentiate and circumscribe material outcomes for women and men. This definition of gender relations recognises that the interplay of race, class and sexuality underpins the form and structure of actual gender relations”. When confronted with evidence, those in charge of budgets, and economic policy, in the past, adopt a strange wide-eyed innocence. They claim that theirs was a value-free exercise, guided by the policy decisions of the time. In response, the Women’s Budget Initiative attempts to expose assumptions about gender underlying South Africa’s budgetary process and the implications for women of maintaining or changing them.

Women are not a homogeneous group and women’s oppression in South Africa is mediated by a matrix of race, class, rural/urban, age, marital status, language, culture and other divides. Yet overall women are disproportionately represented among the poorest in the country. They are the majority of the homeless, the landless, and the violated. When women started to count the cost it was stark and horrific. In addition to the many studies which reflected the poverty women and their children experienced, there were increasing numbers of studies into that hitherto silent and secret shame. With democracy the expectation that life must change has come. That murder and violence inside and outside the home will end. Today women and children reveal a greater confidence in reporting and speaking out against violence. The system should not continue to fail them. The budget as a potential tool for implementing progressive commitments and policies cannot be left to technocrats.

You who have no food, speak
You who have no homes, speak
You who have no jobs, speak
You who have to run like chickens from the vulture, speak.

Dora Tamana’s writing inspires the idea of a Women’s Budget, especially its attempt to ensure that women’s voices are heard. That silence regarding women’s contribution to society, in particular to the economy, is broken.
Debate

South Africa faces the challenge of removing the divide between the public and the private, that isolates and undervalues the reproductive arena and keeps so much of women’s oppression silent and hidden. As women begin to engage in economic debates, they will initially have to run the gamut of dismissive responses which put issues such as poverty or the lack of child care or loss of reproductive and parental rights outside the arena of economic debate because the latter is “concerned with the much more serious and significant macro level”. The South African economy is complex and the transformation debate should not be allowed to get away with simplistic analyses or solutions which isolate women’s experience from mainstream economic issues.

Diane Elson points out that “the integration of human development targets into macro-economic policy reform programmes will also facilitate a view of human beings as ends not just means, as persons with social rights, not factors of production with prices. Programmes for economic policy reform should be required to specify whose rights will be changed and how. This way of introducing gender awareness into the design of economic policy reform is likely to benefit some men as well as women in so far as it introduces consideration of needs and rights into the process of reform alongside dollars and deficits”. Thus an integrated approach to the economy is the only sustainable approach. Institutions and practices which cling to the “trickle-down” ideology of the past have to be challenged. To reduce poverty, the poor have to be targeted directly. We need to address as well the issues of wealth distribution and employment creation.

The decision by the ANC to have a 33.3 per cent quota of women parliamentarians, has not just meant that parliament looks different. It has ensured that the issues of women have begun to be integrated in the work of government in a way they have never been before. Women’s influence has been felt in many areas, from policy making to legislation and the constitution. Women have come together in campaigns to ensure that their voices are heard in the course of the democracy they voted for. Witness, for example, the Women’s Charter of the Women’s National Coalition which spells out the demands, needs and aspirations of South African women. Women know that the key is political will and political power. The elections signalled the first time political will was expressed at the state level in South Africa, with commitments to gender equity being made by the African National Congress, as the majority party, and the State President in his inaugural speech.

Women’s contribution to the economy is often undervalued. Rhonda Sharp, likens the economy to a three-tiered cake. A third of total resources is derived from the market and government activity. The middle and bottom layers represent the remaining two-thirds of the economy and consist of
“women-type” activities. In spite of this, GDP accounts poorly for women’s contribution, through domestic labour, care of the aged and children, subsistence agriculture, community voluntarism, or work done in the informal sector etc.

Towards a Women’s Budget

The national budget reflects the values of the country. Past budgets in South Africa were clear reflections of the priorities of apartheid: capitalist and patriarchal. Under the new government, the budget will be the most important policy instrument for transforming the country. At present the budget is still a dense and inaccessible statement of government’s estimated expenditures and revenue. It allocates resources on a short-term basis, according to general programme demands, without evaluation of the long-term impacts, such as that on social equality. There are also no mechanisms in place for the analysis and evaluation of government performance in relation to its objectives. Further, government budgets and policies are often assumed to affect everyone, more or less equally; to serve the “public interest” and the needs of the “common person”. However, the targeted “average” citizen was white, male, Afrikaans and middle class, while in reality the average citizen in South Africa is black, poor and a woman.

Disaggregated data are needed to study the postulated gender neutrality of the budget. It will then be possible to assess the impact of tariff, industrial relations, taxation, education, employment or industrial policy on women, as well as that resulting from their location in the family and the economy. Who gets the jobs? What is the nature of the jobs created? Who gets the subsidies? What are the policy assumptions of the budget? Are women dependent and men the breadwinners? It would appear that current rules reinforce existing inequalities and work against the interests of women. However, the ultimate goal is not a separate budget for women. The aim of the Women’s Budget Initiative is to ensure that programmes of every department, at national, provincial or local levels, are examined for their impact on women. The Initiative sees women as the lowest common denominator of all poverty-stricken groups. If it succeeds, its positive impact will be felt by all vulnerable groups, where women are invariably at the very bottom: the youth, workers, unemployed, rural households, and the disabled. The experience garnered from targeting groups of women will be useful for targeting other groups in the community. Interest has, for example, already been expressed by groups working with children and the disabled to embark on similar evaluation exercises.

There is need to influence three types of spending. First, that on specially targeted programmes, second, expenditure on programmes aimed at bringing about change in the departments themselves, including affirmative action, and third, mainstream programmes. The central question
with regard to the latter is whether total budget estimates, minus the first two types of spending, reflect gender equity objectives? The goal is that each government department undertakes this evaluation exercise on an annual basis.

Departments will have to take decisions on their own internal priorities, as well as on the cost implications. For example, the Welfare Department faces the difficult question of how to find ways of providing child care to poor families, while preserving entitlements for the richer groups. Government will in the future have to decide where to put greater priority, on poverty reduction or defence spending. Departments will also have to table clear reports to parliament, with disaggregated information indicating what has or has not changed. Within the overall evaluation of performance of policies, budgets, staff training programmes, as well as other public sector expenditures. Government will have to provide gender and poverty indicators, their targets and time frames.

Steps Forward

The Women’s Budget Initiative has now completed analyses of 16 budget votes, in terms of their impact on women’s lives. In 1996 budget votes of the departments for Reconstruction and Development Programme, labour, trade and industry, housing, education, public sector employment and taxation, were analysed. In 1997, the budget votes for the ministries of health, land, agriculture, safety and security, justice, correctional services, transport, energy, home affairs, foreign affairs and also the area of budget reform were also evaluated. By 1998 all budget votes will have been analysed.

The women’s budget is a potentially powerful instrument for transformation, but can become peripheralised if its work is confined outside government or becomes a public relations exercise in the Office of the Status of Women. An office able to look after women’s interests in the budgetary process must enjoy a high profile and have substantial resources, clearly delineated powers and lines of communication, with for example, the President, the cabinet, the bureaucracy, as well as with parliament and civil society. This will enable such an office to acquire the expertise necessary to undertake an essential dialogue with the state in a bid to get the latter to implement the vision that won the ANC government power.

An indicator of progress made in the past few years in sensitising government departments is the response to enquiries on gender issues. In 1994, the Women’s National Empowerment Task Force requested information from ministries on the three most important changes made with a view to improving the women’s situation. Responses were few and far between, and significant commitments were rare. Two years later, in 1996, policy commitments related to the Beijing Programme of Action were received from 21
departments. Though commitments were of unequal worth and value, the responses indicated an important victory for women in departments, at cabinet level, in parliament and in civil society, whose efforts influenced ministries to undertake changes. Ministries are beginning to develop gender-sensitive policies and budgets, while interest has been expressed in how to extend this exercise to provincial and local government levels.

Structures for women’s emancipation and empowerment have begun to emerge. They include the Commission on Gender Equality, the Office on the Status of Women, gender desks in departments and a Women’s Parliamentary Caucus. Thus while the legacies of apartheid continue to burden South Africa, power has shifted at the political level. South Africa can now move away from the costly, hierarchical, authoritarian, inefficient and time-wasting procedures and programmes of the past. However, policies and action plans mean little if the necessary resources to effect them are not available. There can, thus, be no illusions on the difficulties that South Africa will have to overcome in trying to address women’s disadvantaged position in social and economic life. Still, on the basis of efforts already exerted, South Africa has the unique possibility of developing creative people-centred, and not just profit-centred, solutions in its evolution towards gender equality.

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Economic Reforms and Rural Households in Uganda

Rose Kiggundu

Introduction

This chapter illustrates how rural households in Uganda have responded to macro-economic reforms. The analysis is confined to policies considered important to the improvement of the welfare and status of poor rural households, in particular the differential in opportunities for men and women living and working in rural areas. The paper argues that it is important to adopt a dual strategy: combination of price incentives at the macro level with non-price incentives at the sectoral and micro levels in order to ensure a durable and equitable improvement in living conditions for both rural men and women.

Uganda’s Macro-Economic Reforms

By the mid-1990s, Uganda had overcome much of the macro-economic distortion caused by economic mismanagement and political instability. Besides the return to peace in the southern parts of the country, improvements in performance were mainly the result of the consistent application of the Economic Recovery Programme of 1987, supported by a number of donors and multilateral institutions, including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. The reforms fall into three broad areas: the first is related to exchange rate and external trade regulation. The government reformed the foreign exchange system, leading eventually to convertibility of the shilling. Trade licenses and export taxes were replaced by a certification system. Import tariffs were also reduced on a number of goods.

The second set of reforms were in fiscal and monetary areas. Government committed itself to the reduction of the public deficit via control of expenditure, accompanied by improved revenue collection. Subsequently, a cash budget was adopted to ensure that expenditure remained within available revenue limits. In the monetary area, there was strict control of money supply by the Bank of Uganda via selling of government papers at market interest rates, and by restricting government borrowing from the central bank. Besides this, there was deregulation of interest
rates, a broad financial sector reform, and a strengthening of the supervisory role of the Bank of Uganda over commercial banks. Reforms have expanded the quantity of financial services, as well as the sector’s efficiency.

The third set of reforms is related to institutional reform, notably deregulation of commodity marketing, opening-up of the traditional export sector to competition, and export diversification, mainly into horticultural products. The other aspect of institutional reform had to do with civil service reform, the divestiture of loss making parastatals and army demobilisation. Up to a third of the civil servants were retrenched in the early 1990s, while a number of parastatals have been or are on the verge of being privatised. Among those in the latter category is the state-owned Uganda Commercial Bank, with an extended branch network in the country.

Implementation of these reform measures resulted in significant GDP growth rates, an estimated 8 per cent per year during 1992–95, compared to an average of 5 per cent for the period 1987–91. The rate of inflation dropped from 300 per cent in 1987 to an average of 10 per cent in the 1990s. Price and trade liberalisation have restored domestic confidence, and attracted foreign investors. Divestiture of state-owned enterprises picked up in the 1990s, with the public being encouraged to participate by buying shares. A stock exchange became operational in 1997, but trading has yet to start.

Output in agriculture, though slow to respond, is beginning to show signs of improvement. Coffee marketing is fully liberalised and farmers are able to get up to 64 per cent of the export price for their coffee. Trade diversification is shown by steady increase in the volume and value of non-traditional exports such as fish, maize, groundnuts, hides and skins, vanilla, cut-flowers, and mushrooms. Exports of the latter were valued at US$24 million in 1990, rising to US$91 million in 1994. As a result, coffee now accounts for only about 56 per cent of total exports, compared to 97 per cent in the late 1980s.

Rural Household Responses to Reforms

To provide a feeling of how rural households in Uganda have responded to economic reforms, we looked at the impact of some key reforms. The key measures were meant to create monetary stability and remove the implicit tax on agricultural exports associated with trade controls. Improved incentives would enable farmers to rehabilitate their farms, as well as engage in non-traditional areas of agricultural production. Deregulation of interest rates was meant to increase efficiency in credit allocation, reduce the size of non-performing assets and create viable lending infrastructure in the countryside.

On the face of it, improvements in the incentive structure had a strong impact on rural households engaged in coffee production. Increased farm-
gate prices led to adoption of new high-yielding varieties. The Uganda Coffee Development Authority assisted in this process by introducing a nursery programme for cloned coffee plants. Increased competition between buyers has meant that many farmers are now paid promptly, while increased access to consumer goods, such as sugar, salt and soap, has increased incentives in the countryside.

However, this rapid improvement is confined to the coffee growing central, eastern and western parts of the country. The major cash crops in northern Uganda are tobacco and cotton, which are perennial crops, and rehabilitation of their production and marketing has been more difficult. Peasants have been less willing to embark on production when incentives remained inadequate, even though there was promise of quick improvement. With regard to cotton in Arua district, for example, a study done by the Uganda Women’s Network indicated that poor incentives had led to drastic output reduction in 1992 and 1993. Poor infrastructure and insecurity in northern Uganda are additional factors inhibiting increased production. It is, therefore, not surprising that rural households in coffee growing areas enjoyed a higher living standard, with more expenditure on food and other goods, than those in the northern part of the country. Cash incomes in the coffee growing areas also enabled households to diversify into non-traditional crops such as maize, beans, and horticulture.

An illustration from southern Uganda highlights some of the issues noted above: Kajoji village is about 15 kilometres from Busunju trading centre along the road from Kampala to Hoima. An elderly female respondent, who was also a head of household, had this to say about her reaction to recent changes in coffee prices:

The coffee boom of 1995 taught me a lesson. Private coffee buyers had come to the village searching for dry coffee beans. Households that had coffee were paid on the spot. I missed out because I did not have coffee beans to sell. Through my local village group, I learnt of the quick yielding coffee seedlings which could be bought from the clonal coffee nursery programme. However, I did not have the investment capital required to purchase the seedlings and construct the nursery bed. I later decided to harvest and sell my sweet potatoes, beans and cassava in order to raise money. I hired labour to assist in the harvest, transportation, and marketing of the products to Busunju trading centre. I only managed to sell off half of the products. From the money, I made, I bought clonal coffee seedlings and planted them.

This example indicates increased resource allocation towards tradeables by a poor woman-headed household, in a coffee growing part of Uganda. Similar examples can be found in many villages. But, there is also no mistaking the high level of vulnerability of these households, partly due to swings in food prices. The rural-urban terms of trade remain very unfavourable. Associated with this rural-urban imbalance is the general demand constraint in the economy, brought about by the money supply
squeeze in the urban areas. Micro and small-scale entrepreneurs, especially those in rural areas, are faced with a serious lack of demand for their products. Resulting poor cash incomes have frustrated initiatives of rural households to engage in income-generating activities. They lack access to modern services and the information necessary for the taking of profitable decisions on production.

Rural households also often lack seeds for planting. Traditionally, farmers kept stores of food for drought seasons. This security threshold has disappeared from many homes. Farmers now sell food which might not be a true marketable surplus, this exposes rural households to serious food insecurity. Part of the problem is due to the collapse of the government’s extension-workers programme. Farmers no longer have access to technical guidance, including proper food storage. This service reduction can be blamed on public-sector retrenchment and reduced government expenditure, the “no money syndrome”. According to official data, there are about 3.5 million farming families in Uganda. However, by June 1995, only 2,000 rural extension workers were employed by government. This means that each extension worker attends to an average of 1,750 households a year.

While the woman in the example above could determine the use to which her land was put, the majority of women in Uganda have little real control over land. Although user rights are often guaranteed for women living with their husbands or family relatives, they are often lost on divorce. Further, since cash crop production is more lucrative than food production, the best land is monopolised by men for cash crops, even though cash-crop production requires female labour at the various stages of the cycle.

Rural households have a number of coping mechanisms. For instance, many are now members of savings and loan associations. In a number of cases, they provide burial credit. The necessity for the latter is a result of the large number of deaths in recent years resulting from AIDS. Participants make initial contributions of about 50,000–70,000 shillings to the burial fund, thereafter a lottery is organised and the winner borrows the accumulated contributions. The loans are on a short-term basis and at very high interest rates (over 100 per cent per annum). The winner also gets physical gifts from the burial group, like mattresses, cooking utensils, etc. This scheme has attracted many rural households all over Uganda. Although lacking in many technical respects, it has been crucial to financing income generation in the countryside and to providing cash with which to transact business or to undertake social commitments, such as meeting burial expenses.

While women have resorted to gender specific survival strategies, rural men seem to have continued with business as usual. A few male farmers work the fields till around mid-day after which they join their friends to drink local beer or engage in conversation. Some men have, however, lost their self-esteem entirely. This is a growing category which includes demobilised soldiers, retrenched government workers and micro-business opera-
tors forced to exit competitive informal commerce in towns. This category has now resorted to extensive drinking and even to crime.

School-age children within the rural households have taken up micro-trading activities in order to raise school fees and money required for uniforms, books and other school requirements. Boy children undertake these income generating activities e.g. they work as porters, fetch water for a fee, or sell cigarettes. On the other hand, girl children provide much labour in food gardens, as well as in coffee production, to “raise school fees”. There is also evidence that girls are married off much earlier in times of distress.

As a group, rural women have been most hit by adjustment measures in the health and education sectors. They have had to deal with the severe effects of the AIDS epidemic, including a growing number of orphans, and increasing cost of health care. To cope economically, women have extended their work-day by engaging in multiple income-generating activities. In addition to selling food in markets, women also sell liquor, pancakes, fried cassava, etc. The main marketing outlet is the weekly rural market where proceeds from sales are used to buy essential goods like paraffin, salt and soap. A lot of barter exchange now takes place within these markets. The poor are apparently willing to pay for increased costs of health so long as the quality of health services improves. Support to women in the form of appropriate labour saving devices and credit might be the best way to ensure that the rural poor enjoy some of the benefits of economic reforms. Services in the rural sector must improve.

The deregulation of trade and provision of a wide ranging package of incentives to foreign and local investors in Uganda, has resulted in a growing number of investment ventures, estimated to have generated about 10,000 new jobs. The impact can be illustrated by fishing trends on Lake Victoria. During 1993–94, fish exports rose from US$58 million to US$85 million. New investors use advanced technology and equipment to catch fish, and have out-competed the small fishermen from the islands. Before this expansion, people on the islands depended on fish for protein; indeed, for many of them, it was a staple food. On the mainland, tilapia and lung fish were common food items for many rural and poor urban households. However, conditions have changed dramatically. There is now less fish available for the local market in Uganda. The big companies process the fish into fillets for export. A new market has emerged in both rural and urban areas: trade in bones and fish remains, a paradoxical outcome of the liberalisation of the economy.

Yet there are still many ways in which farmers and the poor could be assisted. Because coffee is a smallholder crop, farmers do not require a lot of capital equipment for coffee production. The biggest production constraints for rural households are labour shortage, an inadequate land tenure system which generates considerable insecurity, and inadequate access to credit facilities for upgrading coffee trees. These constraints have remained more
or less intact after the economic reforms. Increased producer price incentives for cash crop production have thus not resulted in a big supply response. There seems to be a case for first addressing these non-price structural constraints before hoping to incorporate the rural sector into the modern economy.

Conclusion

Uganda’s economy has undergone major changes in the past decade. Kampala City and other towns, with an emerging middle class, have benefited greatly from economic reforms. Wealth has been accumulated in terms of buildings and other private property. The President and other leaders have admonished the poor, currently concentrated in rural areas, to overcome their poverty by exploiting opportunities for income generation created by the new economic environment. However, benefits have yet to seep down to the poor. This is mainly because reforms have, in some instances, been implemented in piece-meal fashion, with contradictory policy objectives. To be effective, market incentives need to be accompanied by infrastructure support, improved roads, access to services, and better information flows, especially in the still politically destabilised north of the country. It is important to remember that reforms that fail to enrich the poor majority are ultimately not sustainable. Since the government emphasises rural development, rural well-being will be the test of the effectiveness of its policies.

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Introduction

This chapter looks at the evolution of Tanzania’s reform of its land laws, an initiative embarked on as part of broad economic liberalisation supported by donors and the World Bank Group. The land reform process has so far had three distinct outcomes: first, a Presidential Land Commission presented its report; second, the government issued a National Land Policy; and, third, a Draft Land Bill was completed. The next, and last step, will be the debating of the Draft Land Bill by Parliament and its adoption, following revision, as a Land Act to replace the moribund Land Ordinance of 1923. This chapter discusses the land reform process, including issues demanding further deliberation and action.

Pre-1992 Land Policy

Tanzania is largely a country of smallholders, with up to 80 per cent of the population depending on agriculture for its livelihood. But even pastoralists and urban dwellers, who comprise the rest of the population, depend on agriculture to some degree. Land is a key asset, and all attempts to reform land laws are bound to have strong social, political and economic implications.

The main characteristics of colonial land policy were as follows: first, ownership and possession of land was differentiated between formal and informal sectors. In the urban sector and among plantations, land ownership was controlled by statute, and ownership was supported by documentary proof in the form of title deeds. Among peasants and pastoralists, ownership was established through membership of a “native” community. This type of entitlement was variously called native title, customary title, deemed rights of occupancy, etc. The majority of rural dwellers in Tanzania still only have these latter claims to land.

The British ruled Tanganyika as a Trust Territory and passed land laws which, prima facie, were aimed to protect native interests. The Land
Ordinance of 1923\(^1\) which concretised the dual structure named above was, however, vague on “native” land ownership.\(^2\) While written land title deeds were granted to foreigners in urban centres and to estates and plantations, the majority of citizens were limited to customary tenure under a system of informal law. Thus, under statute law, the economically dominant classes in urban and rural areas came to dominate large-scale properties while the majority, under customary law, were restricted to ownership of small-scale landed property.

The second feature of this land policy was that nobody could own or possess land unless proof of use was evident. In other words, security of tenure was dependent on proof of use. Right of occupancy was defined as “title to the occupation and use of land”. Native title, it was concluded, was essentially usufructuary i.e. provable on use (Lyall, 1967).\(^3\) Though the principle that land use ensures entitlement sounds egalitarian, in practice it was difficult to implement fairly. The same principle was used to justify land confiscation from “natives” who were not putting land to “proper” use, that is not engaged in commercial activities. Similar justification was used in the classic case of land confiscation from the Meru (Kirilo and Seaton, 1967). Paradoxically, the Tanzanian government has used the same argument in expropriating land from pastoralists (Lane, 1996). However, the principle has also been used, positively, to enfranchise customary tenants, and to provide a basis for developing legal principles for granting “land to the tiller” (James and Fimbo, 1973). Still, with regard to gender, the principle of “land to the tiller” has historically been unfairly applied. Women are the majority “users” of land in the countryside but have little power over its ownership.

The third feature of land policy, contrasting markedly with the current emphasis on market liberalisation, is the restriction put on land market transactions. This feature of land policy has had a variety of uses and manifestations in application. During the colonial period, it was used to exclude native Africans from the formal land market. But the same principle has also been used to restrict transfer of granted rights of occupancy by post-independence governments in their bid to monitor land speculation, control rents, or when they sought to acquire land or buildings for public use.\(^4\)

The institution of communal land holding was based on the claim that individual proprietary land rights were unknown among African societies, and that land transfers did not exist before colonialism. Although these

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\(^1\) This is still the standard Land Statute. See Chap. 113 of the Laws of Tanzania.

\(^2\) In this “dual economy” the Land Ordinance provided for granted rights of occupancy (a periodic system of land ownership of up to 99 years) for the dominant classes and deemed that the “natives” had customary titles known as deemed rights of occupancy.

\(^3\) It was intimated that in non-literate societies the only evidence of title is proof of use. See “Mtoro Bin Mwamba vs AG, 1953”, Tanganyika Law Reports, p. 327.

claims fly against historical evidence (Lyall, 1980; Griffith, undated; Oldaker, 1957), fear of land transactions persists even today, stifling all attempts at modernising agriculture or evolving an efficient land market.\(^5\)

The need to prevent the spectre of landless peasants, among land-grabbing foreigners, was a stark argument for preserving tight control on the land market.\(^6\) For example, dissatisfied with the limited “window of intervention” accorded it under the system of freehold titles, the government banned them altogether with the institution of the Freehold Titles (Conversion to Government Leases) Act, 1963. On the basis of superiority of its “development requirements”, the state was now able to intervene in all land use.

The government’s interventionist role in land management started early on in the colonial era, however. The state ensured itself all the instruments necessary to intervene in all aspects related to land holding and use. Under this system, the traditional principle of land ownership in market economies, i.e. that the owner is entitled to “peaceful enjoyment” of property, becomes precarious. Under the current system in Tanzania, even land under granted rights of occupancy is subject to conditions imposed by the state. Failure to follow them invites unilateral revocation of title by the President of the country. Though top intervention is rarely necessary, the system is still a source of much insecurity of tenure.

The urge to control land also extended to customary land tenure. Lack of formalised arrangements at the land user level meant that peasants were subject to a myriad of penal by-laws in the cultivation and conservation of agricultural land (Williams, 1982). Minimum acreage by-laws were used in the colonial period to ensure that peasants allotted minimum acreage to food or cash crops, failure to do so would be answered with penal sanctions, including imprisonment.

The bulk of colonial land legislation was made with little consultation. Lyall (1973) notes:

> An analysis of the Ordinance shows that in reality it vested all necessary powers over land in the Government, the purpose being that although no large concessions were made to settlers at that time, apart from the land alienated by the Germans, future land policy might change. The function of the Ordinance was therefore to give specific powers to the government and be as vague as possible about African rights so that any shift of policy could easily be justified by a reinterpretation of the Act. Land policy was to be left as far as possible to administrative, not legal control. Later experience shows that considerable modifications of policy were in fact made without the necessity of change in law.

Colonial circulars re-interpreted policy at every turn. For example, during the 1930s, when there was little white settlement, land alienation was re-


\(^6\) See Nyerere, 1966.
stricted. However, between the end of World War II and the early 1950s, when white settlement had increased, alienation policy was interpreted with much greater discretion (Tanganyika, 1941, 1953). According to Lyall (1973) the total area alienated under long-term rights of occupancy rose from 788,038 acres in 1946 to 2,533,966 acres by 1958, a more than three-fold increase.

Agrarian reform has been a key concern of the post-colonial government in Tanzania. This was because agriculture was seen as capable of generating growth from the country’s own resources, while at the same time benefiting the majority of the people. In practice agrarian reform meant regulating the large-scale estate and plantation sectors, and transformation of small-scale agricultural and livestock activities in the countryside. After independence in 1961, the state tried to modernise the peasantry, first through resettlement and service extension, and, subsequently, through more refined attempts at “capturing the peasants”, notably the introduction of Ujamaa (or African Socialism). By the end of the 1970s both approaches had failed, however (Coulson, 1978, 1982).

Towards a National Land Policy

Between 1976 and 1980 Tanzania found itself in something of a dual crisis. On the one hand, the economy had gone into sharp decline, characterised by a large fiscal deficit, rising inflation and an expanding balance of payments deficit. The second crisis related to the financial aftermath of the war with Uganda, that dislodged Idi Amin, at the end of the 1970s. All this came at a time when the villagisation (Ujamaa) programme demanded a considerable amount of resources to remain on track (Havnevik, 1993). Further, fewer resources were now available for meeting the demands, for example food subsidies, of the politically powerful urban elite. The period thus saw Tanzania abandon its socialist-oriented economic policies, and embracing, rather reluctantly, those advocated by the IMF and the World Bank. Since even Tanzania’s traditional supporters, the Nordic countries, had marked their reluctance to disburse aid in the absence of broad agreement with the International Financial Institutions, the country was left with no option but to fall in line.

Once again concerns about agricultural performance became the focus of the reform measures. Donors and the World Bank blamed the poor state of agriculture on the earlier emphasis on import-substitution manufacturing. This indirectly taxed farmers, and switched the domestic terms of trade in favour of urban dwellers. In spite of a continued flow of resources to state farms and related institutions, government investment had tended to decrease over the years. In defining economic policy directions at the beginning of the 1980s, the World Bank and the donor community suggested a renewed focus on smallholders. It was argued that if the country’s devel-
opment was to be agriculture-led, then peasants had to be given the necessary incentives and support. A strong element of the policy shift would relate increasingly to the role of market forces in setting farm-gate prices and in agricultural marketing as a whole.

The government responded in 1983 with a National Agricultural Policy, in which private ownership of land was emphasised. Villagers would, for example, be able to own land privately within the boundaries of their villages. In the Ujamaa villages, the establishment of individually-owned units was also proposed. The period of lease would be of long-term duration, a minimum period of 33 years, to allow investment and conservation. It was hoped that this would increase rural productivity, and ensure owners a period long enough to recoup their investment. The type of tenure proposed for the village itself was a right of occupancy of 99 years, that is, for all practical purposes, equivalent to freehold. This concern for individual land security, in order to encourage agricultural investment and productivity, was not new, however. It was the subject of the Royal Commission Report of 1955, where the structures proposed to bolster up individual peasant production were pretty much the same as those listed above.

It was within this general search for a new *modus operandi* on land matters that the President appointed a commission, chaired by Professor Issa Shivji, to study and make proposals for land tenure reform.

The Shivji Report, 1992

The Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Land Matters presented its report in November, 1992. The report identified five areas of concern:

1. pervasive insecurity of tenure;
2. radical title vesting in the presidency (powers of control and administration over land);
3. overlapping institutional structures over land allocation and administration, and dispute adjudication;
4. lack of transparency and popular participation in the administration of land; and
5. poor institutional structure for adjudication of land rights and disputes.

The report made recommendations on two broad fronts: the first was on land tenure reform while the second concerned restructuring of the institutional mechanism for land allocation and administration, as well as adjudication of land disputes. With regard to land tenure, the challenge was said to lie in enabling citizens not only to occupy and cultivate land, but also to own and control it. This called for institutional changes and a search for feasible alternatives for organising the land tenure system. The report recommended the removal of the radical title from the President and vesting it in
the people’s representatives. This would be achieved by dividing land into two. National lands, would be administered by a Board of Land Commissioners under a National Lands Commission, holding national lands in trust on behalf of citizens. Village lands would be held by village assemblies, composing all adult members of the village. In an assessment Shivji (1996)\textsuperscript{7} has written:

The central recommendation however, was undoubtedly the divestiture of the radical title and de-linking of land from the Executive and vesting of village land with Village Assemblies. This recommendation is the most fundamental one and runs through all the more detailed recommendations of the Commission. Admittedly, this would have some significant impact on the organisation of the state structure.

The idea of de-linking the President from land matters was radical and it is not surprising that the National Land Policy document, that partly evolved from the report’s recommendations, avoided it entirely. It was felt that removal of presidential powers over land would, in the course of implementing development projects, make policy-makers seem like “beggars for land”. However, the goal of democratising the “eminent domain”, while at the same time vesting ownership in the people themselves was laudable (Tenga, 1993).

Other recommendations on land tenure included formalising customary titles by issuing customary certificates of title (Hati ya Mila ya Ardhi). The title would be, essentially, a derivative right granted by the village assembly, the owner of the general title, termed “certificate of village land”, which defines and certifies the village boundaries. A process of popular adjudication was recommended and judicial confirmation in the case of dispute was to be provided. Decisions concerning land were to be made at the village assembly’s general meeting, while the dispute processing mechanism was to be in the hands of an elder’s land council which would also administer a village land registry. Outsiders would be entitled to customary leases not exceeding 10 years. While transactions between village residents were to be allowed, those between outsiders were subject to the consent of the village assembly. Within the village, assignment of matrimonial property was subject to spouse consent.

The National Lands Commission was to administer the granted right of occupancy, as existing, but the allocation process would be elaborate, involving local communities through district land committees and urban ward land committees. The land grant would finally be certified by the land circuit courts.

In the area of land administration and dispute adjudication the report noted that the existing machinery had become inefficient, illegitimate and unjust, and thus incapable of “administering land rights/justice”. A system

\textsuperscript{7} See also Shivji and Kapenga, 1997.
comprising a traditional council of elders (Baraza ya Wazee) was recom-

mended. Above them would be circuit land courts presided over by a pro-

fessional magistrate with a jury-like panel of elders. Appeals at this level

would be to the land division of the High Court where the presiding judge

would sit with a panel of elders. Incorporating elders at the various stages

was meant to involve ordinary Tanzanians in dispute processing, as a first

step towards eradicating the “dual” system of land allocation, with custom-

ary law for rural dwellers and statutory law for the modern sector.

National Land Policy, 1995

The National Land Policy document addresses four major areas: land tenure

and administration; surveying and mapping; urban and rural land use plan-

ning; and land use management. As already noted, the critical recommenda-

tion of the Shivji Report, regarding the removal of the executive’s ultimate

cpower on land, was not accepted. However, the land policy document

agrees that land should be a constitutional category. Further, again contrary
to the Shivji Report’s recommendation, the village assemblies will not be the

administrative instance, but rather the village councils i.e. the executive at

the village level. At the level of tenure the National Land Policy agrees with

the commission’s report that the right of occupancy system be retained. This

means in effect recognising a statutory right of occupancy of not more than

99 years, and an unlimited customary title. The latter would be confirmed

by a customary right of occupancy title (Hati ya Ardhi ya Mila) issued by the

village council and registered at a district land registry.

The Commissioner for Lands shall be the chief administrator of land and

shall appoint officers to administer land, other than village land. Village

land shall be administered by village councils. All citizens are to be ensured

equal access to land, but access by foreigners would be via stipulations of

the Investment Promotion Act, but they would not be able to acquire cus-
wotmary land.

Women’s access to land is guaranteed, although the law of inheritance

“will continue to be governed by custom and tradition”. It was further

stipulated that ownership of land between husband and wife shall not be

the subject of legislation. On land utilisation and protection of sensitive

areas, “special areas” would be put at the disposal of investors, while land

ceilings, anti-speculation measures and environmental protection were in-
cluded in the provisions. However, with regard to guidelines on disposal of

land, the National Land Policy is full of contradictions. The government’s

powers of revocation and forceful acquisition of land are retained, however.

This is compensated with the recognition of the principle of land value and

that of fair and prompt compensation. The Land Policy also provides for a

system of land registration for statutory and customary titles.
A new provision is that, having received an offer of right of occupancy and accepting it, and if after 180 days a certificate has not been issued, the letter of offer may be registered with the Registrar of Titles “as notice of impending ownership”. On dispute settlement, the National Land Policy agrees partially with the Shivji Report. It notes that the adjudication machinery should start at the level of Mabaraza ya Wazee ya Ardhi (elder’s land council) and on to quasi-judicial bodies at the district, regional and national levels, with possible appeals to the High Court on points of law. On village land titling, the Land Policy provides no coherent directive, however.

Finally, on land use management the policy provides a significant policy statement on range lands and related conflicts over livestock access, and, similarly on conflicts arising from land use in protected areas such as game parks. There are also statements on environmental protection, notably on protection of game areas, wetlands, the coastline and fisheries.

However, because of the drawn out nature of the process, the debate over the National Land Policy was unexpectedly low key. Some women’s groups, and pastoralists, through their NGOs, took exception to some of the provisions in the preparatory stages of the document, but that was all.

The Draft Land Bill

Processing of the Draft Land Bill, indeed the whole process, has been largely externally funded and it is feared by some that the outcome will be unduly influenced the donor agenda, especially with regard to markets, privatisation and the creation of a conducive environment for investors.

Fimbo (1996) summarises these fears as follows:

What cannot be masked is that the World Bank and the IMF are at the Centre of the Stage. It is not accidental that in 1991 a Presidential Commission was appointed. Its expenses were met from external funds and the printing of its report was similarly funded. The Seminar on National Land Policy held in January 1995 was also similarly funded by a donor and so was the publication of the National Land Policy (NLP), 1995. On approvals of dispositions, the NLP significantly echoes the World Bank position: “The consent of the Minister or his appointed officers is not necessary for market transfers to take place”. Now the British Overseas Development Administration has come in to complete the task of assisting in drafting a new land code of (or for) Tanzania. The ODA has provided both funds and a consultant, Professor Patrick MacAuslan of Birbeck College, University of London.9

8 See for example Tanzania, 1994.
9 The “Draft of a Bill for the Land Act” contains 262 Sections in 15 parts with 4 Schedules at the end. The Draft was also reviewed at the Second National Land Workshop in Arusha where the Tanzanian advisory support group, led by Professor Fimbo, submitted its report for discussion. Significantly, Professor I.G. Shivji was absent.
In the course of work on the Draft Land Bill, MacAuslan (1996) was guided by six “inarticulate assumptions”: first, that as a major national resource, land must be used and managed in the national interest; second, the primary importance of providing for security of tenure and title to all citizens; third, the need for transparency and accountability in the exercise of public power over land, including openness, fairness and impartiality in the administration of land; fourth, the need to create conditions for the operation of an efficient and equitable land market; fifth, the need to bring about a greater involvement of the citizenry, both directly and through their representatives, in the management of land; sixth, the importance of providing an appropriate Tanzanian legal framework, and mechanisms, for dispute-settlement and redress of grievances in relation to land management. These principles indicated in turn the necessity of a detailed land law, detailing powers of land officials and the manner in which they exercise their power. It was also necessary to detail the steps needed to be taken before a person obtains rights in land, effect transactions or how to seek redress in case of deprivation of land rights.

With the above assumptions as a basis, nine key areas were covered:

1. The role of the Commissioner of Lands.
2. The role of civil society in implementation of the law.
3. Protection of village land and the national interest.
4. Women’s right to equality in land matters.
5. Operation and regulation of the land market.
6. Village land administration.
7. Pastoralism.
8. Validating informal tenure transactions.

To tackle the issue of a dual system of tenure, customary titles were to be recognised by statute, with clauses 5 and 6 of the Draft Land Bill providing for how village land is to be secured. Part III of the bill, dealing with the “Classification and Tenure of Land” gives equal status to the hitherto unequal categories of customary titles and granted right of occupancy. Under Part VII, village land is categorised in detail and MacAuslan notes that this “is arguably the heart of the Bill”. While the Draft Land Bill concurs with the National Land Policy document and the recommendations of the Shivji Report that village land be administered by village authorities, it emphasises that the functions should be exercised by the village council on a

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10 The draft was prepared for the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, under an ODA contract, 1996.
professional basis. In setting out the “legal framework for the exercise by village councils and officials of their powers over land”, the Draft Land Bill demonstrates a different view of land management from that of the Shivji Report.\textsuperscript{11} Whereas the latter sought to give all powers to village assemblies, constituted of all adults in a village, MacAuslan is dismissive of popular management:

Whatever might be the theoretical case for mass democracy, it is not practical. Village assemblies consist of all adults in the village; is it really conceivable that such a body could administer village lands? The Bill in other words does not subscribe to the thesis of ‘the noble peasant'; left alone, peasants will always act for the local common good.

MacAuslan argues instead for facilitating the growth of good land managers. Further that if village land management is organised under the assumptions of mass control, simpler titles, simple procedures for processing etc., the colonial duality would be perpetuated. Abolition of this duality from the structure of the tenure system would be a notable achievement of the Land Bill.

The “security to land is dependent on proof of use” principle is also supported by the Draft Land Bill. Definition of the granted right of occupancy is grounded on “occupation and use”, and revocation of title is largely due to breach of “use” requirements. Revocation of title “in public interest” is abolished. Customary right of occupancy will now be subject to use conditions, breach of which would have penal consequences, different from those of the granted right of occupancy. This provision is similar in spirit to the minimum acreage bye-laws of the colonial past. However, while the Shivji Report recommended revocation in cases of breach relating to land under village title, the Draft Land Bill suggests sanctions that fall short of revocation, such as supervision orders or temporary assignment of the customary right of occupancy. Considering the fact that customary title is indefinite and is usually a grant to a person and his heirs in perpetuity, this approach is positive.

With regard to market dealing in land, the pre-1992 land policy had an “anti-commoditisation” stance. The National Land Policy document is, however, not clear about this issue, even at times contradictory. However, the Draft Land Bill, comes out clearly in favour of land transactions on the basis of demand and supply. Clause 39 of the bill provides for the basic thrust: unless specifically required by the act, no consents or approvals for dispositions are required, even for petty transactions. Only substantial dispositions would require consents. The role of the Commissioner for Lands in overseeing “just” and “unjust” transactions was a key issue at the Second Land Workshop. It was suggested then that the executive would be assum-

\textsuperscript{11} See MacAuslan’s “Clause by Clause Commentary on a Draft Bill for the Land Act” prepared for the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, December, 1996.
ing functions that were beyond its role. In the bill, land officers and the courts are given supervisory powers.

Finally, the pre-1992 land policy accorded the state an extended role in matters of land allocation and administration. This concept is strengthened in several ways by the bill. The bill’s stance on this issue seems to run counter to the principles of openness, fairness, impartiality and security of tenure, that underlay the Land Commission’s work. It spells out the role of the President as trustee of the land of Tanzania and the rest of the bill seems to be based on this fundamental principle. Thus the idea of a National Land Commission as a trustee of the land proposed by the Shivji Report was rejected.¹² Making the executive the sole arbiter and administrator of land can, however, not guarantee achievement of the objectives of land reform. With the ambition of creating “conditions for the operation of an efficient and equitable land market” the author of the Draft Land Bill misses the main thrust and spirit of the Land Commission’s work.

The Draft Land Bill also suggests a powerful role for the Commissioner of Lands in the whole process of land administration. The powers of the commissioner supersede those of the bureaucrats in the Land Ministry. At every stage of land processing the commissioner has power to intervene, power over consultative process, power to recommend revocations and acquisitions etc.

A number of entirely new features were introduced by the Draft Land Bill, some already noted above. Among the best received ones was the inclusion of women’s rights to land in the bill, equating women’s right of access to land with that of men. Further, it preserves the property rights of women as already provided in the Law of Marriage Act, 1971, including separate property rights between husband and wife, and granting to each spouse the right to acquire, hold and dispose of property or contract, sue or be sued; and the protection of the right of spousal interest in the matrimonial home, including the obligation to give consent on its disposition. However, on customary land tenure, the bill still refers to clan land, ownership of which discriminates women. A number of laws, including those of succession, probate and even the law of marriage are currently not in line with the provisions of the Draft Land Bill. Notably, the rights of children born out of wedlock as well as the status of divorced women are not clearly spelt out (Rwebangira, 1997, Shaba, 1996).

The Bill provides for pastoralism in three ways: first, by the creation of corporate forms under which pastoralists may organise themselves, with supervisory powers over these entities entrusted with the Administrator General. Second, statutory pre-conditions are set out to for meeting the requirements of pastoralists when decisions on land management are made including mechanisms for conflict resolution when their interests collide

¹² See also Shivji, 1996.
with those of other land users. Third, provisions are made for an inter-village mechanism for reaching land use agreements.

However, NGOs working with pastoralists were unimpressed by the provisions, which they felt would have little positive impact on their constituency, especially in light of earlier abuse of pastoral schemes. It was also felt that the needs of the pastoralists were given little consideration. For example, though the land needs of a pastoralist are far above those of ordinary peasants or urban dwellers, a similar limit of land holding of 2,500 hectares was imposed on them. In this regard, the bill should be revised as far as the whole question of pastoralist tenure is concerned.

Recent years have seen a rapid growth of rural-urban migration, and growth of informal settlements. There have also been a number of other land transactions that needed formalisation. The bill seeks to regularise these settlements and transactions. In the rural areas, a major area for regularisation regards the *Ujamaa Vijijini* exercise, which involved compulsory collectivisation of peasants. The exercise lacked legal backing. To regularise this exercise *ex post* the Draft Land Bill makes provision for a special fund for compensation, with a time limit for claims set at the year 2000.

The Draft Land Bill recognises the urgency expressed in the National Land Policy document on the importance of environmental protection and makes provisions for them. Central to the land law process has been the debate on whether statutory changes brought about by legal reforms bring about sustainable improvements. Though donors and international financial institutions opted for evolutionary processes, they differ on who must intervene to bring about change. That donors and financial institutions earlier abandoned the modernisation experiment, based on individualisation, titling and registration, for evolutionary approaches, makes their case suspect. Shivji and Kaptinga (1997) note:

The result has been an overnight conversion of IFI consultants and do-gooder academics from the West to celebration of customary systems, organic evolution, preservation of indigenous communities and so on. But this conversion is as suspect as the earlier scepticism.

Conclusion

The process of creating a new Land Policy and a new Land Act has not been a smooth one. A number of observers have even doubted how much the final product reflects the needs of ordinary Tanzanians, as the process, was donor-driven, and that ultimate power over land remained in the executive arm of government. Fortunately, the Shivji Commission Report derived from a broad canvassing of views and addresses a broad number of popular issues. When the Draft Land Bill is debated and finally passed into a formal statute, it will be possible to subject it to the rigorous critique that such im-
important legislation calls for. Thus while much has been done in the past decade to reform land law in Tanzania, much more awaits to be done.

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References


PART III

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR A NEW PARTNERSHIP
Letter to Sweden from Africa

Angela L. Ofori-Atta

19th January, 1996

My dear little brother Sweden,

Thank you for your very caring message. I have been told that after years of helping me out, you are reviewing your policies. I appreciate this very much. You may sometimes feel that not much has been accomplished after millions of dollars of aid and expertise have been sent towards my needs. This is only partly true. I am glad that you have not given up entirely but are preparing to renew your efforts.

I am writing to you of things intangible, things which have often hampered many of the efforts of countries such as yourself, but which are often not written into policies. I write of respect, expectations, double standards, uneven playing fields, and so on, and so forth. This is a difficult letter for me to write as it is of things which sadden me greatly.

I shall begin with expectations. Brother Sweden, your people, for the most part, know little about my peoples. They probably think of a small continent, with everybody in small villages tucked away in oases, forests, or beaches, where everybody stands around idle all day, smiling at the next white photographer. These are supposedly simple happy people, like children. So, your people are eager to teach them, humour them, guide them, help them, just as they do with their own children. Therefore, your expectations of my peoples are what your people would expect of young children; not very much. The yardstick by which the progress of my peoples is measured is different from that used to measure yours.

In these benign settings, i.e., the happy village, my people are thought to look after each other well, that the large extended families ensure a tight social security system. There is, therefore, no need, to set up proper governments which are accountable to these simple people who do not need much.

Then of course your journalists shatter that image with scenes of war and hunger, massacres and deprivation from Rwanda and Burundi, and your people say: “it is the tribal problem pure and simple”.

Aah, nobody speaks of the complicity of European countries and other past colonial vested interests in my peoples’ woes. Nobody tries to find
ways of resolving these issues until more of my peoples die. After all, what else can be expected from these simple child-like peoples?

So your people have these conflicting pictures which are of two extremes. They know little about the fast developing Africa of cities and large towns and of satellites, faxes, high finance, trade, ports, oil, peace-keeping, fully booked airlines and so forth.

About the countries which are better organised, your people are so impressed that these Africans seem to have advanced, that regardless of the state of corruption, abuse of human rights, and so forth, well, this is progress indeed, what more can you expect from Africa. So development aid is poured into these countries, with few checks and balances. Indeed, it is your consultants who come to ‘do’ this development, and huge proportions of your aid then return to your people, thus benefiting your people more than mine. My people sit back and watch your people ‘doing’ this development and sigh, and wonder. When the work is done, the tiny proportion of my people who ‘govern’ then claim credit for this development, and use it on the political platform to cover up for what they did not do. Sometimes, your development aid is planned more to suit my governors political ambitions than to help my people. My peoples are often not consulted on what their own needs are and your projects dot our landscapes, under-utilised, often plain dead.

Your governments may befriend the African leaders who have seized the states, those whom I call my ‘governors’. In an attempt to genuinely help, or perhaps to secure business for Sweden, your governors act solely with my ‘governors’, often unelected, undemocratic. Your governors speak only to these ‘governors’, without asking or looking for diversity of opinion or using local expertise. Your people hardly ever check the information spewed out by the African state. Where your people find a modicum of democracy, they are truly happy, and refuse to measure it by the same yardstick they use with you. Oh well, they say, this is Africa, what else can you expect? When aid is poured into my countries, often in the form of soft loans, grants, NGO funding, and so forth, there are no independent data gathering systems, so as to be able to genuinely assess success or the impact of the interventions. In the world of banking and finance, I imagine that operating without independent data gathering does not make sound common sense at all. To gather such data from governments to use to police them makes even less sense. Oftentimes, I have been saddened by attempts made by the Bretton Woods Institutions to play the role of opposition or conscience to these ‘governors’ of mine. The role of opposition is sacred in democratic systems, and must not be played by the international community. There is a necessary role for opposition in guarding against the excesses of unbridled power.

And my African peoples can certainly play the role of opposition. Your peoples laugh at the beginnings of opposition in some of my countries
which splits into many groups and cannot present a united front. But in several Scandinavian countries, having several political parties is not considered problematic. These double standards stem from not thinking of my peoples as adult, or as equal. It thus seems to me, little brother Sweden, that in a number of cases, you have taken sides with those people who have ‘kidnapped’ or ‘hijacked’ my countries. I mean those few people who have subverted whole destinies of my peoples and who have not allowed the natural evolution and progress of my societies.

Now you ask how best to rethink your policies. I say to that, please change your expectations of my people. Expect more from my misguided leaders, not less. Expect the same level of accountability and transparency you would demand of EU members in your dealings. When you find yourself thinking if you are being too tough, remember that my peoples are as good as your people, they understand right and wrong, they can stick to arrangements and contracts they have made, if this is expected of them, just like your people can. Expect that they must have opposition or governments-in-waiting who will secure the checks and balances which are required for the governing systems to work, which will also ensure that the help you give me, brother Sweden, will be well utilised.

Once you feel comfortable about these intangibles and can translate them into your policy statement, I would like you to consider a different entry strategy for each country you wish to forge partnerships with. However, it is imperative that when you enter these countries, you speak with everybody who you are asked not to speak with, insist on hearing alternative voices, and if you are told it is impossible, then do not stay, for your development aid will not be safe, and you owe it to your tax payers to guard their investment. Secondly, if you do decide to stay, include as many local African consultants as you possibly can so that the aid money goes further, and my peoples’ expertise may also be built up. Foremost and finally, do not only come with aid, but with trade. Introduce your large and small firms to my entrepreneurs. Link them up in joint ventures, and push manufacturing and agricultural processing firms to the fore for consideration. Expose more and more of my peoples to your peoples so we can understand each other and our real need for interdependence and inter-reliance, for we need each other to survive.

If you desire concrete things, little brother, you could help me set up institutions which support and nurture independent thinking in my countries. For instance, you could support think tanks such as the Nordic Africa Institute but in Africa this time! You could help support the growth of political parties and political education in Ghana, help to advance the cause of minorities in other countries such as in Nigeria and advocate the release of political prisoners such as General Obasanjo.

You could help to set up independent monitoring systems for inflation, poverty, and human rights, and you could help fund anti-corruption inves-
tigative work, e.g. tracking down illegal capital flight promoted by the ‘governors’.

More importantly, little brother, I would like you to use your EU membership to advance these intangibles of which I speak, to your other brethren in the EU so you can all act in concert and treat my peoples with the firm respect demanded of equals.

Take care and many thanks,

Big sister Africa
26th June, 1997

My dear little brother Sweden,

I thank you that you persist in trying to find a new way for our relationship to move forward. In my last letter to you, I spoke of intangibles which, I felt at the time, affected our relationship. I spoke about our expectations of what my people are capable of. I asked you to expect more from my people and not less.

I wrote about your people taking sides with my governors, men who have captured my states, who account for their misdeeds to no one. I spoke about the disservice you do to your people, your taxpayers, when you sink your hard-earned money into governors like those who rule over me.

I wrote about you sending your consultants to my states, paying them 30 per cent of the money your people give me, making my people buy your goods which may not be suitable. What is worse is that you do not tell your people the truth about these arrangements and conditionalities. I spoke then about the need for independent monitoring systems so that you do not depend only on figures offered you by my governors as indices of how well they are doing. I asked you to allow my people to play the sacred role of opposition and to discourage the Bretton Woods Institutions from attempting to take on this role. I asked you to speak to all whom you are asked not to speak with, to make use of my consultants, to come with trade as well as aid. So these were the things, the intangibles, which I thought of then. But now I have been listening to the great people of my continent and your country, as they have struggled with this question of egalitarian partnership. And I think there are some great ideas being tossed about.

Basic to the notion of good partnership though is the question of whether we share common ideals and goals, whether we can trust each other, and whether we can feel for each other.

1. It would help if we liked each other a little. But it would be even better if we felt passionate about each other. Like in the renewed passion of a long, long marriage. Notice the beauty of my lakes and mountains, the
eeriness of my deserts, the lushness of my forests, the warmth of my people, the smoothness and darkness of my complexion. I, in turn, will admire, once again, the cleanliness of your cities, your different forests, your midnight sun in the summer, your blue eyes and fair hair. Show yourself to me more and allow me to do the same through the modern technologies we have: Cinema, TV documentaries and music. Show me your history, how you rose from grass to grace, your success story in so short a time. Ask my history, and teach it to your young and old. In this way we will passionately respect each other’s minds also, so I ask for a courtship of friendship first in this new partnership.

2. I ask that you carefully decide what your goals are for the growth of your civilisation, how you ensure that you guarantee your people this way of life, this high standard of living. Then look at my states. How can the gifts of my states help you fulfil your dreams. Be honest about how much you need from me and what you wish to give in exchange for what I have. Then choose the state which will give you what you need. Are my governors in those states people of integrity? Are they accountable to my people? Are they as constant as the northern star? If yes, then proceed to form deep alliances, transparent agenda, negotiate rules and terms of engagement, build in rewards and consequences, have a social contract and name an arbiter you both respect. I ask you to do this for your enlightened self-interest, as a noble participant put it. Self-interest has hitherto been seen as a shameful, secretive thing. But let us recognise it as the genuine force which drives you to seek a fairer, more egalitarian partnership with my peoples. By your example, perhaps my peoples will learn to formulate the primary interests of my states, and, by your example, will pursue these interest genuinely and with perseverance.

3. What if my governors are like drunken husbands and fathers. When sober, warm and gentle, but when drunk, arbitrary, unaccountable, disrespectful, abusive to my people, corrupt and stealing from the coffers of my states? What should you do? What you have always done, go around the governors. Foster links with ordinary people. Foster private entrepreneurship and joint ventures between our people. Help in our fights for what my people perceive as justice and freedom and tell your people what Sweden gains from this association with my peoples. Apartheid may be buried but the new fight is about being citizens of states with a right to live and dream not in fear and hunger and illness. This fight is as worthy of your help as were the first fights for freedom and justice.

4. About this social contract with the states you choose, there are a number of issues you need to consider. First, do the governors pay a living wage to my people? You see, if my people are poorly paid and so cannot afford the school fees of their children or health care for themselves, how will your investment be safe? For, then, the corruption will be at every level of my societies, not just at the top. Next, look critically at the state’s resources, notice the wealth of that state and its potential and assess for yourself the truth about the matter. Pay no heed when my
governors tell you that they cannot afford to pay better wages. How did you resolve this matter yourself 40–50 years ago? Show my governors how and show them also how central this issue is to my people, and to the sustainability of your business with my people. In your ventures with my people, pay a living wage and much more than that!

5. Stop thinking of me as poor, my little brother. For as a continent, my natural wealth is unsurpassed by any other. Think of me as wealthy, only mismanaged, plundered, and abused, by the very people who are enriched by my wealth. Treat my governors as people presiding over wealthy states. And perhaps they will start waking up to this truth, will start learning how to manage and harvest this great potential as has Botswana, my small country with larger reserves than even South Africa. Notice the pride with which the veep (vice president) speaks about his country and SADC.

So what is it I am saying, my dear little brother Sweden? Basically that we should get to know each other better, get to like and respect each other more, work out a good partnership based on transparency of agenda, mutuality of need and build this on egalitarian principles. You do not need to come as a helper, only as a partner. This your people can understand and respect, and my people will applaud. We will welcome you and your expressed self-interests. We will give and we will take, fully acknowledging the mutuality of the benefits we reap from each other.

Good luck with your efforts at convincing your people and welcome when you are ready.

Sincerely,

Big sister Africa

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Those Who Give—Those Who Receive

Janet Rae Mondlane

Strengthening the Third Sector

Being a teenager in the 1950s, I shared with many other Americans, a feeling of optimism and enthusiasm about the future of the African continent. Transplanted to Africa in the early 1960s, enthusiasm grew but a creeping doubt I hesitated to share with donors tempered the optimism. I began my professional life as a militant in the struggle for national liberation in Mozambique; then came years of service in the government of the newly independent state. After this came responsibility for the management of five factories; from there to the private sector; since 1987, I have worked in civil organisations—the third sector. Now, feeling like an old baobab tree, roots in a Western culture, heart in the African and with the benefit of the laser 20/20 vision of hindsight, my mind seeks to find solutions to a dream that has gone awry.

Recent African history is common knowledge for the readers of this book and does not bear repeating here. Who could have foreseen the problems that surfaced? Perhaps, on the one hand, a leather-skinned colonial administrator and an old African chief sorting out daily problems? Or, the other, those practitioners and intellectuals who are struggling to bring about changes in the world economic and geo-political order. But these two categories of knowledgeable persons did not debate together in order to work out a common paradigm for the future of the African continent, much to our disadvantage. (Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995)

Southern Africa in general is not as attractive for investment as some other regions of the world. Much work has to be done to improve the investment climate. While this is being done, an alternative strategy needs to be employed to improve the social and economic situation of the region’s poor before more humanitarian nightmares occur.

This short paper uses Mozambique as a point of departure; yet many states on this continent are not unlike my country and so the issues I address are also relevant to them.
In the Mozambique case study of the War-Torn Societies Project of UNIRSD, it was suggested that a functional scenario for the stabilisation of post-war Mozambique has to be based on the interplay of:

a) conflict resolution
b) reconciliation
c) reconstruction

...the Mozambican process of governance, of political and social stability and of economic development can only be felt if they function within this (triangular) relationship. Therefore, there is a need to coordinate actions and programs, and maintain a permanent dialogue among the actors. (Abrahamsson and Nilsson, Mozambique, 1995).

One of these actors, a very major one at that, is often not invited to the conference table. For want of a better term, we can call this actor the common people. Whether one discusses population growth, the GNP, balance of trade, the debt burden, aid target groups, education, health and human resources, all are based on a huge pool of humanity which does not necessarily respond to paradigms designed by development thinkers. When Africa was popular in the 1960s and 1970s, many African leaders and their foreign supporters viewed the common people as a shadowy mass to be acted upon or for. Problems arose when state leaders failed to fulfil the needs of the people and thus could not gain their assent to be governed. In newly independent Mozambique, the government could or would not tolerate diversity. As the central government weakened (for various reasons) and still was unable to provide basic community needs, a significant legitimising of traditional systems reappeared, and ethnic group membership became ever more important. Today, the appointed governors of each province are acceptable only if they come from the local ethnic group. With the up-coming local elections, ethnicity, with its conflict-bearing potential, will be even more accentuated and regional tensions may increase. The social misery of absolute poverty has forced the people to turn in upon themselves, tacitly rejecting the state and the concept of national identity, through the simple expedient of ignoring them.

What the subsistence-scratching peasant and the poverty-stricken urban dweller cannot know is that almost every improvement they hope for is couched in an interdependent global economic system and that except through a legitimate government, there is no connection between themselves and that all-embracing mechanism. What the government needs to recognise and act upon is that, in the absence of a legitimate across-the-board administrative structure, there is an urgent need for the establishment of a tremendous multiplicity of links with the common people, that enormous pool of humanity that can be touched almost exclusively through what must be essentially a one-on-one contact.
I would venture to suggest that what international aid actors need to inform themselves about is the firm movement towards an array of traditional societies based on ethnicity which are gaining strength because they are fulfilling functions that the Mozambican government has not been able to fulfil and which touch the common people’s very survival. Immediately after independence, the concentration on large economic projects (which ultimately failed) channelled scarce resources away from the majority peasant farming population. This in turn helped to build up the number of urban poor. There is no way to recoup time, energies and investment lost. However, there is definitely the possibility that, through a multiplicity of small and accompanied economic and social inputs on the part of interested Mozambican citizens, not only inroads can be made into the alleviation of poverty, but a new hope can be generated within populations hitherto neglected. To this end, I would suggest that the infant, though fast-growing civil society organisations, can serve as the link between government and traditional societies.

Therefore, while not ignoring the needs of government, donor support should be given to the development of and capacity-building in third sector organisations, encouraging an informal framework within which democracy and finally legitimate governance can flourish. Civil organisations join together citizens from every stratum of society: participation on the part of the members is essential; best of all, it is not necessary to wait for a bureaucrat to say ‘yea’ or ‘nay’.

In the whole of Africa, voluntary organisations have doubled and in some cases even tripled since the early 1980s. In part, this phenomenon reflects donor discouragement with developing countries’ governmental credibility. It also speaks of the growing interest of citizens to actively participate in community processes. In Mozambique, as of 1996, 240 non-governmental and community institutions were listed as being engaged in some kind of activity. Of these, 25 per cent were national organisations which is an increase from 0 per cent (with the exception of the Red Cross) from the mid-80s. I cannot say at this moment how many of the national civil groups depend on outside funding, but those which are truly functional follow the current international pattern—northern NGOs fund their southern sisters as well as operate their own programs, representing an estimated 14 per cent of net disbursement of Western aid to developing countries (1970 through 1993). Looking at these figures, it is not to be wondered at if donors who are analysing their development cooperation programs also think about the role the NGOs might play.

There is even reason to believe that in Mozambique and in the Southern Africa region, the participation of civil society forces in societal development is going to increase. Mozambique is, indeed, delayed in forming quality organisations for some of the same reasons that a governmental branch confronts difficulties. Operational policies are weak. Personnel is inexperienced. Organisational infrastructure is, in most cases, non-existent.
On the other hand, the people who establish and then participate in projects/programmes have a fundamental interest in what they are doing; otherwise they would not even be in the group. Enthusiasm is genuine. Exceptionally important, although the founder(s) may hail from a middle-level elite, is the involvement and reliance on grass-roots level participants—common people within their own environment. It is the rule and an absolute necessity. If the national NGO does not embrace the village or the suburban population, it dries up. This is a distinct advantage in keeping the civil society market cleaned up, for though a group’s name may be on the roster of organisations, no attention needs to be paid to it if it is non-functional, an outcome which is very different from the government bureaucrat who may be redundant or dysfunctional but does not disappear together with his/her ineptitude.

I earnestly believe that the necessary multiplicity of links with the grass-roots level can be carried out by civil organisations. Thus, the pride of ethnicity need not be taboo; it could be constructively and naturally used to enlist the cooperation of the people and eventually better their economic and social situation. If such a positive scenario develops, if the poverty of rural and urban populations is seen to be of interest to others than just themselves and is finally attenuated, the conflict component of ethnic division may diminish. Ethnic and regional divisions exist in Mozambique. Not talking about it will not make it go away. A people in anguish will go to their ethnic roots for comfort because it is in the soul and need not be purchased. It behoves those interested in peace and in whatever obtainable paradigm of a democratic social order, to be knowledgeable about ethnicity and to use it positively when it manifests itself. Every single Mozambican has an ethnic background, is aware of it, and today, even exploits it. This is the picture of our situation and it would be foolish to try to ignore this fundamental reality.

It would be incorrect to think that civil society can replace the state. It cannot. It can, however, give the state more time to organise itself, to do some house-cleaning and discover new methods for fulfilling its priorities. Citizen associations, with their functioning ties to traditional society, on the one hand and their better understanding, and more cooperative attitude towards government, on the other, can be the bridge so necessary at this point of Mozambican contemporary history. There is a need to build a healthy nation-state, but it takes a very long time, and patience, and peace. Abrahamsson and Nilsson, in their excellent book speak about the difficulties of forming an education policy and wrote lines that can be aptly applied to every area of our development: “The difficulties in developing a comprehensive and coherent strategy should also be understood in the light of the ongoing transition from war to peace and the political instability and insecurity that the country is currently facing. ... The failure of the modernisation strategy and the search for an alternative strategy, which is more
territorially oriented and which integrates the vision of modernisation with the prevailing cultural/traditional values, make this formulation a very complex process indeed”. Mozambique needs time to find this process and reconstruct itself if it is not to follow the road Rwanda and Bosnia.

Civil society, given an adequate scope to develop, can complement the roles of the state and the market in national, social and economic development. It must work in partnership with the government and the private sector and initiate and maintain a dialogue with national government representatives and donors.

When comparing levels of sophistication of development among the state, the private sector and civil associations in Mozambique, the latter group is definitely the weakest and needs strengthening. It is worthwhile, even urgent to do so, although the framework within which this can be done needs to be thoroughly discussed among the various actors. In its promotion of a democratic society, the Mozambican government has not put obstacles in the path of the development of civil associations. If these have lacked support, it has been rather an incapacity to do so rather than a decided policy. In a somewhat laissez-faire environment, civil society organisations have made mistakes essentially different from those that government usually makes and on a far smaller scale. Compared to government’s needs, a little goes a long way when dealing with the civil sector.

There is more than sufficient space for the functioning of the third (civil) sector. Northern NGOs should be encouraged to be gradually less operative and help in the capacity-building exercise needed for healthy growth in their southern counterparts. As recipients have, of necessity, listened to donors, the donors need to keep an ear open to the goals and aspirations of the recipients even though they may seem to be off the beaten track. The fact is that grass-root populations reside off the beaten track and undoubtedly their solutions are not necessarily those of their more modern donor friends. Like putting clean sugar into a deep bodily wound to substitute for alcohol—it works just as well, perhaps better. Although the culture may be different, the actors care about the larger society and responsible citizens who are looking for ways to put into practice what the more complex analysts call sustainable development with a human face.

We need to put together our respective experiences in civil organisation in a massive dialogue in order to learn from each other, donor and recipient. We need to discuss our roles. And last but certainly not least, we need to have confidence in one another that we are participating with the common people to satisfy their own economic and social needs.

Donors, Recipients and Beneficiaries in Civil Society

In the previous section, it was suggested that the inclusion of civil organisations in peace-keeping strategies is vital to the emergence of a democratic
society, giving time to the (re)organised government to claim legitimacy where confidence has been eroded or destroyed. This is especially so among populations that are more distant from the central structures and that have difficulty in perceiving the existence of government as a viable force.

A handy definition of civil society is offered by Olara Otunu: the space between the state and the individual. It is the functioning of the donor/recipient relationship in this “space” that is here being examined.

A few Northern governments, like that of Sweden, possess a higher percentage of genuine interest in the development process of Southern societies and take the time to analyze transitional periods in war-torn countries, whether that war be armed conflict, war against poverty or war against disease and illiteracy. Repair to a damaged people is less costly if done sooner rather than later, before the global price for all peoples in lives and money reaches unmanageable proportions.

A society recovering from armed conflict faces many tasks, some of them desperately urgent such as the removal of land mines and the consolidation of internal security. These are specialised activities that go on for some time even while the groundwork for vitalising the society begins to take shape. Ways to help a country function again, no matter what the sector, vary according to basic indicators that characterised the country before the conflict began. Yet there is one cooperation attribute which is common—recovery is not rapid and therefore donors should look at a long time-frame in the donor-recipient relationship.

The effectiveness of that relationship in large part depends upon the depth of mutual understanding existing in the partnership. Just as the Northern donor usually possesses the means through staff and study to know a recipient, the Southern recipient should be helped to understand the changing problems of the donor—political, economic and social—through frank dialogue. Also, perceiving important cultural differences between the actors helps to smooth a bumpy road. This understanding, together with personal relationships that are built with frequent contact and continuity of carefully selected personnel, lessen the eventuality of either player being caught off-balance, a situation detrimental to confidence-building. Sympathetic awareness promotes flexibility in funding, an important consideration donors should remember during the planning process.

The long time-frame mentioned above has an ultimate objective which needs to be accepted by both partners: to build the capacity of the public sector and the private sector (those organisations occupying the “space” between the state and the individual) so that they may fully accept their responsibility as instruments of stability in a development process, the latter specifically at the grass root level. Donor fatigue notwithstanding, the most important consideration is to decrease donor-dependency. More easily said than done. Yet that time must come if government and civil society organi-
sations within a Third World country truly wish to weigh their options and make their own decisions.

Is there a formula for fashioning a cooperative strategy between cooperating partners to achieve the desired goal? Yes, if employed with contextual flexibility.

The Synergos Institute working in Latin America is interested in the role that civil society organisations can “play” in complementing the roles of the state and the market in national, social and economic development” (The Synergos Institute, 1996). It was determined that a first step was to examine the status and needs of civil society, exploring what measures should be taken to strengthen these organisations to enable them to address poverty and social development.

Consultations among national government representatives, regional organisations, social leaders, banks and donor agencies proved that several lessons were to be learned in the consultative process:

- Civil society-governmental partnership is possible and can be effective.
- Civil society-(regional) bank partnership is possible and can be effective.
- Consultations deliver information about civil society, point out opportunities and obstacles, suggest mechanisms for cooperation and follow-up.
- Consultations forge a common language.
- Consultations prove the viability of a multi-sector approach.

Except in the case of a heavy-handed government which does not interest itself in the basic questions of poverty and development, the consultative process can be employed in Africa, undoubtedly with the same success.

In Mozambique, a country with a growing but inexperienced civil society, a foreign NGO endeavours to do networking among national and foreign NGOs. Working for several years at this task, a series of recommendations have been set out for recipient and donor in the development of national civil society organisations (Conferencia, 1996).

In the first place, problems faced by NGOs and donors are in the areas of planning, monitoring and evaluation. Too often there is a lack of implicit or explicit strategy between the partners as well as a lack of clear objectives in the project and its organisation.

Secondly, problems in reporting, transparency and control are often due to a lack of planning. Most interesting, and obviously a strong factor in consolidating democratic processes, the local NGO must train the beneficiary (perhaps the village dweller or the inhabitants of an urban ghetto) to take a controlling role. Additionally, as mentioned previously, donors should inform their cooperating recipients about their own policies, priorities and norms. In the absence of such information and communication, there fails to develop a dialogue between the NGO and the donor in the planning process.
When an agreement is drawn up between recipient and donor, the planning, reporting and sustainability of the programme/project are often weak in formulation and design. Presently, a typical agreement deals with general organisational objectives, outlines a limited monitoring programme and deals with only a short-term contract. A donor’s frustration may often centre on his own administrative budget constraints and a lack of investment in the donor organisation.

Finally, there are principles and options that can guide the development practices for civil society organisations, the recipients and the donors:

1. There are rights and duties in the exchange between the NGO and the donor. The objectives and needs of beneficiaries should mould the design of intervention projects and service delivery, that is, transparency.
2. NGOs must develop effective processes for planning, monitoring and evaluation.
3. Beneficiaries, NGOs and donors need to develop realistic plans and budgets to obtain the required resources for the objectives.
4. Affirmative action policies to benefit and strengthen least favoured groups must be supported by specific activities and resources and should be situated within a policy of resource development.
5. Donors need to adopt agreement formats to suit the needs and objectives of the NGO, that is, allow for more flexibility.
6. Ways of channelling funds to a civil organisation and the recipient should be adapted to the level of development of the beneficiary, that is, the process of planning.
7. Donors, NGOs and beneficiaries should develop their objectives taking into account the sustainability of help to the beneficiary, that is, the process of planning.
8. Effective agreements that have time limits need to provide a termination administration for financing, and preventing interruptions in financing.
9. Donors and recipient must identity their respective roles and responsibilities to effectively support the entire financing project.
10. Donors, NGOs and the recipient must agree on transparency of objectives, activities and resources.

To implement the above principles, capacity-building is essential.

Summarising the development financing process, one sees the need for a code of conduct, a “learning” atmosphere, capacity-building, a fund for institutional development, better administrative effectiveness on the side of the donors and a close and constant evaluation of the financial and human resources of donor and recipient, present and future.

The ideas outlined above present challenges to recipient and donor alike. Every collaborator needs to have the vision of the mission to be
accomplished. When that occurs, the flowers of respect and friendship will grow in the landscape of democracy.

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A Changed “Aid Relationship”—One Practical Experience

Narciso Matos

Introduction

Having participated in a conference held in Abidjan in early 1997, and jointly organised by the Swedish government, the Nordic Africa Institute, and the African Development Bank, I was much encouraged by the climate that prevailed throughout that meeting. A “no business as usual” attitude seemed to permeate each and every participant, and this made the event very instructive and rewarding. It was, therefore, with much pleasure and enthusiasm that I accepted the invitation to develop some notes that had been prepared for the Abidjan conference about my direct experiences as former Rector of the University of Eduardo Mondlane (UEM) in Mozambique, and thus share some of the lessons learned with a greater audience.

UEM Experience in University Revitalisation

Background

Mozambique, with a population of about 18 million and a territory of 800,000 square kilometres, can briefly be described as follows:

– it is emerging from a 15-year long destructive war of aggression, that claimed about 1 million lives, forced almost one third of the population to refugee camps in the neighbouring countries, and literally destroyed the country’s education and health facilities. In some provinces, the collapse of the economic and social fabric of the society was imminent;

– it is going through a difficult but steady peace process accelerated in 1992 by a peace agreement signed between the government and the former rebel movement, which was followed by constitutional changes and multi-party elections in 1994, universally declared free and fair;

– it has inherited from the civil war, some 90,000 men and women with military training who were demobilised and provided with means which were scarcely sufficient for survival and starting a new life. Most
of these are today part of the huge number of unemployed citizens, the majority of whom are young men and women;
- it has given priority to the resettlement of the population in the rural areas and is creating conditions for access to clean water, schools, hospitals, roads and new jobs.

One of the main constraints facing Mozambique in this new start is the scarcity of skilled manpower in virtually every profession. Despite the enormous efforts devoted to education and training since independence in 1975, the country has today less then 4,000 university graduates, as exemplified by the number of medical doctors (below 300), lawyers (below 100), veterinary surgeons (below 200), etc. At the same time the number of new university graduates each year remains at the low level of about 350 (220 graduates from the main and, by far, the largest university in 1995/6, with medicine accounting for 32, engineering 25, law 38, agriculture 12, etc.).

Higher education is currently provided in three public institutions with a total enrolment of about 8,000 students, namely at the University Eduardo Mondlane (UEM) with an enrolment of 5,200 students at the beginning of the academic year 1995/96, the Pedagogic University (UP), with about 2,000 students, and the Institute for International Relations (ISRI), with about 500. The intake of freshmen is limited to about 1,100 places (900 at UEM, 150 at UP, 50 at ISRI), even though the number of applicants is about four and half times the places available.

This high demand also explains the emergence in the past two years of three private higher education institutions. These are relatively small and offer a total enrolment of about 300 students in a few selected areas which are in great demand such as business administration, computer science, sociology, as well as religious studies.

University Reform

By 1990, the country still faced the destructive effects of the civil war, the economy was stagnant or declining, a structural adjustment programme (SAP) introduced in 1986 was not yet yielding tangible results, but its negative impact over the public sector, education, health and social services in general was already severely felt. In this context, the University Eduardo Mondlane, then with 2,900 students (24.7% female), 457 academicians (308, i.e. 67% nationals, only 10 PhD holders, 196 licenciados), and 1,272 technical and support staff (3% with university degrees and 70% with less than 6 years of basic schooling), was facing severe problems. These included staff retention, overall poor learning environment, deteriorating quality of educa-

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tion and research, low student intake, soaring dropout rates, insufficient public funding which in real terms was decreasing, and despite a reduction of salaries of over 30 per cent, delays in remunerating employees. Ironically, the university’s considerable success in attracting donor funding had placed it in an unsustainable position of receiving about 50 per cent of recurrent budget and 75 per cent of investment funding from external sources. The university, leadership recognised at this time that a new strategy was imperative if the UEM was to continue to fulfil its unique mission of providing the country with desperately needed university-trained personnel.

Planning Process

A thorough survey and a plan of action for the period 1991–2000 was therefore prepared. Initially, this was undertaken as a result of an internal and participative process which included all the senior leadership of the university, from rector to faculty deans, heads of departments and the planning office, senior professors, administrative staff and students. The results were summarised in a document entitled Perspectives for the Development of the Eduardo Mondlane University.

This first document was then submitted to and reviewed by constituent groups in each academic department, and their comments and recommendations were incorporated in a first draft of a document called Present and Perspectives.

Present and Perspectives was then used for intensive consultations with the Ministries of Planning, Finance, and Education to ensure the support of the government for the structural and financial implications of the plan. The strategic plan was afterwards publicly presented to representatives of the academic community, government, private and social sectors and donors at a Consultative Meeting held in May 1991.

The plan contained a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the shortcomings of the university in staff development and retention, student performance, research output, extension and other services to the community. It analysed the student population and students’ study and living conditions, as well as their origin. It analysed the composition, functions and qualifications of the administrative staff and their ratios to students and academic staff. The plan also addressed the administrative and financial management structures of the university.

Objectives of the Plan

The strategy for the future had the following objectives:

- to stabilise the institution by tackling the main causes of the problems affecting academic and administrative staff;
- to improve the performance of the university in relation to its main functions of training, research, extension and service to the community;
- to improve the learning and living conditions of students, and achieve higher internal efficiency by increasing the student intake and reducing the number of student dropouts;
- to improve equity in terms of gender, class and regional background of students, by providing scholarships, more places in student hostels, and by offering up-grading entry courses to enhance the rates of success of underprivileged groups;
- to improve the quality of education and research through post-graduate training and review of the curricula and study programmes of the courses offered at the institution;
- to support the development of faculties, departments and research centres, giving priority to the faculties responsible for courses most in demand;
- to strengthen the capacity of research centres, including the development of their financial sustainability; and
- to improve the internal management of the university and the links between the university and government, private sector, other stakeholders and community at large.

Most Significant Achievements

To fulfil these goals, it was necessary to undertake profound changes in the structure and governance of the university, and in the internal regulations for academic and administrative activities. The process required and eventually led to the approval by parliament of a National Law on Higher Education, followed by approval by the government of a new charter for the UEM itself.

Internally, the University Council was adjusted to include representatives of government, private sector and personalities selected on their own merit, making up one third of the council. The remaining seats were filled with academicians, non-academic staff, students and senior university administrators.

The Academic Council was reshaped to include proportional representation of the areas covered in education and research at the institution, and a number of faculty deans. New regulations and procedures were enacted among other things, for admission and promotion of staff, for access to post-graduate training, for admission of students and allocation of scholarships and for the operation of the research centres.

Institutional reporting and accountability were strengthened with the production and wide circulation, for the first time in the institution, of annual reports and audited comprehensive financial statements. These, together with Annual Plans of Activity were presented in annual Consultative
Meetings which all major internal and external stake-holders were invited to attend.

The admission process for students was refined and the performance in each course monitored. Graduation ceremonies were introduced as annual features and statistics on graduates were published. The number of graduates per course, gender, province of origin, marks achieved, average time spent until graduation, and dropout rates were made available to the public.

Academic staff members were sent for masters and PhD courses abroad, or engaged in sandwich programmes and pedagogic training. Several in-service and professional courses were organised for administrative staff, and some were sent for university training in fields of interest for the development of the management capacity of the institution.

In general, a process of renovation and expansion of physical facilities was started, with particularly in respect of student hostels, laboratories and libraries. Negotiations with government resulted in the approval of a 100 per cent increase in the salaries of academic staff, which then became twice as high as the salaries of civil servants with equivalent qualifications.

Reporting and Donor Coordination

The relatively high number of donors supporting the UEM was and remains its main source of survival, but it is also a liability that requires time and effort to deal with properly. Understandably, for each donor it is important to have an overview of the development process and general direction of the institution, as it is important to receive accurate information about the specific project or programme funded. Progress and final reports, and audited financial statements are contractually required in defined formats and on specific dates. For an institution with over 34 donors of different kinds in 1990, reporting was, therefore, a cumbersome and very demanding exercise.

The UEM made a conscious effort to “coordinate” its donors. These were asked to accept the institutional annual report and audited financial statements as essential components of the reports to be presented to them. The university volunteered to improve the reports in accordance with suggestions from donors, and to incorporate as much detail as required to make them acceptable to as many donors as possible. The goal was to achieve a standardised reporting and evaluation procedure designed to reduce the administrative burden of preparing one report for each grant. In addition to the annual and financial reports the UEM also volunteered to provide further specific information as required by each donor.

Donors were also asked to be more flexible and to provide core funding, to allow the university to decide and set priorities for the use of the resources made available. These proposals were only accepted to a very minimal degree, and by 1995 only SAREC, Sida, NORAD, the Government of the Netherlands and the World Bank had responded positively to the initia-
tive, whereas most donors maintained or were even tightening their reporting requirements and even fewer accepted the idea of core funding.

Relations with Swedish Institutions

From the early days of independence Swedish assistance to the balance of payments support programmes has been extremely important, not only in terms of the volume of resources made available to the economy of Mozambique, but also due to the concessional conditions which allowed the government to carry out its economic and social programmes without the conditions which accompany financial resources obtained from sources like the Bretton Woods Institutions. Bilaterally Sweden has also been very supportive, traditionally, to social programmes in education and health where, among other things long term assistance for capacity building in higher education has been provided.

SAREC excelled in support for research capacity building. Starting in a period where hardly any national had post-graduate or other kind of research experience, SAREC made available much needed resources for training both within the institution and in other cases in more advanced centres in Sweden and elsewhere. Assistance provided in-country allowed also for training of support staff, for renovating and up-grading research facilities, for acquisition of equipment and books, for international contacts with peers and participation in scientific conferences. Over the years, the programme evolved from assistance to social sciences on to health, natural sciences and engineering, covering virtually all subject areas offered at the university. It also developed into comprehensive assistance to research programmes and teams at department and faculty levels. SAREC created for itself an important position in the dialogue between the UEM and the donor community, and indeed played a major role through the development of capacity at the level of the central administration of the institution. More specifically, SAREC helped through the development of capacity for research coordination and for institutional reporting.

Sida joined the donors assisting the UEM in 1992, and provided support in a rather innovative way. Jointly with the university administration, it conducted a study about the most basic and priority needs of the institution and came up with a Core or Institutional Support programme to address the minimum requirements for improving overall performance. This was translated into a 3 year-cycle of budget support, covering maintenance of equipment and facilities, student scholarships and welfare, funds for training of academic, technical and administrative staff and recurrent costs. On the investment side, Sida provided funds for the construction of new student hostels. It also provided financing for a distance masters degree course in finance and business administration run by the University of London in partnership with the UEM.
Salary Support and Incentives

One area donors never ventured to support is salary funding. Yet, low and non-competitive salaries are known to be one of the causes of the decline of the public sector and universities in Africa. But this is an area considered taboo by each and every donor. In this, the UEM never managed to engage donors in any substantive dialogue.

Main Lessons

The strategic planning exercise has been very beneficial for the university. It has created a more open and supportive working environment based on internal consensus. The plan itself has been extensively used for fund raising purposes. A fledgling consultative group of donors has been convened at UEM’s initiative in the effort to improve information flows, rationalise funding and streamline evaluation and reporting procedures.

In 1997 the UEM has achieved most of the goals stated above, and is a much larger institution with a teaching staff of 689 (annual growth 16%), a student body of 5,200 (annual growth 10.7%) and non-academic staff of 1,414 (growth 4.2%). 9 per cent of the Mozambican teaching staff hold PhD, 22 per cent masters, and 68 per cent licenciatura degrees. While the intake of students remains at about 900 freshmen, the quality of the students admitted has improved significantly, as indicated by the marks achieved at the entry exams in all subjects; the number of graduates, annually now at 220, has been increasing slowly but steadily in the past seven years. The number and quality of research projects and researchers involved have also improved.

Despite serious constraints faced by the university, its renewed vigour is reflected by the fact that currently a new cycle of planning geared towards adjusting the goals of the institution for the coming three years is again under way and its initial phase was completed by June 1997.

Relevance of UEM Experience to Development Cooperation

The experience of the UEM is certainly specific and arguably limited. However, it allows those who have been involved in it to regard cooperation and what is today called Development Cooperation with a perspective worth sharing.

From Aid to Partnership

Today aid and development assistance are increasingly under political pressure and clearly on the decrease. A projection of cooperation for the next two decades or so must be based on an entirely different paradigm.
Notwithstanding the time required for a successful transition from the current aid dependency to new forms of cooperation, one would expect and envisage new partnerships to be developed among increasingly equal partners, something which would work and be successful because all stakeholders would have a sense of benefiting at some stage and in some form.

Among the elements which can contribute to building these partnerships are mutual understanding and trust between the persons representing the parties. There must be openness to value the cultural differences and to discuss frankly the interests pursued.

The leadership of the parties also needs to commit itself to promoting cultural exchanges and accepting differences. There has to be agreement to address global issues such as democracy, human rights, global security, peace, environmental protection, population growth and food security, etc. reaching beyond the specific framework of the prevailing or envisaged cooperation; to promote international relations geared towards a new world order, whereby large and small countries, strong and weak nations are equally respected; to recognise that in realist-politics partnerships also serve to pursue the strategic national interests, to develop new markets, and to protect and enlarge linguistic, cultural and economic spheres of influence.

A working partnership has to emphasise the need to create an enabling socio-economic environment. Attention has to be paid to the promotion of the fundamentals for national and regional, hence global, socio-political stability, as well as to laying the foundations for sustained and steady economic growth, which requires cooperation over long periods of time and through successes and difficulties.

To ensure long-term sustainability a proper institutional and legal framework needs to be put in place, whereby the linkages with other activities, structures and management levels are well defined. Sustainability is best improved by building the capacity in the institution. This requires ownership of project design and implementation and avoidance of aid dependency by defining clearly the time-frames and the results expected for each phase of the programme, as well as the time to phase out and move on to new initiatives. In the process of building human and institutional capacity, one can never overemphasise the importance of supporting higher education institutions.

Bilateral Relations

Multilateral institutions like the World Bank and IMF are important and sometimes determinant in the policy formulation of African countries. Sweden as a member of these institutions has had a positive influence on their policies. Particularly the attention that Sweden has given to education, health and to the social sectors is very commendable and should be continued.
Another dimension to consider is assisting African countries by reducing or eliminating the burden of external debt. The magnitude of this problem is such that bilateral assistance can complement the relief that the Highly Indebted Poor Income Countries’ Initiative might bring to some countries on the continent.

This emphasises the importance of bilateral relations, that should never be neglected, subordinated to or substituted by relations established under the umbrella of multilateral institutions. Bilateral relations provide a very suitable interface for dialogue and mutual understanding. Besides, many important aspects of national development cannot be entirely covered in the agendas of multilateral dialogues, and can only be appropriately dealt with within a government to government, people to people relationship. It goes without saying that the needs, especially in the social sectors, are so great that the intervention of multilateral institutions must be complemented by country to country agreements. Bilateral relations should therefore be furthered, and also used for consultations about issues which can best be handled in multilateral settings.

Regional and Sub-Regional Integration

Globalisation of trade and the evolution into a world market in recent years has been accompanied by the strengthening of regional groupings such as the EU, ASEAN and NAFTA. Africa cannot survive and thrive as an economic entity unless regional integration on the continent is developed. The existence of groupings such as ECOWAS, in West Africa, SADC, in Southern Africa, COMESA/PTA, in Eastern Africa, the CFA-zone, and others, offers some hope. An international policy pointing to the future should consider the strategic importance of these groupings and envisage consultation and mutual cooperation with them. A special place should be reserved for Africa-wide regional institutions like the OAU and the ADB. These are singularly endowed to understand—or to develop understanding of—the African situation, problems and alternative solutions, in a better fashion than broader institutions such as the UN, the World Bank, IMF and similar world organisations. African regional organisations should therefore be encouraged and helped to develop themselves as the first “external” party to “intervene” in problems faced by African countries, and to offer models and advice to other international institutions. Their understanding of African history and values, and the wealth of information and knowledge they possess should be tapped and put to good use for the benefit of the continent.

Content and Focus of Cooperation

To be effective, bilateral assistance and cooperation must be focused. The capacity to prevail for a period long enough to generate societal impact—
which reaches beyond programme results—and the need to devote ade-
quately resources to the programmes of cooperation require prioritisation. 
Mention was made of the unique role played by Sweden (and other like 
minded countries) in the development of social services in African countries 
such as Mozambique. The practical experience accumulated in this process; 
the need for development of education, health and civil society institutions 
for many years to come; the recognition of the fact that in Africa only the 
public sector is in a position to provide schools, vaccinations, disease control 
mechanisms, family planning and other health and community services to 
the overwhelming majority of the population, who cannot afford to access 
the very few and very expensive private providers; the acceptance of the 
fact that NGOs, national and foreign, can play an even more valuable role if 
properly coordinated and as a compliment to well established national sys-
tems and never as alternative to government institutions; all this together 
underlines the importance of cooperation and support to the public social 
sector.

At the same time, it needs to be considered that after decades of invest-
ment in state enterprises and in the public sector of the economy, for reasons 
beyond the scope of this presentation, it is today widely accepted that eco-
nomic and social progress in Africa requires the development of a strong 
private sector. Indeed, most of the agricultural production and of trade, in-
cluding that across borders, is developed by family and/or private small 
entrepreneurs, particularly by African women, who constitute over 50 per 
cent of the population and of the active work force in Africa. The missing 
element so far is the recognition of this centuries-long tradition and the 
provision by governments of an adequate and conducive environment for 
their development. The “informal sector” in Africa, despite government re-
strictions and attempts at “taming it”, is the most lively sector of African 
economies, providing self- and family employment and sources of revenue 
and survival in many cases to over 80 per cent of the population, in particu-
lar in the rural areas. It is therefore good policy to recognise this and search 
for ways and means to promote small and large scale private initia-
tives. A complementary avenue to promoting productivity is to encourage the par-
ticipation of the Swedish private sector in the emerging markets of Africa, and 
to help governments build enabling environments in which private 
initiative can thrive.

One further aspect relates to the selection of sub-regions or countries for co-
operation. It has to be acknowledged that no country, however wealthy she 
might be, has the human and financial resources to engage in relevant and 
at the same time unlimited cooperation. In this regard the choices made by 
Sweden to cooperate preferentially—and we assume not exclusively—with 
some regions and countries in Africa seem understandable and worth con-
tinuing. Fewer links that work and are effective are better than many small 
and ineffective interventions.
Higher Education and Research

The divide between affluent societies and developing countries today has less to do with availability of natural resources than with the quality and the productivity of the work force. Large numbers of expatriates, as is still the case in Mozambique and at the UEM (currently 20%), can only contribute to development in a limited way and during bridging periods, but are costly and are not the ultimate key to the development of Africa. The parallel between the contribution of expatriates and relief programmes cannot be avoided, as relief programmes too can never be confused with development programmes. In the long run Africa will regain control of her destiny by providing each and every African country with indigenous African experts, sufficient in number, adequate in training and skills and wide in coverage of all sectors of societal endeavour.

This can only be achieved through long term investment in basic education and vocational/professional training—education must therefore be seen as an investment and not as a costly expenditure (it is well known that ignorance is much more expensive). As the provision of education by the private sector in Africa is still weak and marginal, this can only minimally—although not to be neglected—contribute to educating the African women and men required in the future of the continent. It remains therefore the overwhelming responsibility of governments to articulate cooperation agreements that pay due attention to education.

In this context Higher Education and Research and the universities and research centres responsible for them deserve major support in their efforts to revitalise their activities and adjust their missions to community and societal demands. As only Higher Education and Research can provide the knowledge base and the man and woman-power necessary to bring about development, the unique role that Sweden has played in the past and can continue to play in encouraging and supporting development in this direction is worth to note. Special attention should be given to models of regional cooperation and research, developed by institutions in Africa determined to combine efforts and to pull together the often scarce human and financial resources at their disposal, while at the same time being devoted to achieving economies of scale.

Like-Minded Group

Experience with Swedish cooperation policy has revealed its proximity to that of other Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands and Canada. The role of Sweden individually and of other like-minded countries within the World Bank, IMF and similar institutions deserves to be underlined. Continued coordination with like-minded countries and pro-active interventions in the
multilateral arena can provide much needed support to put across policies that serve the development of Africa.

Final Remarks

The author wishes to thank the Swedish Government and the Nordic Africa Institute for their invitation to share these views. It is also commendable that a country like Sweden should seek the views of less well-off partners in its quest to reformulate its policy towards Africa. It is this very approach and openmindedness that is the basis of what some of us regard as the human-sensitive society that we desire as an alternative to the neo-liberal doctrines of this era of quasi-total imperium.

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Towards a New Partnership—Partnership between the Tanzania Government and the Nordic Countries

Sam Wangwe

Background and Context

During the first five post-independence years (1961–1966), foreign and local private investments were expected to bring about growth and development in Tanzania. When the expected foreign finance was not realised, the Arusha Declaration (1967) was charted out with emphasis being placed on self-reliance. It was envisaged that foreign aid would be mobilised and utilised to build the capacity for self-reliance. This can be regarded as the first attempt to redefine the perception on aid and to cultivate a partnership which would ultimately help to build the capacity for self-reliance.

Since then, Tanzania has been one of the foremost sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) recipients of bilateral aid especially during the 1970s and 1980s. Both bilateral and multilateral assistance to Tanzania increased greatly in the late 1960s and during the 1970s. The willingness of donors to extend substantial amounts of aid to Tanzania during the 1960s and the 1970s can be explained from two perspectives. First, Tanzania’s development policies pursued during that time were fairly congruent with the dominant views of the social democrats in the North. Second, Tanzania was considered to be strategically important in terms of foreign policy considerations.

According to OECD data, the volume of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Tanzania, is estimated to account for over 80 per cent of net total inflows of external capital, suggesting that private capital inflows have been negligible. The annual disbursement of ODA rose from US$51 million in 1970 to a peak of US$1,151 million in 1990 after which the volume of aid has declined gradually to US$ 814 in 1995 (UNDP, 1997).

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1 I would like to thank Ms. Lorah Madete of ESRF who provided research assistance for this study.
Aid in the 1970s was largely project aid geared to filling the widening investment-saving gap and the related foreign exchange gap which were propelled by an ambitious state-led investment programme along the lines of the basic industry strategy of 1974. The earlier concentration of aid in investment projects was consistent with the requirements of such an ambitious investment programme. The role played by aid at that point in time was in line with the development economics doctrine which postulated an important role for foreign capital in promoting growth in capital shortage economies like Tanzania. Buttressed on the Harrod-Domar type of model, injection of capital in the form of project aid was expected to promote growth and development. Towards the end of the 1970s and in the early 1980s it was increasingly becoming clear that value added from new investments was limited because of the declining capacity to import the needed intermediate inputs and to meet other recurrent expenditure requirements at a time when the balance of payments deficit and budget deficit were growing at alarming rates.

In response to this situation two major changes were initiated in the donor programmes. First, there was a shift in emphasis from project to programme aid. This shift was prompted partly by the growing balance of payments problems and the declining utilisation of capacity in the industrial and other sectors to a level as low as between 10 per cent and 20 per cent during the early 1980s. These developments were perceived as a manifestation of the unsatisfactory performance of project assistance and the realisation that import support would be needed to raise the level of output. Increased output would originate from enhancement of the capacity to import intermediate inputs which would raise the level of utilisation of capacities in enterprises which, in many cases, had been created through project aid. The second change involved a shift towards financing in the form of recurrent budget support (e.g. DANIDA’s Essential Drugs Programme; Sida’s support for school textbook production and NORAD’s maintenance support to the Institute of Development Management (IDM) at Mzumbe). This shift was a response to the growing awareness that insufficient allocations to recurrent expenditure in the government budget had become a more binding constraint to the delivery of output and other services than allocations to the development budget. It is in this context that bilateral donors have also been shifting from financing new capital projects to the rehabilitation of existing projects and mechanisms to ease maintenance problems. In both cases the Nordic countries were in the forefront in making these shifts with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of aid.

By the mid-1980s the expected improvement from the shift towards rehabilitations of existing capacities and import support (or balance of payments support) was running out of steam. For quite some time in the early 1980s the Nordic countries continued to support Tanzania in the expectation
that these shifts in forms of aid would turn around the declining aid performance. Various donors were supporting changes in macro-economic policies as proposed by the International Financial Institutions. The Nordic countries were the last group of donors to join those donors who were advocating change of macro-economic policies.

By 1984 it was clear that the Nordic countries were supporting the adoption of economic policy reforms as a way of improving the environment under which aid was being administered. During a Nordic/Tanzania seminar in 1984 the Nordic countries levelled strong criticism at Tanzania’s economic policies. By 1985 the Nordic countries were quite explicit in urging Tanzania to adopt the IMF proposed economic policy reform programme.

Policy Reforms and Resumed Development Assistance

Following the conclusion of an agreement between Tanzania and the IFIs in 1986 aid flows resumed increasing from a low level of US$477 million in 1985 to a peak of US$1,151 million in 1990. This resumption of aid flows is a reflection of confidence among the donors in the improved policy environment. It was perceived that aid effectiveness would rise with improvements in the macro-economic policy environment. The rise in aid flows, however, is likely to face limits in the future. After 1990 the level of aid has been declining, reaching US$ 814 million in 1995.

It should be pointed out that the resumption of aid flows from 1986 occurred at a time when aid relations had been influenced by an extended period of strained negotiations in the first half of the 1980s. Having tried to formulate and implement the two earlier programmes (NESP 1981–1982 and SAP 1982/85) without success and without adequate donor support, Tanzania has tended to accommodate the influence of IMF/World Bank and the positions of other donors in her economic policy (especially since 1986). This tendency is sustained by the perception that disagreement with IMF/World Bank would induce not only withdrawal of IFIs’ support, but also that of other donors. This perception has influenced the relations between Tanzania and the donors with Tanzania “shying away” from effective participation in the design and operation of aid projects and programmes a situation which has not facilitated progress towards ownership of her development programmes. Development assistance was therefore resumed in the context of a very low level of ownership of the development agenda.

Resumed Concerns about Development Cooperation

The background to the crisis in aid relations and its origin have been accompanied by an intensified concern about the effectiveness of aid. These concerns provide the context within which the initiative was taken to address a
new partnership in the relationship between Tanzania and the Nordic countries.

Concerns about Aid Effectiveness

During the late 1970s and in the course of 1980s, aid became increasingly exposed to criticism from both the political right and the left for various and often different reasons (Riddell, 1987). One response of bilateral and multi-lateral aid agencies was to give added emphasis to evaluation. During this period, the evaluation function became institutionalised, and most aid agencies established evaluation units within their administrative structures (Berlage, L. and O. Stokke, 1992).

In a recent comparative study on aid effectiveness in Africa (coordinated by the Overseas Development Council), the findings from seven countries which were covered in that study indicate that aid effectiveness has fallen below expectations. As regards the perception of the effectiveness of aid a recent opinion poll in Europe revealed limited confidence in the EU’s role in the allocation and management of aid (EU Newsletter, November 1996). In this context, about 40 per cent of those questioned thought that management of aid should be handed over to UN agencies in comparison to only 4 per cent who favoured a continued direct role of EU in the management of aid.

In the specific context of Tanzania these concerns about aid effectiveness led to several aid evaluation reports in the late 1980s and the first half of the 1990s. The evaluation reports of Norwegian Aid (1988), Swedish and Finnish Aid (1994) and Danish Aid (1995, 1997) all indicate that the level of aid effectiveness had fallen below expectations. One common thread which runs through all these reports is concern about the low level of sustainability and limited local ownership of the development programmes. The findings of several recent aid evaluation reports are consistent with the observation that both donors and the government of Tanzania have contributed to the problem of limited local ownership of development projects/programmes.

Various recent evaluation reports have expressed concern on this issue (e.g., Swedish, Finnish, Danish). For instance, Swedish aid policy of increasing the role of the recipient country has been difficult to achieve due to the weak capacity of Tanzania both economically and institutionally (Adam, et al., 1994). As a result many of the projects/programmes funded by Sweden have been donor-driven particularly with regard to financing and personnel. Consequently, responsibility for implementation has increasingly been taken away from the government of Tanzania. The Finnish Aid Evaluation Report (FINNIDA, 1995) also admits to a low level of local ownership of its aid assistance to Tanzania in the past. The report states: “In principle, Tanzania is involved in all phases of the project cycle. All the requests come from the Tanzanian side etc. All the missions are carried out by joint teams, as well as the selection of implementing agencies of projects”.

Towards a New Partnership
The report on Finnish aid, however proceeds to observe that the practice is different. Many difficulties arise at the implementation phase. The report concludes that the fact that implementation takes place within the local structures does not necessarily mean that implementation is not ‘donor-driven’. The report observes that there are reported cases where intrusive donor conditionality was imposed even at the level of implementation (FINNIDA, 1995). The findings of these aid evaluation reports are generalisable to most donor-Tanzania relations.

The importance of national ‘ownership’ of development projects and programmes, however great their external inputs, derives from its inherent appropriateness and efficacy. This fact is emphasised in the Helleiner report (1995) as well as the various donor agencies’ evaluation reports. According to these findings, projects and programmes that are locally owned by those who implement them have proved more likely to work and to be sustained. These observations are very valid and warrant high priority to be accorded to issues of enhancing local ownership of development policy and programmes.

As the Helleiner report has indicated, many initiatives originate from the donors, with only limited policy guidance from the Government of Tanzania. An example is given of a key policy document, the Policy Framework Paper (PFP) of 1994 which the report says appears to be a collaborative effort but ownership was dampened by two factors. First, the original draft was prepared in Washington. Second, after it was agreed the World Bank introduced new conditionalities during the negotiation of a new structural adjustment credit (Helleiner et al., 1995).

Crisis in Aid Relations

Concerns about the deterioration in relations between Dar es Salaam and the donor community led the Danish government to constitute (in mid-1994) a group of independent advisers to examine and advise on development cooperation issues between Tanzania and its aid donors. The work of this group produced a report popularly referred to as the Helleiner Report (1995). According to the Helleiner Report the crisis in aid relations was seen by many to originate with the long-standing failure of the Government of Tanzania to collect, as agreed, all of the counterpart funds arising from donors’ import support programmes. These arrears, which generated suspicions of corruption and have still not been fully dealt with, have been an important and continuing irritant to donors. Following the disappointing fiscal performance in the 1993/94 fiscal year, which led to the setting up of an IMF ‘shadow’ programme in the first half of 1994, Tanzania’s aid relationships began to worsen markedly. The situation was aggravated at a tense meeting between donors and the Finance Minister in March 1994.
Donors increasingly expressed longer-term disillusion, and the crisis resulted in suspension of aid to Tanzania from 1994.

The intensified concern about the effectiveness of aid to Tanzania was manifest in a series of substantial evaluations by the Nordic countries and the Netherlands of their Tanzanian aid programmes, which were initiated and completed in 1994 and discussed at a major conference in Dar es Salaam in January 1995.

The following are some of the issues which were raised at that conference:

- commodity import support may have alleviated shortages but did not deal with inefficiency in industries;
- limited fungibility of foreign aid and insufficient counterpart resources had contributed to reducing the effectiveness of aid;
- the problems of aid dependence had become more serious and sustainability of aid projects was not realised;
- domestic resource mobilisation was not being pursued aggressively enough. As indicated above, this perception by donors had culminated in suspension of aid in 1994 on the ground that Tanzania had not demonstrated sufficient efforts in tax revenue collection.

Each side had their views on this situation. On the side of the donor the Helleiner report indicates that the Government of Tanzania was to blame for weak performance, corruption and lack of will. On the side of the Government of Tanzania the report indicates that donors were to blame for making unrealistic and excessive demands on Tanzania, exerting too much influence on its development programmes and policy, not sharing information sufficiently and having no trust in Tanzania. In addition, like other recent evaluation reports, the Helleiner report placed emphasis on institutional development as an area of concern for aid effectiveness. The performance of a whole range of institutions—public sector agencies, financial institutions, educational systems and regional and local administration—needed to be revisited.

The Tanzania Government—Nordic Countries’ New Partnership

Context

A close development cooperation had persisted for the past three decades between Tanzania and the Nordic countries. The effectiveness of this cooperation had now come under close scrutiny. Most of the recent evaluation reports had questioned the effectiveness of aid and had made critical observations regarding the kind of partnership that had existed till then. The series of critical evaluation reports culminated in the Helleiner Report which took stock of major development cooperation issues in the Tanzania-donor relations as of 1994/95. As a follow-up to these reports a high level meeting
on the New Nordic-Tanzania Development Partnership was held in Dar es Salaam in September 1996. Representatives of the governments of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden met with representatives of the Government of Tanzania and agreed on the principle of establishing a new Nordic-Tanzania development partnership.

Contents of the Agreement

The new partnership envisaged between Tanzania and the Nordic countries contained the following:

- future cooperation would aim at eradication of poverty and enhancing peace and stability in Tanzania;
- the new partnership would be based on continued policy reform, democratisation, the fight against corruption, sustaining good governance, stability, increasing domestic resource mobilisation and reassessing the role of government;
- concerted efforts would be directed towards substantial reduction (or removal) of the debt burden and promotion of sustainable production induced growth;
- while sustaining assistance levels in the short and medium term, the partnership should aim at gradual replacement of “development assistance” with other forms of bilateral cooperation in the long run;
- partners agreed to establish and maintain a transparent system of dialogue and agreed to make long-term financial commitments;
- emphasis was to be placed on enhancing Tanzania’s institutional and human capacity to own the development agenda as it takes full responsibility of and becomes accountable for resources and programmes provided.

Most of these points were incorporated in the agreement made in a subsequent Tanzania-Donor meeting which was held in January 1997 between senior Tanzania government officials and representatives of all major donors.

Evaluation and Prospects for a Truly New Relationship

Implementation of the partnership will require action from the Tanzanian and the donor side. The most challenging part of the new relationship is that donors and recipients alike must not continue to conduct business as usual. Many current practices and relationships between them will need to change.
Tanzania to Take Ownership of Key Policy Documents

The Government of Tanzania needs to mobilise its capacities in the central and local government, in key policy institutions such as the Bank of Tanzania and mobilise other capacities outside government to make inputs into key policy documents. Effectiveness of local capacities would be enhanced if ample time was set apart for the preparation of important policy documents rather than preparing these in a rush to meet very short deadlines as has often been the practice in recent years. This task should be regarded as a normal and regular process in the government economic management system and not as an emergency. This implies that an institutional machinery for this process will need to be put in place. An interministerial team of experts which would have the mandate to mobilise technical support from elsewhere within or outside government as need arises, should be set up for this task.

Joint Ownership of Country Programmes

The process of preparing aid policies and strategies and country programmes by donors, should be done in collaboration with the recipient countries. The Helleiner Report suggests that this process should take into account the goals and priorities of the recipient and the donor. Also of importance is the participation by partners in recipient country administrations and civil society in the design of country programmes by virtue of their being prospective implementers of the programmes. Initiatives to enhance local ownership should cover all levels of development management. Local levels in particular will need to be given special attention. Strengthening of the prioritisation process based on consensus through the empowerment of the grass root institutions is needed to enable them to plan and implement their own development agenda.

Capacity Building

Building local human and institutional capacities should occupy the central position in all aid projects and programmes. Capacity building initiatives should address at least four concerns: improving conditions for capacity development, shifting gradually from aid to trade relations, relating technical assistance to local capacity building and enhancing capacity to manage development projects and programmes.

Capacity building efforts should be directed towards enhancing the government’s leadership role in economic management of various sectors by way of improving policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation. Planning, budgeting and accountancy management will also need to be strengthened as a prerequisite for greater accountability and local ownership of aid efforts. Technical assistance should be integrated into local
efforts towards capacity building so that it systematically complements and augments local capacities. Furthermore, capacity building should also include the strengthening of the local government, the regional and district administrations, community-based organisations, and NGOs for the purpose of promoting the society’s actual involvement and participation in development at all levels.

In the process of engaging in capacity building it should be recognised that capacity requirements are dynamic and change with the challenges of economic management. As such, the government should develop a framework for reviewing its capacity to manage the economy in a continuous manner in a changing environment.

Complete Resource Budgeting, Budget Reform and Economic Management

The process of planning and programming of the development projects and programmes is riddled with uncertainties of resource commitments (especially from donors). And since the budget is not transparent, this (non-transparency) is noted as one of the contributing factors to the practice of some donors directing funds to their own projects without integrating them into the programmes and budgets of the Government of Tanzania or, in most cases, even failing to provide the budgetary authorities with accurate and timely information about them. Donors could redress this situation by providing full information on resource commitments, say over a 3–5 year period, including making estimates of direct funds that would allow a higher degree of confidence in the planning and programming of these projects.

It is noted that the need to meet terms of policy conditionality—a budget frame acceptable to the World Bank/IMF—contributes to the excessive underbudgeting. The demands to abide within the budget ceilings override reason in realistic budgeting. The Helleiner Report recommended that immediate action is required to strengthen the Ministry of Finance to enable it to prepare realistic budgets, make better projections of revenues, impose strict financial control on accounting officers, and improve accounting of government expenditure. Top priority should be given to building the capacity for budget management in the Treasury. The authority of the Treasury in budgetary matters must be respected and protected by the highest level of national political leadership. These recommendations are still valid and should be implemented.

Dealing with Corruption

It is important for the government to be serious in fighting/combating corruption. There is a widespread perception of an increase in corruption in the
highest echelons of the government among donors and the Tanzanian public alike.

The move by the President to set up a special task force to look into the incidence of corruption, identify major areas where it is rife and come up with recommendations on how best to curb corruption, was a step in the right direction. The resulting report (the Warioba Report) is out and has been made public. What is awaited is the implementation of the recommendations of the task force in order to restore the credibility of the government in the eyes of the citizenry and of the taxpayers in the donor countries. The manner and extent of the implementation of the Warioba Report will have an important influence on developments towards a new partnership between Tanzania and the donors.

Accountability and Transparency

In the new partnership, the definition of aid accountability and transparency should be broadened to include the donor. Accountability and transparency in the management and control of aid should be a two-way process. In other words, the aid recipient should be accountable to the donor; at the same time the donor should also be accountable to the recipient (if greater effectiveness of aid is to be achieved). The two parties should agree on goals and targets and on the conditions for achieving them. These conditions should form the basis of conditionality and accountability on both sides (donor and recipient).

Coordination

Effective aid coordination can be achieved by formulating a clear national aid strategy. Some of the key elements of a national aid strategy would include: the national objectives, strategies and priorities; an articulation of roles of the recipient, donors and implementing agencies; a stipulation of modes of disbursement and accountability; and areas of focus and concentration. This, however, presupposes that arrangements which facilitate coordination across all donors involved in a specific sector are in place. It should be emphasised further that aid coordination, however, remains primarily the responsibility of the recipient.

Policy Direction

Recent initiatives have been taken locally to prepare various sectoral policies (e.g. agricultural policy, industrial policy, mining policy, education and training policy). These are encouraging steps in the right direction. Developments in crafting a long term development vision for Tanzania which is currently in progress under the overall coordination of the
Planning Commission are promising and should form the basis for preparing medium term and long term development strategies which should ultimately guide action in aid programmes.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of aid in the development of Tanzania has been perceived to be less than satisfactory. The concerns that have been raised in this context have led to a crisis in aid relations. It is against this background that a new partnership is envisaged between Tanzania and its donors. The first steps towards defining this new partnership started to address the Tanzania-Nordic partnership. The main principles of the new partnership were agreed upon between the Tanzania government and the Nordic countries in September 1996. The main thrust of these principles has been incorporated in the agreement that was made between Tanzania and all major donors. In this sense the case of partnership between the Tanzania government and the Nordic countries has made a major contribution towards laying the foundation of a new partnership between Tanzania and all its major donors.

The main challenge now is in the implementation whereby concrete action will need to be taken by Tanzania and donors. Both parties will have to depart from doing business as usual and adopt new ways of relating to each other. Prospects for a new partnership hinge on Tanzania taking action to clearly stipulate the overall development policy and strategies on the basis of which sectoral priorities can be identified and key policy documents can be prepared. These would then guide the direction of aid. The role of aid should be to complement domestic efforts and in the process enhance capacity building. On the side of donors the new partnership will require that they change to allow Tanzania to genuinely determine the development agenda.

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References


Africa, as Large as the Moon—and as Distant?
Sweden’s Relations with a Continent

Kajsa Övergaard

Introduction

After a century of missionary work, several decades of development contacts as well as immigration from Africa, there are thousands of Swedes who have either personal experience from different African countries or who have personal African contacts. No quantitative estimates have been made, however, but we can find scattered information from various organisations. Thus the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden reports that in the last hundred years, it has sent out some 700 missionaries. Obviously those thousands of Swedes, with experiences from Africa have given people in Sweden increased knowledge about the African continent and, limited though this knowledge may seem in quality, coverage and distribution, they have clearly managed to present a more diversified image of Africa.

It is important to emphasise that these contacts have had a great impact on Sweden as a country as well as on individuals who have had the opportunity to work and live in different African countries. Yet, many Swedes returning from, for example development cooperation work tend to be frustrated when they see how difficult it is to transmit their own experiences back to Sweden and have to deal with the reality that people’s interest in their knowledge is very limited. The frustration that African refugees and immigrants experience is probably just as high.

The aim of this essay is to give an indication of the extent of the contacts between Sweden and Africa. Most of the material derives from the SIPU International report entitled *Review and Analysis of the Interchange Between the Swedish Society and Sub-Saharan Africa*, prepared for the meeting in Saltsjöbaden, and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs’ report titled *Partnership with Africa—Proposals for a New Swedish Policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa*. The latter report points out that “Swedish knowledge of Africa has a bearing on the quality of our relations with Africa. The image of

1 SIPU-International, p. 84.
Africa in Sweden affects the foundation of relations with Africa [...]”. For this reason, the essay also deals with the common Swedish image of Africa. The idea that “the image of Africa is culturally constructed, and often reflects the self-images of the beholder” will be worth considering while perusing this essay.

The Swedish Image of Africa

For more than 30 years, the Swedish author and film-maker, Lasse Berg, has been giving reports primarily about Asia and Africa in newspapers and books as well as on the radio and the television, thereby trying to convey information that would not reach the general public otherwise. Fairly recently, his interest was roused in how the average Swede's image of Africa came to develop, and he started studying Swedish travel books, the first of which was published in the middle of the 17th century, geography books, missionaries’ accounts, articles published in newspapers and periodicals. He sums up his studies in Swedish in his work entitled När Sverige upptäckte Afrika [When Sweden Discovered Africa]. Towards the end of the book he says: “Three hundred years of writing about Africa has made us more ignorant. Our generalisations have become increasingly cruder, and in the eyes of the outside world, Africa has become the symbol of all kinds of poverty and disaster”.

Sweden was never a colonial power, and in a number of cases this has been advantageous to our contacts with Africa. It is not clear, however, whether this has had a positive impact on the average citizen’s attitude towards Africa and Africans. Most people in this country get their current image of Africa via the media which tend to focus on disasters, wars, hunger and other types of misery, where Africans are described or portrayed as helpless victims. The Swedish state-owned television and radio, as well as the two largest dailies have one correspondent each in Africa—all of them stationed in Cape Town or Johannesburg. Ultimately, the media depend on people’s interest in them to be able to sell subscriptions or news-stand copies or increase the number of viewers. Due to the pressures on the media and the high pace of information flow, correspondents will have to focus on extremes, no matter how much individual journalists would prefer to give a

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2 The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, p. 89.
3 Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, front page.
4 Berg, p. 236 (G. Övergaard’s translation).
5 The Swedish daily newspaper Svenska Dagbladet’s correspondent is a stringer, not a regular employee.
A deeper and more analytic image of different countries, their inhabitants and life styles.6

A number of organisations as well as individuals have tried to deepen and broaden the Swedish image of Africa. Many Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), engaged in development assistance, for example, have contributed to the large supply of information material to schools about other parts of the world, among them Africa. Yet, when they need money for their disaster relief and development work, those very same organisations are sometimes forced to hook up with the media’s preoccupation and focus on disasters. The organisations depend on private contributions from individuals and it is perfectly clear that they know how to make people open their purses. However, since the late 1980s their frequent exploitation of poor or starving people in marketing campaigns has been debated, both inside and outside NGOs. Nonetheless, their genuine wish to convey more positive and nuanced images keeps colliding with the need to present images that will give money to work within disaster areas—a dilemma that often leads to conflicts between different sections of the organisations.

Another reason why it is so easy to end up with an Africa-image of poverty and misery might be that the whole continent is too often regarded as one single unit. In trying to find the most crucial issues, the various major problems easily are brought into focus and soon enough the discussions will pass on to fund-raising and aid related topics.

This gloomy picture is sometimes combined with (or replaced by) a more romantic image of Africa as the savannah paradise—a place where civilisation has not yet completely ruined the original harmony of the world.7 An interesting aspect of how our image of Africa develops is also the fact that in their African cultural activities, as many as 60 per cent of the Swedish NGOs, included in a fairly comprehensive survey 1994–96, seem to focus on traditional rather than modern culture. The only organisation devoting almost all their cultural activities to modern culture is actually the National Association of Afro-Swedes which is dominated by second generation Africans.8

How then are we to proceed to be able to promote a more complex and interesting image, one where information about problems is intermixed with information about more positive circumstances without making a u-turn, ending up with an idealised picture. The following points on Lasse Berg’s list might be helpful in that venture:

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6 Sida’s (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency’s) information bureau recently ordered an investigation of the presentation of Africa in Swedish media. A report will be presented during late spring, 1998.

7 Helgesson

8 Palmberg, pp. 20–21.
Most Africans do not live in poverty.
Most Africans lead lives which, on the whole, are as good and as satisfactory as those of most Europeans; they eat what they need and they are well.
Most Africans are not indebted to foreign aid workers for their decent lives.
Most Africans live in a peaceful and stable environment.
Most Africans do not hate individuals belonging to other ethnic groups.
Most Africans have never seen an AC 47.
Most Africans are not lazy.
Africa has many and varied aspects.9

To make it possible to create and develop good contacts, the images of both parties must be considered and be of equal high standing. How are Europeans depicted in various African narratives, what images are conveyed in schools and in the media, and how fair are they? What sort of image do tourists, development assistance workers, missionaries in Africa give of Sweden? Are Africans in Sweden invited to present their images?

Sweden’s Contacts with Africa

Let us now leave the Swedish image of Africa and turn to current Swedish contacts with Africa. Although contacts due directly to Swedish aid are not covered in this essay, it should be pointed out that Swedish aid has been of vital importance in the development of other relations between Sweden and different African countries.

Official Contacts

The number of top-level official Swedish visits to Africa has increased from 13 in 1990 to 24 in 1996. Not unexpectedly, the greatest increase occurred in South Africa after the fall of the apartheid system (Southern Africa had 9 visits in 1990 and 16 in 1996). The number of official African visits to Sweden in the same period was twice as large.10 Visits to West and Central Africa were practically non-existent.

Sweden has 14 embassies in sub-Saharan Africa,11 most of them concentrated to Eastern and Southern Africa, due to the fact that the Swedish development assistance, historically has been and is, concentrated in these

9 Berg, p. 236.
10 The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, p. 71.
areas, which, in turn, is due to the fact that missionary work (which began more than a hundred years ago) and popular movement and church support to resistance movements have been concentrated in these areas, which in turn has led to a concentration of existing trade relations with Africa (see below) in this area. 15 sub-Saharan African countries have embassies or other diplomatic missions in Stockholm, and another 20 legations all over Europe are accredited to Stockholm.

NGOs

As many as 160 Swedish NGOs are working in 40 of the 48 sub-Saharan African countries, and this figure excludes various organisations of the handicapped and the scout movement. Some of them are large and some very small, but almost all are working with long-term projects and with personnel stationed in the different countries. Most of their work is carried out in Southern Africa (32%) and Eastern Africa (41%). This concentration in Eastern and Southern Africa, apart from being a product of historical factors, is also connected to the fact that Sweden and the groups are trusted because of the support they gave to those regions during their struggle for national liberation and against apartheid.

Not much remains today from the large Swedish support to resistance movements in Africa. One ongoing activity, however, is the protests the youth organisations of some of the political parties have carried out outside Shell petrol stations, trying to reveal the acts of cruelty in Ogoniland, Nigeria (a region very rich in oil deposits) and the support they and other organisations have given resistance and environment groups there in the conflict primarily between Shell and the inhabitants in Ogoniland. Their support clearly demonstrates the connection between human rights and environmental issues.

Swedish environmental organisations cooperate with and support some twenty African environmental organisations and conferences on environmental issues held in Africa. Several NGOs, e.g. the Swedish Red Cross, had environmental issues on their agenda as early as the 1980s, linking a preventive tree planting project and a water project to the predominant disaster relief work. These projects have moreover had an important educational dimension in Sweden. There is a great deal of cooperation in research (see below) as well as in development assistance work in the environmental field.

13 The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, p. 73 (Central Africa, 8% and West Africa, 19%). Original source: Forum Syd, Organisationer med u-landsinriktning 97/98.
14 The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, p. 79.
In *Partnership with Africa*, it is stated that Swedish popular movement work “… has been based on solidarity motives and sustained by an international interest in and commitment to improving the living situation of the poor and oppressed”. However, we might question how much of their work has been based on real solidarity and respect for the fellow-being. All too often the connection between cause and effect has not been sufficiently tackled. We need to ask ourselves how much of our engagement in Africa has been prompted by a bad conscience about the social conditions on the continent without a willingness to address relevant political questions head-on.

Increasingly, the contacts of NGOs’ and the churches’ contacts with Africa are taking on an exclusive solidarity character. In some cases the mutual exchange of ideas have become part of the cooperation. One example of such a relationship is the Church of Sweden’s project “Mission in Return”, in which clergymen from different African countries have worked in, and given new input to, Swedish parishes.

Trade Unions

Trade unions are in Sweden seen as part of the NGO community discussed above. In the 1960s, the trade unions’ work in Africa increased as they benefited from assistance for the trade union organisation build-up, in combination with popular movement work in Sweden (where also the political parties and the cooperative movement have come to take an active part). Many members have been actively involved in this work and have brought back their experiences to their working places all around Sweden.

Friendship and Immigrant Organisations

Over the years, a number of friendship organisations have been established with the aim of furthering contacts between Sweden and some African country or region. The initiators are often individuals who have worked in development assistance or as missionaries or who have created good contacts with people in a country which they have visited. These organisations constitute an important resource for information about contacts between Sweden and the country/regions in question.

The organisations of African immigrants and refugees work hard to strengthen the contacts between Sweden and their native countries and between Africans and Swedes in Sweden; they are moreover important meeting places for Africans in Sweden. There are approximately 35,000 African first generation immigrants/refugees in Sweden, some 56 per cent.

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15 The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, p. 75.
16 The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, pp. 74.
of them being men. Most of them come from Ethiopia and Eritrea (ca 39%), Somalia (ca 27%), Uganda (ca 6%) and Gambia.\(^{17}\) Obviously we still have a lot to do to establish the situation of the Africans in Sweden. They belong to a group of people who have been badly hit by increasing unemployment—often in spite of their higher education and/or long practical experience. In these individuals Sweden has a mine of information and knowledge which in many cases is completely unexplored and which might be used in a constructive way in the contacts between Sweden and Africa. Several organisations initiated by Africans in Sweden and by individuals with an African background are actively working to present their countrymen and women as a resource for Sweden. One of these organisations is carrying out some development work in Africa in cooperation with Forum Syd—the Swedish NGO Development Centre.

Culture and Sports

Africa’s diversified cultural life is rich, vibrant and many-sided. What reaches Sweden of music (mostly from Western and Southern Africa), literature (where the English-speaking part of West Africa and Southern Africa are predominant) and film (mostly from French-speaking West Africa and Southern Africa)\(^{18}\) is consumed in wide circles. More often than not the contacts concern material exchange—records, books, films—but writers and musicians have sometimes been invited to give performances in Sweden.\(^{19}\) Theatres and museums have also taken part in exchange programmes.\(^{20}\) The Swedish Institute\(^{21}\) has given economic support to many cultural exchange projects that have been arranged in Sweden. In 1995/96 19.6 per cent (ca 1.2 million SEK) of the Institute’s resources for cultural exchange went to countries in sub-Saharan Africa. 65 per cent of that money went to projects in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Burkina Faso. It is also the embassies of these three countries that, according to the SIPU-report, are most optimistic about future exchange.\(^{22}\) Africans living in Sweden have contributed in many ways with plays, shows etc., many of which have been staged in schools and libraries. However, it is evidently difficult to make radio and TV producers prioritise African music and other cultural activities.\(^{23}\) More successful in

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\(^{17}\) SIPU-International, p. 97.

\(^{18}\) Notes from a résumé by Mai Palmberg (where she cites Bølefyhr) of the conference “Nordic Research Seminar on the Study of African Film”, Uppsala, 6–8 February, 1998.

\(^{19}\) SIPU-International, p. 72 (examples listed).

\(^{20}\) The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, p. 75.

\(^{21}\) Administers Sida-grants for cultural exchanges.

\(^{22}\) SIPU-International, p. 74.

\(^{23}\) SIPU-International, p. 75.
attracting the media are individuals and cultural organisations and groups initiated and dominated by young Swedish Africans of the second generation—a generation with double cultural identities: Swedish and African.

Exchange in the field of sports is fairly limited. The predominant sport is football. At least 5 countries from sub-Saharan Africa have taken part in Gothia Cup since 1975.24 Moreover, NGOs have sports cooperation with football associations in South African townships, and had so earlier with Tanzania. Recently individual teams collaborates with counterparts in different countries in Africa.

Tourism

Between 20,000 and 30,000 Swedish tourists visit sub-Saharan Africa annually.25 Most of them go to Kenya, South Africa and Gambia where, for better or worse, they will gain first-hand experience of Africa. What they witness and the extent to which their image of Africa will be reinforced or modified, depends on the character of the trips and the travel agencies— their knowledge and purpose—as will, of course, the intentions and openness of the traveller.

Trade and Investments

Swedish exports to Africa have been increasing since the middle of the 1990s (to a large extent due to the new situation in South Africa and the devaluation of the Swedish corona in September 1992) but it is only 1 per cent (ca 3 billion SEK per year) of Sweden’s total exports.26 With the exception of trade connected with Nigerian (mainly) oil and Liberian shipping services, South Africa is the leading importer of Swedish products (mostly processed products, but project exports—combining services like education, management and maintenance to exported products—are becoming increasingly common in the wake of privatisation). Swedish imports from Africa make up only one third of Swedish exports to Africa. South Africa and Kenya are the African countries that export the largest number of products to Sweden. It is mostly raw materials, but Swedish importers are showing a growing interest in textiles due to EU quotas against Asian exporters.27 One way for Swedish enterprises to keep track of the increasing

24 SIPU-International, p. 79.
25 The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, p. 85.
26 The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, p. 81.
27 The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, pp. 81–82.
number of available African products would be to take part in fairs on the continent.\textsuperscript{28}

Swedish investments in Africa are small, except for those in Liberia, South Africa and, to some extent, Zimbabwe. Swedfund is a state-owned enterprise headed by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs; its business is to invest in commercially viable “joint ventures”. Since its beginning in 1979, Swedfund has been making investments in 13 different sub-Saharan African countries. The Swedish Export Credits Guarantee Board is acting on behalf of the Swedish State to improve the competitiveness of Swedish enterprises abroad. The Board is not very active in Africa due to the high commercial risk involved; nevertheless, in 1997 it guaranteed credits to 38 countries in sub-Saharan Africa.\textsuperscript{29} All the same, a certain amount of disappointment is discernible in some countries that the support they received during their struggle for liberation has not developed into a greater interest in investments in and trade with them than what is shown at present.

Most of the Swedish embassies in Africa believe that there will be an increase in trade as well as in investments in the future in spite of the current problems.\textsuperscript{30} Swedes speak of their problems with the bureaucracy and the administration (especially the Customs), the lack of trained personnel, poor raw material quality, increasing crime rate, corruption and political unrest in a number of African countries, and they also point out that the average Swede’s knowledge about African countries is very low. Africans often mention poor African knowledge about Sweden, lack of interest on the part of the Swedes, and poor understanding in Sweden that Africa needs to expand its trade with the outside world rather than accept increased aid. Moreover, they stress that there is limited African experience of the export market and a lack of cheap and fast transportation.\textsuperscript{31}

Research

Research interest in Sweden has increased considerable over the years and are today substantial. The incentives for that increased interest has partly come from so-called Minor Field Studies (financed by Sida, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) and other research/travel scholarships (e.g. those awarded by the Nordic Africa Institute), as well as Sida/SAREC support to University departments over a long period of years. Over the years, some 55 per cent of those students who have been given

\textsuperscript{28} See e.g. Internet: www.smelink.se/fair/afrika.htm. Editor: Werner Hilliges. SMELINK is an information network created to aid Swedish small and medium sized enterprises.

\textsuperscript{29} SIPU-International, p. 53–54.

\textsuperscript{30} SIPU-International, p. 10.

\textsuperscript{31} SIPU-International, pp. 45 and 55.
funds to carry out Minor Field Studies have turned to Africa. The report of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs states that it is desirable that the awards be made available also to students from African universities—preferably students cooperating with Swedish students. The Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries, SAREC, which has now been made part of Sida, is working to strengthen research capacity in Africa and other developing parts of the world by means of bilateral and regional funding. In 1995/96 54 per cent of the budget was spent in 13 countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

SAREC also promotes Swedish research related to developing countries (approximately 10 per cent of the yearly budget is directed towards researchers in Sweden), and in 1998 the grants for this type of research increased considerably. In 1996, some 50 individuals from sub-Saharan Africa had part of their higher education financed by the International Science Programme (IPICS), and the International Foundation for Science (IFS) has given economic support to 700 young scholars in 35 sub-Saharan countries since 1986. Moreover, many departments at Swedish universities have established cooperation with departments in Africa, and in many cases, this cooperation is funded by the universities themselves. Economic support for research about and in Africa is also offered by the UN and EU. The Nordic Africa Institute, which is jointly funded by the Governments of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, has been and is an important resource in stimulating research on Africa in Sweden as well as the other Nordic countries. It is true that Swedish students have in the past shown limited interest in studies at African universities, but their interest in Africa seems to be growing.

Information Technology

The rapid development and growth of information technology has led to a trend break in our contacts with Africa. Yet, it should be pointed out that though information technology will open up new opportunities in Africa and is actually growing by 10 per cent every month, its accessibility is very unevenly distributed. Few Africans own a computer, and there are African

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32 The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, p. 76.
34 McNeill et al., p. 47.
35 SIPU-International, p. 64.
36 WoYa!!’s homepage (updated April 1998). WoYa!!’s aim is to strengthen Africa’s presence on the Internet and increase the visibility of African Internet sites and resources.
countries which are still not connected to the Internet. Many African universities have already become integrated in international electronic networks, however, and information and ideas spread as quickly to and within the African continent as elsewhere in the world.

Racism

In spite of rapidly increasing global exchange, linguistic and cultural barriers still inhibit rewarding mutual exchange at the local level; sometimes these barriers also lead to conflicts. Growing Swedish racism and hostility towards foreigners must be taken seriously and be met in a consistent way. From this perspective it is important to stress the existence of positive counterweights, for example, the “Five to twelve” movement, a driving force against racism and hostility towards immigrants, the founder of which is the father of a girl who was murdered by a young African refugee who had come to Sweden alone.

Some Concluding Remarks

The Ministry for Foreign Affair’s report Partnership with Africa depicts a visionary future where people from different walks of life have a vital and equal exchange with different African countries, cities, communities and individuals. If we are to reach at least part of that goal in the near future, a more diversified and less distorted image of Africa must be presented to, first of all, the emerging new generation in Sweden. Dr. Adebayo Olukoshi, a Political Scientist from Nigeria, sets the tone when he says that a new, self-confident generation is about to take over the African stage. Sweden will do well to learn from and support these young Africans, committed as they are to building up countries which they themselves can be proud of and with which the rest of the world will enjoy having prosperous relationships.

Before we can realise this new world, we must find the answers to a number of important questions. How are we to implement a change of attitudes as long as the media keep focusing only on sensational “stories”? How are we to manage to present a more nuanced and interesting image of Africa, when Africa’s place in textbooks and curricula is said to have decreased? How is the gulf between the prevailing Swedish image of Africa and aspirations conveyed by Adebayo Olukoshi above to be narrowed so that future contacts between Sweden and various African countries will be

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37 According to the homepage of “African Internet Infrastructure Information” (http://demiurge.wn.apc.org/africa/), updated on March 3, 1998, 41 countries in sub-Saharan Africa have full Internet access in the capital cities.

38 Olukoshi, p. 29.

39 The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, p. 89.
fruitful and stimulating to all concerned? How are we to take advantage of the knowledge and commitment embedded in those thousands of Swedes who have lived in or visited Africa and those Africans who are now living in Sweden? A keen wish to find an answer to these questions and an interest displayed by actors within a broad spectrum (i.e. not only by those who are directly working for or have a personal interest in improved relations with Africa) is a prerequisite for the development of real partnership. If Sweden is to start walking in the right direction it is necessary that the different Ministries should engage in greater inter-departmental coordination with a view to evolving coherent and consistent policies that pay heed to the hopes and aims stated by the individual Africans involved in the “Partnership Africa” project.

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Translation: Gerd Övergaard

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Hilliges, Werner, 1998, www.smelink.se/fair/afrika.htm, information network on Internet created by SMELINK (an independent foundation, Mr. Stig Hagström, Sweden’s University Chancellor, is President) to aid Swedish small and medium sized enterprises.


Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1998, brochure describing the project “Cultural Images in and of Africa” led by Mai Palmberg, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.


Introduction

This is a summary of a study made for the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs as part of the Partnership Africa project. Its theme is how Halmstad, a medium-sized town in southern Sweden, relates to Africa.

The study does not pretend to cover all the various contacts Halmstad and its inhabitants have with Africa. The method used is that of a journalist, interviewing key persons and then following the threads given by each person interviewed.

The original study covers most of the relevant aspects of life in Halmstad industry, local government, the university, schools, media, cultural institutions, and different parts of civil society. The main actors are Halmstad people working in and on Africa and people of African origin living in Halmstad.

When I introduced the aim of my study to people in Halmstad, most of them said ‘but surely there is very little contact with Africa?’ However, even if relations may seem of little significance, they exist. In fact, there are more contacts than we expected, but less perhaps than there should be. As the former director of the museum puts it:

We must develop contacts with the Third World. Today most of us no longer react when we meet black people in the streets of Halmstad, some of them even speaking the local dialect! When all races mix, racism is bound to disappear. However, it may take some time …

Halmstad

Halmstad is the main town in the region of Halland on the Swedish west coast, formerly a part of Denmark, which was conquered by Sweden in the late seventeenth century. Historically, the region was poor, but it is now relatively prosperous through industry, agriculture, and tourism. Halmstad municipality has a population of 83,000, and has incorporated a large part of the surrounding rural area.
The old city centre is dominated by a large market place, with a medieval church, the town hall, banks and shops. The river Nissan divides the town; to the west is the commercial and cultural centre, while industry is found concentrated to the eastern side. This is where the new university is placed in Halmstad’s only sky-scraper, a legacy of the optimistic eighties.

Halmstad presents itself as a place which is “close to everything”. Distances are short, communications with cities like Gothenburg and Malmö are fast, and continental Europe is nearby. Asked about its nearness to and relations with sub-Saharan Africa, the town administrator says: “Unfortunately, our contacts with Africa are negligible. There are not many foreign contacts at all at the municipal level. Maybe that is because people think they are already halfway abroad…”

Halmstad meets Africa on two different levels, one being the exchange and contact with markets and people in Africa, the other the contact with immigrants from Africa living in Halmstad (275 of African origin, including adopted children).

The quality and quantity of the contacts depend to a great extent on individual interest on both sides. As in many places in Sweden, the commitment to African development was impressive in Halmstad in the 1970s. It has decreased in later years, and today the commitment is low both within local authorities and organisations.

Negative attitudes towards Africa and African immigrants are also found and expressed today. These attitudes are generally recognised, though often with embarrassment, in memory of a time, not so long ago, when they were not acceptable.

The negative attitudes are a considerable obstacle to improved contacts, as they hinder the acquisition of better knowledge. A Halmstad politician says: “Oh yes, people are anti-foreigners today, and black people are often seen as people with AIDS, or people who can’t read. Unfortunately”, she continues, “people are not very interested in becoming better informed either”.

The old notion of Africans as those who “nod and receive”, fostered by aid projects, from missionary involvement to solidarity work, does not help people to look at Africans as partners and equals.

While these are general trends in Swedish society, many people, even locals, say that people in Halmstad are reserved and self-sufficient. Their attitude is said to be one of caution, fear of innovations and lack of interest in things from outside. “We are sluggish, slow and wary”, says a local politician. If this is true, it is not easy to create an atmosphere favourable to international cooperation with distant countries and people.

In short, many people in Halmstad look at Africa as something very far away, and not worth investing either interest or money in. As for the African refugees in town, a person in charge of their affairs says “people hardly notice them”.

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However, the contacts with Africa are not altogether negligible. There are ties, in business, learning, art, and, not least, at a personal level. There is perhaps more than you would think, but less than is desirable. Africa and Halmstad could certainly have more to give to each other.

Economic Life

Some of the bigger Halmstad industries export products to Africa, mainly to South Africa. Several look at Africa as an interesting market in the future, but have little active marketing for fear of political instability and insecure payment flows. The “Nigerian letters”\(^1\) have had serious repercussions on possible business between Halmstad companies and African countries, and negative experiences have caused some firms to apply unusual business transactions, i.e. ask for payment in advance from African customers. But the biggest company, Getingeverken AB, producing sterilisers for hospitals etc., says their business relations with Africa, often connected with aid, have been without problems. The biggest obstacle to increased business is probably that Halmstad entrepreneurs know too little about recent changes in the African market.

The farmers’ organisations in Halland have long been active internationally. Quite a few individual farmers from Halmstad and its surroundings have worked in agriculture in Africa, with Sida or the Swedish Cooperative Centre. Apart from planned women’s projects in Zimbabwe and Kenya, the interest of the farmers’ associations is at present mostly directed to Latin America and Eastern Europe. Farmers say that they find Africa “too far away”, not only geographically but also in modes of production. Those who cultivate ecologically, however, are more interested in African farming systems.

At present, the central office for purchasing agricultural products like seed and fertilisers buys nothing from sub-Saharan Africa. “Our control principles are rigid”, they say, “and we enter markets only restrictively. We do not know the markets, but fear the quantities the African markets can offer are too small for us”.

There is a small but increasing number of African goods to buy in the shops in Halmstad, mainly fruits, vegetables, tea and coffee, some of which have good sales. One shop, recently opened, sells African handicraft, mainly from Kenya. Some NGOs sell African products in their shops or sales outlets.

Halmstad travel agents sell more and more journeys to Africa, mainly to East and South Africa. Negative attitudes to Africa in general seem to be a hindrance for further growth of tourism. Some people believe there is not

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\(^1\) Letters sent to Swedish businessmen from Nigerian crime syndicates to lure them to make advance payments for investments which never take place.
much to see, apart from nature, and others fear that hygienic conditions are not satisfactory. But there is also an increasing appetite for adventure as well as for learning about different cultures.

Institutions

The interest in international affairs shown by Halmstad authorities is low. There are no friendship communities outside the Nordic countries, which is regretted by some local politicians. In the regional council, however, the interest in international affairs is increasing.

The contact of local authorities with Africa is restricted to the 275 Africans living in town. The main actors are the Refugee Division, the Job Centre, and the Municipal School for Adult Education, where they learn Swedish and receive further education. “What the authorities must do, they do well”, says the Head of the Refugee Division, “but nothing more”.

The police and the court have seen little of the Africans, “less than could be expected from a group where the majority are unemployed”, they say. Quite a few people from Halmstad regiments have taken part in UN activities in the Congo or in Somalia. A few Swedish citizens of African origin have done military service and a former Ugandan refugee has become an army officer.

The young university prides itself on an international outlook, having contacts with a multitude of universities around the world. In spite of its goal of internationalisation, there is no obvious commitment at the university to extend international contacts beyond other industrial countries. The experience from Africa of some teachers employed at the university has so far not really been used by the university. The interest among Swedish students to learn about the Third World is competently channelled through the MFS-programme, (Minor Field Studies, whereby students can conduct a study in developing countries on a scholarship basis); however this is not exclusive to Africa. There are positive signs of an extended international interest in some of the research centres; one of them is starting a research project with Tanzania.

The attitudes to Africa of the few Swedish students interviewed in the study reflect general trends in society. Most students are said to be eager to study abroad, but Africa is not their first choice. They do not seem to use the nearest possible source—the 15 African students at the University—to change their negative image of Africa. But it is not certain that the African students are prepared to act as “culture informants”—their ambition is to be accepted as “normal” students. There is nothing at Halmstad University to prevent that.

School children in Halmstad now seem to know much more about the world and about Africa than before. But their attitudes to Africa are predominantly negative, as was found in a brief study made in four forms at
different levels. My assumption is that they are more influenced by media, maybe also parents, than by school.

Some schools have sister schools in Africa, and have raised substantial amounts of money in their favour, due to the efforts of dedicated teachers with experience from Africa. This is an excellent way to increase knowledge and commitment. At the same time, it may also confirm a feeling of “superiority” among Swedish children. Internationalisation in schools is hampered by budget cuts. To reach the goals of internationalisation and to improve the situation at the local schools, school authorities would probably have to revise their priorities.

Nearly all African children go to one school in a suburb where most immigrants live. There are cases in other schools where African children have been bullied.

Culture

...We are informed in detail of how Africa dies. How Africa lives we no longer know. The image of Africa is the same as in the colonial era. Then Africa was also at the point of death. The black man nodded when a coin was put in the money-box. (Anders Ehnmark, Rapport från Sida, 1994)

Media in Halmstad deal with local affairs. Africa is present in local newspapers, radio, or TV, if there is a local connection, or in press agency material. I studied the biggest local newspaper, Hallandsposten, HP, during a period of four months in 1996. I found that press agency news items from African countries, like from other Third World countries, are often selected according to their sensation value, thus confirming the negative ideas of the readers. But HP also has a few but well informed articles about immigrants and about local Swedes who have been to African countries. Black faces are rarely seen in the pages of HP, apart from those of African soldiers and starving children.

There is a municipal budget for culture, covering libraries, youth centres, and support to various cultural activities, especially to those organised by local associations. Cultural contacts with Africa exist, but are rare. The libraries seem to cover Africa well and cater for the needs of children and African immigrants. Literature in immigrant languages is provided when asked for.

Local painters have been inspired by historical events and African nature. There are people collecting African masks, choirs having African music in their repertory and a jazz band which has toured in Kenya. At the Biennal Festival for Children’s Culture in May 1997, multiethnicity was the focus and a South African band was the major attraction.

The House of Culture, centre for theatre and music, hopes that the present work in Southern Africa by one of its employees will lead to an increase in musical contacts. Some Africans are active performers, but the most quali-
fied often leave for bigger cities. There are some African cultural associations, but they have not yet led to a substantial increase in cultural exchange.

The religion of Halland is traditionally Church of Sweden, and free churches have a weaker influence than in neighbouring regions. The contacts between churches in Sweden and Africa have a long history. Among the churches of Halmstad, one parish of the Church of Sweden and the Pentecostal Church have active and fruitful contacts with Africa, in Tanzania and Burundi respectively. The missionaries contribute to the continuity of contacts. Some churches actively try to involve immigrants, and missionaries often have good contacts with them.

African visitors to Sweden are sometimes surprised when confronted with the very weak formal Swedish religiosity (e.g. number of people attending services at church every Sunday). The retired vicar in the parish of St Nicolai in the city centre told an Ethiopian priest that his parish has about 10,000 members. The visiting priest was amazed and asked: “How can they all get into your church?” When I said that generally only 100–150 people attend the service, he exclaimed: “But that is impossible!”

Many contacts have had a one-sided character, with African churches as receivers of charity. On a visit to Halmstad, the Bishop from Karagwe, Tanzania, stated that in his diocese they did not want any material aid, only church workers from Sweden. The Halmstad vicar’s conclusion is that perhaps personal contacts are in fact the most fruitful support. “Maybe better”, he says, “than the footballs we sometimes send them…”

Politics

Most Swedish parties are represented in the political landscape of Halmstad. The Social Democrats have a long standing majority in the Municipal Council. While most political parties were active in the struggle against apartheid, the interest in African affairs is now limited. Often, women’s and youth organisations have more international contacts, but at present only the Centre Party Women’s Organisation supports projects in Africa. No African is known to be a member of a political party but there have been efforts by some parties to involve the immigrants.

Some trade unions have active international contacts, for example to fight child labour. Two agents of the industrial workers union train union leaders in South Africa. Asked what their Swedish members say to this, one of them says:

You would not like to know … In fact, if I just say that we have been to Africa, they say: What the hell—we pay 400 in fees per month and you spend it in Africa! But if I take my time and explain how our international work protects our members, it’s OK. Because if workers in poorer countries are not organised, we will suffer. Our companies will move to countries where labour is cheap.
Civil Society

– Let us say you want to help an organisation. When that goal is reached, like when ANC became the leading party in South Africa, you just stop. You help the underdog, but not those in power …

– Besides, people have lost faith. Today misery in Africa seems immeasurable, there is no way to help. So people just say: That is how they are, let them survive their famines like we did in the last century, and then rise like we did, on their own. If only we gave them time, but we drive them on, and yet do not share our resources! (Amnesty member)

Apart from political parties, trade unions, and churches, 22,800 people in Halmstad are organised in different associations, out of which 17,500 belong to sports clubs. With the churches, these organisations are in the frontline of all international contacts in town.

Most Swedish organisations were part of the general internationalism of the 1970s. The international commitment in Halmstad has not disappeared, but is waning, and often focused on other targets than the Third World. New initiatives depend on the enthusiasm of individual members and leaders. In many organisations, women are in the forefront of the international work.

Organisations in Halmstad can be said to follow two main lines—“traditional” ones, like Rotary and the Red Cross, and those started as a result of the 1968 movement. Members in both kinds of associations in Halmstad joined because of their idealistic commitment. But while members of traditional associations may see their work as an act of charity, the solidarity groups can be said to be more motivated by political idealism—solidarity with people fighting for their rights.

While some of the traditional associations joined in the solidarity work in the 1970s, there now seems to be a tendency to leave active external contacts to national associations or to change focus. Some associations are ageing, and find it hard to recruit new young members. The Red Cross in Halland has a project in Uganda, but also works with immigrants. The local Save the Children is very active with immigrant children. Rotary sends out doctors to work for a short time in Africa. Sports clubs have no exchange with Africa, but have contributed to a nation-wide collection of sports gear for Tanzania and South Africa. Africans are active in the handball team which is well-known and in the boxing club, and a few have joined other local organisations.

Starting with Amnesty in the 1970s, solidarity organisations in Halmstad have been, and some still are, very active. Halmstad groups are said to have been innovative and imaginative in their solidarity work and they collect substantial amounts of money. Some local doctors have been very active, especially in distributing medical equipment and financing small projects in Africa and Latin America. While membership in Africa groups and ISAK
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(Isolate South Africa Committee) has dwindled, Emmaus and Amnesty are still big, and a number of their activities are for Africa. However, some of these organisations also experience weakening commitment and membership.

“We may be few today”, says one member of SAK (South Africa Committee, former ISAK), “but what we do is not insignificant. If each of us informs ten people, hundreds in Halmstad are being told about the situation in Africa!”

One reason given for the decreasing commitment is the demise of apartheid. It was an obvious and powerful enemy, easy to mobilise and unite people against. Now that commitment has become homeless. Some of it is diverted to other, mainly Latin American or Baltic, countries, while young people, if at all committed, seem to go for the environment.

Adult education organisations in Halmstad, which used to organise study circles about the Third World, today seem to have few international ambitions. But an employee of a trade union based organisation, inspired by her African experience, has a course for unemployed people starting cooperatives.

A Church of Sweden-based study organisation has taken an interesting initiative. Here a new formula for cooperation is proposed, with Swedish and immigrant women networking within the community as well as with counterparts in South Africa. This may point to a new and better way to communicate with Africans in Halmstad than traditional organisations. So far, the connection between the commitment to Africans in Africa and to those in Sweden is rarely seen by local organisations.

Swedes Who Have Been to Africa

Quite a few Halmstad citizens have worked in Africa—missionaries in for example, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Burundi, Rwanda, the Congo and Zaire, others with Sida and/or international organisations in, for instance Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Zambia, and businessmen active in different countries. Some Halmstad people visited Africa as a consequence of contacts through Amnesty, and others have travelled as tourists.

“My years in Africa have been the most important in my life”, is not a unique statement. Most people who have lived or worked in Africa say that the experience changed their view of life. The question is whether this experience is, or can be, used in Halmstad.

Missionaries have their home parish as a natural base, where they get back-up when they work abroad, and where their experience is used when they return. Other aid workers, however, nearly all feel that their African experience is underestimated by their local employers when they come home. Only a few are asked by friends or organisations to talk about life in
Africa. Considering that the African experience is often seen as a turning point in life, it is not surprising if some are disappointed.

Most former aid workers think it is odd that local teachers seldom ask for their help in vitalising internationalisation in the schools. A study of the internationalisation of the university shows that, also there, little has been done to integrate this special knowledge.

Some manage to utilise their African experience professionally or privately. But many, having changed their view of Sweden and the world, are frustrated by the attitudes of Swedes who complain about their situation, although in an international perspective they are privileged.

Many are also frustrated by the fact that it is difficult to keep up the African contacts, or to go back. A few see the contact with immigrants in Sweden as a natural follow up of their work in Africa; others work in welfare organisations, but many just get absorbed by life in Sweden.

Whether aid workers can function as a bridge to Africa seems to depend on their own attitudes, but also on those of their Swedish environment. In the context of a decreasing interest in international affairs, their role as innovators is becoming negligible. So far, Halmstad seems to have profited little from their experience.

Yet, the role of “those who were there” in forming attitudes in Sweden about aid and the countries Sweden cooperates with in Africa should not be underestimated. To contribute more in their own society, they should themselves form networks, actively offering information to schools and organisations.

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) should pay more attention to those who have returned from jobs in Africa. If they are frustrated, they may contribute to confirming negative attitudes in Sweden towards Africa and to Swedish Aid.

Finally, while tourism to Africa from Halmstad is increasing, still very few go there, and it is hard to see any impact. The way charter tourism is organised today, it is doubtful whether it can contribute to improving relations. It might even confirm the existing gap between cultures. Instead of “we” who give, Swedes become “we” who travel; “they” are the receivers, the servants, and “those who, hopefully, will stay where they are”.

Africans in Halmstad

There are 275 people of African origin living in Halmstad, adopted children included.

Most Africans live in one area, and many of them are said to want to stay there, where there are others of “their kind”. There have been no major problems with people from Halmstad in the residential areas, but some immigrant groups discriminate against other groups.
More Than We Think—Less Than There Should Be

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The paramount problem of the African refugees is unemployment. Most of them feel Swedes apply a ranking list to immigrants, where Africans score the lowest. Some feel discriminated against by certain local authorities. Many find it hard to be accepted and make friends in Halmstad, harder than in the northern part of Sweden.

As a group African men suffer from negative attitudes caused by the behaviour of a few. African women, not least Somalian women, are more generally accepted.

Africans have had to form organisations to be able to get support for their activities from the town authorities. So far, relations are peaceful but new initiatives are needed, on both sides, to avoid a situation whereby Africans become second class citizens forever.

What Africans Say about Halmstad

“Halmstad is all right” says an African student, “I feel secure here. And we have no problems to be accepted, for instance in pubs”. But many say that it is hard to make friends with the Swedes in Halmstad. “To get a real friend is not easy”, says one Somali. “You have to have children in a pram, or a dog, to get in touch with Swedes. Or you have to join an association. It takes time to be accepted there too, since they wonder what you are after, but after about a year they accept you…”

“An immigrant feels lonely”, says another Somali, “if he does not have daily contacts with friends. At home we always meet—but Swedes, they go to their jobs, have guests on holidays, that is how they meet. Swedes are also very busy and forget that you may need contact”. “Yes”, says a woman, “Swedes are like this: hej, hej! /hallo, hallo!—and that’s all!”

Racism and Discrimination

Most immigrants maintain there is little real racism in Halmstad—people are normally good and helpful. But the climate started to deteriorate from about 1991. They think that when the recession began in Sweden, Swedes had to find a scapegoat—and chose the immigrants. “In 1990 things were all
right”, says a woman. “I felt like an equal, not a foreigner”. “Before”, says a Ghanaian, “you could meet Swedes who were curious and friendly, asking about Africa. Today there is a lot of prejudice. It is shocking to hear what they say about Africa, it is like a nail through your heart! They attach everything criminal to us, just because they know so little. Instead of getting in touch, they just remain with their prejudice. Elderly people are the worst”.

Some think there are two kinds of Swedes—Mr Svensson and Mr International, i.e., those who have stayed in Sweden and those who have travelled. A student feels fellow-students in “male” subjects, who have no friends among foreigners and have never been abroad, are ignorant and use abusive language to and about Africans. But those who study the arts or media are different, more aware of other peoples and cultures.

The meeting of African men with Swedish women is not seen as problematic, but it is noteworthy that quite a few Africans do not live with the mother of their child. One says his girlfriend’s attitudes are alright, but her relatives are not pleased with their relationship. One claims the reason he can live with his Swedish girlfriend at all is that she is so “sensible”. Some Swedish girls have given a negative picture of their relations with African men, but my material is too small to draw any conclusions. The material does not include African women married to Swedes.

Authorities

There is, as stated before, a feeling that there is discrimination, sometimes subtle or hidden, among Swedish authorities. Some feel the Job Centre has a ranking list for immigrants—people from Southern Europe are at the top, Asians come second, and Africans are at the bottom. While some Africans say they have been well treated by the Job Centre, others say that immigrants move away from Halmstad because of the attitude of the Job Centre. “And in our situation there is no way you can complain”, says one, “for then you will be blacklisted”.

The police may also be difficult to cope with. For small offences, like cycling without lights, you may not only be fined but also get vicious comments. Some Africans say they are cautious when they meet the police, for they are afraid a conflict may jeopardise their Swedish citizenship. “If someone calls me ‘nigger’ at a disco”, says one, “I don’t care. But the police—it is their task to protect me from such things!”

Jobs

Obviously African immigrants can get jobs in Halmstad if they are active, but the feeling is that new laws and restrictions have become prohibitive. “The men are ordered out to get “job experience”, some Somali women say, “often very hard work. But since they get the same salary then as they
get in benefits, they have no motivation. So, our men are just being sent to take one course after the other, and yet they know they will never get a real job!” “I would never have studied”, says one, “if I could get a job. My baby girl cried when she started at the day care centre—why not let us work at the day care centre(s) to help the children, at least till they understand Swedish?”

Schools

When Somalian children have difficulties in the schools in Halmstad, the Somalian Association tries to help. In one case they met with the staff of the school, told them about their habits and explained them. After that their children feel more respected and at home.

Halmstad authorities meet a lot of difficulties with young Somali men, who find it hard to adapt. One Somali thinks this is due to the Swedes. “We are provoked”, he says, “when Swedes ask if we sleep in houses in Somalia, and explain how to switch on the light and use a water toilet … Teachers must also help our young men to integrate into the study groups or else they become aggressive and nervous and stop going to school”.

The Other Africans

That Africans are no saints is stressed by some. “I feel we have nothing to be proud of as Africans”, says one student. “Some of us are lazy, come late for appointments, and leave jobs or classes after only one day. They are a problem for all of us. Many of us give up too quickly, and yet there are no real obstacles here. Maybe we have brought some complexes from home? And we do not seem to respect each other—I wonder if we can really be defined as one group—as ‘Africans’?” One West African, for example, finds it hard to associate with Somalis. He thinks they are prejudiced, and one Somali agrees, stating there is probably more racial and economic discrimination in Somalia than in Sweden.

He also suggests some Somalis are more religious in Sweden than at home. “Fundamentalism is growing”, he says. “Women who never wore the veil before wear it here”. “People joke about that I don’t eat pork”, says another Somali. “‘Ali, eat bacon!’ they say. That makes me nervous. But at university they say—‘stick to your culture’! And this is what we tell our children to do”.

Maybe those who are not accepted in the foreign culture need to accentuate the symbols of their own religion and culture. The Somalian Culture Association has recently been granted a flat which they have partly converted to a mosque.
Learning from Each Other

The Africans in Halmstad have come for many different reasons. Some have decided to settle, in spite of some hardships, but many plan to go back when possible. In the meantime, they have to find a way to survive, even mentally. They want more mutual understanding. “We have a lot to learn here”, some say. “We like it that women and men decide together in the family, and could learn about other things, like food, and behaviour. We like Sweden for its solidarity with the Third World. But Swedes could also learn from us—how we look at loneliness, how we meet and our social contacts”. “We need to see more of each other,” concludes a Somali.

What Swedes Say about Africans

“Of course we are racists”, says a Swedish woman. “I was shocked by my own reaction, when suddenly at our summer house, deep in the forest, a car stopped outside, and a black man got out. I immediately grasped a big knife to defend myself! And he just wanted to sell some paintings…”.

A member of the UN association also thinks racism exists and ventures some reasons. “After all, no other continent has been so completely subdued as Africa, maybe because Africa was always been regarded as primitive. Africans have even been denied their own history. Maybe another reason is how we read the bible. Ham misbehaved—and black people are seen as his descendants. This is something we used to hear of when I was a boy; black people were somehow never accepted as equals”.

There is no doubt that attitudes in Halmstad, probably like in the rest of Sweden, have changed since the 1970s. Today xenophobia, and even racist attitudes are being freely expressed. A former member of the municipal council feels that Africans are being reasonably well treated in Halmstad, though maybe not with any real commitment. But his impression is that the ranking list for immigrants exists, where the Africans rank lower than others. “The feeling prevails that Africans are ignorant”, he says.

Another retired politician says he often meets people with racist ideas. “It is not nice”, he says, “to hear what ordinary workers can say today about black people. And the blacker the immigrants are, the more negative are the Swedes. Of course, unemployment leads to some shady business among Africans too, but all the Africans really want is a job”. Yet, he thinks that black people never will get jobs in Halmstad. “It is much easier for immigrants who look like us”, he says. “It is sad—but as long as we have this enormous unemployment, I fear Swedes will not change their attitudes to immigrants. Maybe Africans do not feel humiliated as we do when we are unemployed, but I feel their sitting waiting in the market-place is like an insult to our own misfortune”.
Halmstad missionaries tend to agree with this gloomy picture. One feels the “natives” are openly racist and insult Africans. She had expected Sweden to be different when she came back from Africa.

“In Africa”, she says, “everyone wants to learn, but not here”. She thinks the biggest obstacle for young people in Sweden to develop culturally is the attitudes of their parents. “Africans have a unique human warmth”, says another missionary, “and so much kindness, even to strangers. I wish we could only open up and accept it—there is so much to learn from our immigrants!”

Can Swedes Learn from Africans?

It is often said that there is much to learn from Africans. This is a vague and non-committal phrase, which can often be discarded as lip-service, for many Swedes do not seem to be ready to learn. Preconceived ideas stand in the way. “We learnt to feel sorry for Africa”, says a photographer, used to travelling, “so of course they can’t have anything to give us! My very first idea of Africa was the money-box at Sunday school, with a black boy on top, nodding when a coin was dropped into the box. Missionaries gave us the picture of Africans as those who nod and receive. Then we have heard of leaders, rolling in money, when their people starve in the slums. Why don’t their rich people share with the poor? Today we hear of criminality, corruption and civil war—no wonder we think we cannot learn from people like that”.

Some Halmstad people, however, have concrete experiences to share. One consultant feels he learnt things from farmers in Africa which can be used on his own small farm, with fruits, vegetables, geese and sheep. “Our conditions are similar”, he says. “I work ecologically, without artificial inputs. It helps me understand the African small farmer, but I also learn from them. Since fertilisers are so expensive, they have better knowledge than we about old reliable methods like using compost heaps”.

One missionary says we could learn from Africans that trust is a mutual process; if you rely on me, I rely on you. Another is deeply grateful for what he learnt in Rwanda. “I think I learnt to handle life better”, he says, “in sorrow and in happiness. The pulse of life is so much more rapid here—changes are so quick. Africans can see the positive things even in hardship. I think also their vitality and lust for life has taught me to make more out of life. But it is hard to explain the violence, for instance in Rwanda. Maybe we all have this thin layer of civilisation that can easily be scratched away”.

A social worker says she learnt in Mozambique to work with fewer resources. She is also fascinated by the way the Mozambicans solve problems, by reconciliation rather than conflict. “Working in Mozambicans has made me think a lot about how our own lives are organised”, she says. “I am
attracted by their extended family system, and I think we should learn from it. Instead we force our family system on them—I do wish they would not accept it!"

A trade unionist, working in South Africa says he has grown as a human being, working with people from a foreign country, and adds: “Coming home, I told my mum about my experience in Johannesburg. How utterly lonely I felt, as an outsider in Soweto on a visit with a colleague from there. And I suddenly realised how immigrants feel in Sweden ...”

Conclusions

In January 1998, Soul Train, the building of the African Culture Association in Halmstad, was sabotaged. Somebody tried to burn it down. The police have not yet found the perpetrators, but it is believed the motive might be racist.

I have called my study More than we think—less than there should be. My assumption is that a better contact between people in Halmstad and Africa is desirable. I believe that more contact eventually leads to better knowledge and less friction. Global interdependence means that Swedish people cannot restrict their international contacts to their closest neighbours.

My study shows that twenty years ago the commitment to Africa and Africans was lively in organisations, political parties and local institutions in Halmstad. At that time the number of Africans in town was minimal, in fact restricted to the odd visitor, welcomed as a guest. Today the interest in African development has dwindled, while on the other hand the number of residents of African origin has increased.

Now Swedes tend to look at Africa as a source of misery, and their attitudes to Africans who have settled in town as refugees are often negative and unfriendly. The notion of Africans as those “who nod and receive” prevails. Obviously there are also today those in Halmstad who are openly imical. The Africans often perceive the natives of Halmstad as reserved and antagonistic.

The negative attitudes, based on history, media reports, and rumours more than on personal contact, form an obstacle to improved relations. So, increased confrontation does not seem yet to have led to a relationship of more equality and respect in Halmstad.

I feel it is up to the political institutions and civil society to make sure that immigrants in Halmstad will not be reduced to second class citizens for good, and that incidents like the one cited above do not occur. This is, I believe, the most urgent task confronting the whole of Swedish society and one which needs to be handled with vision, imagination, and international understanding.

Local institutions will also need to find ways to raise the international consciousness of their staff, to eliminate all suspicion of discrimination of
refugees. Some of their own employees who have worked in Africa might help, maybe in a network with missionaries and with Africans residing in Africa.

If we really want more qualitative contact with Africa and Africans, the level of information needs to improve about recent developments in Africa in schools, at university and in the media. Since commitment starts with personal experience, I think more teachers and more journalists should be given the chance to visit Africa, maybe through new Sida support to such programmes.

Exchange between schools and universities should be encouraged, in a form where young Swedes can clearly see how they profit from the contact and do not look at themselves as benefactors. In organising such programmes I feel one should make better use of local expertise, from Africans living in Halmstad, and from Swedes who have worked in Africa.

Local cultural institutions could do more to introduce African art, literature and music. Swedish churches might also learn something from Africa about how to make church services in Sweden lively, inspiring and attractive.

Business relations could certainly be improved, perhaps as was suggested starting with a programme for local businessmen to visit African countries to assess the markets. There might also be scope for networks and exchange of experience between ecological farmers in Sweden and African small farmers. This could develop into exchange programmes concerning the environment, an area where Halmstad has interesting experiences to share.

NGOs in Sweden have found their membership decreasing. It is hard to say whether any of the existing organisations will be capable of starting a new popular movement, based on solidarity either with African countries or other Third World countries, and with immigrant groups in Sweden. There is need for new initiatives, maybe also for new forms of organising. Most important is to find ways to engage young people and make them feel it worth while again to act on behalf of their neighbour, in Africa or in Halmstad. For there are certainly things to learn from Africa. As one trade unionist said: “If we could learn from the South Africans’ energy and commitment when demonstrating, May 1st in Halmstad would not look like it does today!”

Finally, I feel that African embassies in Sweden should try to play a more active part in facilitating an exchange between their countries and Swedish local communities. I think that is what partnership means.

Anna Wieslander is a freelance journalist specialising in Development and Aid. She has worked for many years at Sida, mainly with information and training.
Trading with Africa from Sweden—An African Experience

Richard S. Traore

Introduction

In 1980, I participated in the MBA programme at Washington State University. This was quite a change from French-speaking Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso, where I had completed my undergraduate studies in economics.

As a fortune-teller might have foretold, I went very far away from my own country and I met a wonderful Swedish woman, fell in love, got married and had many children. While still completing our studies, my wife-to-be and I decided to spend four years in turn in each other’s countries.

My story could continue in a romantic vein, but then it would not be complete. My wife and I had the ambition to do something for both Sweden and Burkina Faso. After having spent four years in Burkina Faso, we moved to Kalmar in the south of Sweden, where I had already got a job as a researcher and university lecturer. I did however, give up my job as an economist with the World Bank.

Establishing Economic and Business Links between Sweden and West Africa

During my first year in Sweden, within the framework of my research project, I contacted about 100 Swedish firms and was commissioned by nine to conduct investigations in Ghana, Togo, Benin, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Senegal.

Commercial Links

Three of the nine companies were large Swedish firms who wanted me to conduct the following tasks:

– Evaluate their representatives and make suggestions about ways to improve their performance.
– Do competition analyses.
– Provide information on World Bank and United Nations projects which might need their input in terms of consultants and product sales.

The six other companies were medium and small firms that were interested in my doing the following tasks:
– Assess market opportunities and the potential for their products.
– Find two or three potential representatives in each country for a given company. The company would then send a staff member to make the final choice of a representative.
– Help them get on the short list of development agencies’ procurement offices (mostly for purchase contracts worth less than US $500,000).
– Investigate the financial solidity of potential customers.

Investment Studies

For Swedfund and two other Swedish companies I undertook investment studies, which included feasibility studies, partner searches in both Sweden and West Africa, and macro- and micro-economic environment and business climate studies.

Business Attitudes

The Swedish entrepreneurs and potential trading partners:
– Did not know very much about countries in West Africa.
– Had an image of West Africa as a remote poverty-stricken place with a high risk potential. (Swedish businessmen who visited West Africa with me were surprised to find that some of these countries, which had been market-oriented since the 1960s, were far better off economically than some “Marxist-oriented” countries of eastern and southern Africa.)
– Those who have never visited Africa, but believing in the existence of business opportunities, thought that French and British businessmen had already occupied the land as far as business was concerned.

The African entrepreneurs and potential trading partners:
– African potential joint venture partners often expected their Swedish partners to decide what they wanted and dictate conditions, since they were regarded as people bringing in money and technology. The Swedish partner however, often expected an equal partnership, even if Sweden initially contributed more to the realisation of the venture. Usually, besides land and buildings, the local potential joint venture partner has no cash to invest and local banks are reluctant to lend money in investment projects, preferring commercial ventures with quick returns.
African businessmen have a positive image of Sweden and the Swedish people. They welcome the Swedish businessmen as an alternative to French or British businessmen/traders who charge considerable amounts for their products since there is a lack of competition from other international suppliers.

Lessons Learned

There is a greater chance of success for business cooperation if the local businessman has already undertaken some business venture (even on a small scale) in the area where cooperation is sought.

It is very important for the local partner to have good knowledge of the domestic market for his product, including distribution channels and demand characteristics. If the product is brand new, the local partner often has the tendency to rely completely on "the white man" and his technology and not put sufficient effort into promotion of the product.

From Consultant Services to Trading Activities

After having studied many projects where the African businessman did not have enough money, I felt that people have to accumulate some capital and develop a good distribution network before being convinced to invest in joint ventures. One way of achieving this is by developing trading activities.

I decided to cut down on my consultant services which I had carried out since 1988, in order to devote more time to trading activities. In 1991 I started CDT International AB (Consultation, Development and Trading), a company trading mainly in the area of foodstuffs.

Trading North-South and South-North

I travelled to most West African countries to identify which products were in high demand, contacted potential customers, recommended by the relevant Chambers of Commerce, commercial banks or friends whom I already had in each country. I compiled a list of 20 key products such as rice, fish, tomato paste, pigs trotters, frozen poultry, paper, etc.

Back in Kalmar, with the help of an economic assistant, I started a sourcing file (potential suppliers, contacts in Europe, USA and Canada). We got quotations on prices, visited some of the suppliers and began with the first shipments. Before we got started, we had made good contacts with shipping lines and inspection companies to check goods on our behalf before shipment. We had also contacted banks to facilitate the transfer of money from West Africa to Sweden and the payment of our suppliers through our Swedish bank.
In these trading activities we went from a turnover of 600,000 Swedish Kronor to an annual turnover of 25 million Swedish Kronor, mainly through trade with Ghana. We have four full-time employees in Sweden, four in Ghana, two in Côte d’Ivoire and four in Burkina Faso.

From the South to the North we exported fruits, such as mangoes, by air to France and in containers by sea to Holland. Some of the pallets were bought by Swedish food distributors such as ICA and Sandén. The problem with mangoes picked in Burkina Faso was that they were transported by road in the heat to a container that had to be loaded in Abidjan. By the time the mangoes reached Europe, two or three weeks later, some of them were overripe.

To import other products from the South, such as handicrafts, one needs to make sustained efforts to ensure continuous quality and quantities to satisfy northern customers’ demands. In the North, the problem is that the distribution of these items is not large and is mainly done through specialty shops.

Trading South-South

We once tried to sell onions from Burkina Faso to neighbouring Ghana. After doing all the costing, we found that it was 15 per cent cheaper to buy onions from Holland and sell them in Ghana than to buy them from Burkina Faso. Furthermore, the product from Burkina needed improvements in terms of grading and packaging.

Our Burkina Faso office now represents a fruit juice company from Ghana. We are very encouraged by the fact that both the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS, with 16 member states) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (with 8 member states) have made progress in decreasing customs duties successively by 30 per cent and now by 60 per cent, with the goal of reaching 0 per cent customs entry duties between member states in 1998.

This will increase the trade volume between West African states, which is currently less than 10 per cent of their total trading volume and there will be more hope for direct foreign investment to flow into the countries. The size of the “West African Common Market” could bring economies of scale to the production of goods and services. Such economic integration efforts are being applauded by the business community.

Trading in Swedish Products

It was very difficult to find out which Swedish products, in addition to paper, could be sold on a regular basis. On one of our trips to Ghana, however, we were asked if we could supply pigs’ trotters in brine, as Denmark was doing.
My Swedish colleague and business partner Åke Håkansson, who had 25 years of experience in the abattoir business when he joined me in 1993, made a great contribution by developing a new brand of pigs' feet in brine called Rosita. We began by exporting 60 litre barrels each containing about 130 front feet. Currently we are exporting eight containers per month (252 barrels per container) which amounts to annual sales worth about 8 million Swedish Kronor. This trade alone provides two jobs in the abattoirs of Kalmar and Kristianstad and many retailing jobs in Ghana, as well as satisfying customers' demands.

Lessons Learned

In general, one should avoid selling on credit to customers who have not, for a period of at least six months, demonstrated their capacity to distribute goods and transfer money to the supplier. Since banks' conditions for opening letters of credit are stringent in Africa, one can begin transactions by dealing in cash against freight documents. The procedure is that the supplier sends the shipping documents to the customer's bank, which collects the money before handing over the documents to the customer. In this case, the risk is that when the goods arrive at the port, the customer does not have the cash to pay the bank and take out the documents necessary to claim ownership of the container.

The number of days of credit extended to customers should be carefully studied. Among other risks, there is a risk of fluctuation of foreign exchange. Furthermore, with all the business opportunities available to those holding cash in Africa, a businessman is tempted to use the money in other ventures in the hope of making a quick return before paying a supplier by a given deadline.

It should also be pointed out that the society around an African businessman regards him as a rich man, which obliges him to shoulder many financial responsibilities (pay school fees, health bills and other social costs for relatives).

Swedish suppliers would be more interested in entering the African market if EKN credit guarantee policies were made as aggressive as those of the French, British or German export credit institutions.

While planning exports, one should take into account all the delays that can be caused by the bureaucracy in handling harbour, health and customs papers.

When importing from Africa, one has to be prepared to offer some assistance in grading, packaging, quality control and logistics. Sometimes it may also be safer to prefinance the purchase of raw canning materials to avoid delays due to the refusal of local banks to finance the project.

When a businessman sees the marketing opportunities clearly, he does not wait for development agencies to finance his project. For example, our
biggest Ghanaian importer of frozen poultry products from Canada and the USA, two years after dealing with us, started his own poultry farm to satisfy the increasing demand from his customers. He still imports from us, but also does his own production, financed through the profits made in trading with us. The last news we had from him was that he was planning to import young cattle from Burkina Faso, fatten them and sell them in Ghana.

Cultural Exchange

During my many meetings with business communities in Sweden and in Africa, I discovered that there was a dearth of information about each other’s countries and peoples.

In Africa it is thought that everybody in Sweden is rich, whereas in Sweden, the Swedish people think that African countries are so poor that one cannot do business with them, other than supplying foreign aid. Cultural exchange could help people from different countries to get to know each other better.

In 1993 I took the initiative to invite a group of ten musical artists from Ouagadougou to tour southern Sweden. The Diamana Percussion group, as they were called, made the front pages of local papers and the public was happy to see the joy of living in the faces of African people, which contrasted sharply with the impression made by starvation pictures. Furthermore, the public was astonished to hear the artists say that they do not long to move to Sweden, because they love living in their own country.

In 1995, we selected eight Swedish artists and a sound technician to visit Burkina Faso and play during the African film festival FESPACO. This group with the name Midnight Sun gave ten concerts in different parts of Burkina Faso. The public found them exotic. People openly expressed their positive feelings about Sweden and for many, it was an adventure to see the violin played live. The group was so successful that they were invited to play at the president’s private residence during a dinner for representatives of all the countries visiting FESPACO. Midnight Sun was also invited to play at the FESPACO closing ceremony in 1995.

Conclusion

I have covered in broad outline most of the aspects of my experience in trying to establish links between North and South in general and Sweden and West Africa in particular.

My intention is not to show satisfaction with what I have accomplished, but to show to those who want to try, that some things can be done. I do not say that it was easy. I am sure that merely attending a “Starting your own business” course would not have been enough. Furthermore, it was helpful that my wife had a steady job, because starting a business in Sweden is not
any easier than starting a business in any other country. It is also important to have long-term business objectives and not to target only the short-term.

There are, indeed, many other people with unknown experiences that show there is hope and that we are steadily moving towards a world with genuine global partnership between countries and peoples.

Richard S. Traore is an economist. He has worked with the World Bank and is presently co-owner of CDT International AB. He also conducts part-time lectures at Kalmar University in the South of Sweden.
For a Genuine Partnership with Emerging Africa

Mats Karlsson

The African renaissance has begun. This renaissance not only needs to happen, it not only can happen—it actually is happening. Africa is leaving its postcolonial history behind. New generations are taking responsibility for the future.

Africa is not uniform. Violent conflict still ravages the lives of many. Stagnant poverty and stupid politics continue to stunt the individual potential of millions more. But across the continent, more open and more demanding societies are shaping the new Africa. A sovereign, self-reliant and democratic Africa is emerging.

It is in this resurgent Africa that a new generation of genuine partnership should be built. Countries which take responsibility for the public good have a right to claim their share of what the world owes Africa—and what the world owes its own long-term interests. Relinking emerging Africa with the globalising world is in all of our interest.

If Africans are again to become the subjects of their own destiny, and not the object of somebody else’s design, and if we are ever to approach equality in the still unequal relations between Africa and the world, then it is the capacity of African societies, their governments and people, to analyse, choose and shape that must be strengthened.

African societies are acutely aware of the choices they face. But is the outside world listening and responding? Now that many countries are again showing substantial economic growth, what is required to sustain and increase that growth, make it really change the life opportunities of the poor and relink emerging African private business with the international economy? How can aid dependency be broken, the structural adjustment programmes be superseded, and sustainable modes of cooperation be shaped?

Africa’s partners have not yet provided a coherent response on the positive changes unfolding on the continent. But no surprise. This time around, the response cannot come from them alone. This time, the response must in—

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1 Adapted from speeches held during 1997 in Abidjan (African Development Bank/Swedish conference), Dar es Salaam (lecture at the university), Dakar (Association for the Development of Education in Africa, Kampala (Makerere University) and Stockholm (Common Security Forum).
trinsically build on the actions taken and answers given by African societies. More than ever, Africa’s friends need to listen and reflect on what is actually said and done in Africa.

To quote one of Africa’s foremost political scientists, Adebayo Olukoshi, a Nigerian at present with the Nordic Africa Institute at Uppsala, Sweden, from a recent paper:²

There is a new generation which is emerging out of the ashes of crisis and decline in Africa. It is a self-assured generation that is prepared to engage the world on equal terms. ... That generation consists of people who are confident of themselves and are driven by a zeal to transform Africa. ... Its goal (is) the enthronement of developmental democracies in Africa. ... (T)he international community will be welcome in the task of rebuilding Africa but not on any terms or at any cost, least of all on conditions drawn up and imposed from outside in a one-sided manner. If need be, this generation is prepared to go it alone and the world should be willing to let it be—if the international community is not prepared to listen to and respect the self-articulated hopes and aspirations of these Africans, then it should, at least, not obstruct them.

That about sums it up. To turn a phrase Africans’ liberation must be their own. We should be aware, however, that this powerful insight may well be misused and perturbed into an attitude of “Let the Africans take care of their own problems!”. It would then become a cover-up for disengagement. And many in the North would be only too happy to disengage. Some in the North seem today to have the attitude that if things go well in an African country, the people of that country don’t need our help; on the other hand if things go bad they don’t deserve it. Either way, Africa loses. We must resist this.

Development cooperation is not the only answer to Africa’s problems. But it certainly is a part of the solution. After years of working together, and tons of evaluations, we know that it can be effective, even decisive. That is why the rapidly falling aid volumes that have been a feature of the last decade is so disturbing—and irrational. That is why the tortuously slow response to the debt crisis is a historic scandal. That is why the bad aid coordination is a threat to development. Without better aid coordination, efficiency will suffer, and with it political support for aid in donor countries.

If the African nations are now ready to deliver radically better governance—and that is an area that still requires a lot of effort—their partners must not let them down.

Everybody speaks about partnership, but what does it mean? In my view there are both qualitative and methodological aspects to it. First of all, look at the qualitative aspects of partnership. I believe the following five aspects are crucial.

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1. A subject-to-subject attitude. There is need for a real change of attitude. No partnership can thrive or survive without respect for the other. That full respect, rooted in racist and colonialist history, is still lacking.

2. Being explicit about values. You cannot engage in a partnership without sharing values. And only sincerity will reveal them.

3. Transparency in interests. Even if interests diverge—and they may for no bad reason—common ground can be found and deals made. That requires openness.

4. Clear contractual standards. New contractual relationships should focus on the critical factors for success and avoid the plethora of conditionalities that today bedevils cooperation. But then there should be no backtracking by either party. African civil society tells us clearly that indulging reluctant or corruption-afflicted governments is just another form of paternalism. “Never expect less of an African partner than what you expect of yourself”, insists Angela Ofori-Atta, a Ghanaian academic, critically.

5. Equality of capacity. In entering into a fair contract, both parties need to be in equal command of all the issues that go into the contract. The aid relationship may be inherently unequal—one has money, the other doesn’t—but you can have and essentially must have equality in the capacity to analyse the terms of a contract. In a development partnership, that capacity has to be exercised broadly in society.

These partnership qualities deserve, I believe, to be made more explicit. We should develop an explicit code of conduct, so that the way our partnerships really work can be judged. If responsible African leaders would take such an initiative, it might have significant impact on the way the donor relationship develops, and as well boost the willingness in the North to provide support. Such a code could further provide a basis for the new partnership modalities, under strong country leadership, that we desperately need.

The World Bank’s SPA, the EU-ACP Lomé Convention, the UN system-wide initiative for Africa, the consultative groups, round-tables, sectoral programmes—all need a new footing through country-led coordination.

Or as one of Africa’s grand old men of the Humanities, Joseph Ki-Zerbo from Burkina Faso has said: “How can you help somebody you don’t know?” and “The only conditionality I accept is that the Africans constitute themselves” (Ki-Zerbo was in December 1997 awarded the Right Livelihood Prize, also called the alternative Nobel prize, in Stockholm.)

In practice, I see the following changes that have to be made to partnership modalities.

1. Country leadership. This is a paramount area of concern and could be manifested by means of, for example, holding consultative meetings to coordinate donors in the capitals of recipient partners. In between, there should be regular local donor coordination meetings chaired by government authorities.
2. Outreach and respect for the local democratic process. This crucial element has typically been lacking in the “structural adjustment era”, when deals were sometimes made with only a few key economic policy officials involved. If there is to be a “partnership era” there must be respect for open political debate, the role of parliament, consultation with private enterprise and civil society. This may be politically challenging and time consuming, but the alternative would be “choiceless democracy”, as Thandika Mkandawire has called it. Can we expect emerging democracies to develop their roots while there is no respect for alternative choices of economic policy?

3. Transparency of principles. Allow the code of conduct for partnership quality to be translated into local terms. A country—or even a subset of African countries—might issue its own document of principles. An interesting attempt is being made in Tanzania, where a new, post-multiparty elections, Nordic-Tanzanian agreement of partnership principles has developed into something relevant for the whole donor community.

4. Aid pooling and sectoral approaches. It must be possible to cut administrative overhead. If there is a reliable process that leads to, say, a primary education programme in a country, a lead set of donors should negotiate the terms of support with the government. An additional donor should then basically not have to do more than write a check. Financial control, follow-up and evaluation procedures must be acceptable and valid for all donors.

5. Success incentives. Good recipient performance must be rewarded. There has been too much acceptance of bad policies and slack implementation. That should be in the interest of recipients. Yet words like “selectivity” (often used by the World Bank) risk reminding Africans with long memories of how dominant outside powers chose whom to favour. But rewards according to objective and transparent criteria are in everybody’s interests, in particular of the many who do not happen to be in positions of power. Today, most donors are stuck with very large stocks of unspent funds. If radically better aid pooling gets underway, there will be much to be won in terms of fast reallocations to good performers.

6. National capacity. Today, there is a lot of capacity to be found locally or regionally. Using local consultants is part of good donor practice and of course builds more capacity for the future. Many other ways of simultaneously using and building capacity are possible in a genuine partnership. It is decisive, not only to achieve the partnership quality of greater equality, as argued above, and not only as a practical means, often cost-effective and more efficient, but as necessary to the capacity revolution that in the end will trigger a self-reliant democratic development. That, as I will argue below, is one of Africa’s key choices.

7. Coherence. Behind this term are hidden scores of issues with tremendous long-term implications. It is not just the well-known trade and debt issues, but much else that relates to everything from peace and security, to environment, migration and the many issues that enable economic
integration globally. Lip-service is paid at high profile political moments, but so little is done in practice. It is in the African interest to force these issues high on the aid agendas.

Donor governments may well be serious in accepting much of the above reasoning around partnership, but the real proof of their intent is whether they can handle coherence in their own policies. That is why the issues of global governance, and in particular global economic governance, are crucial. Stronger political dialogue and leadership, better coherence of policies, the adequate and sustained financing of the emerging global public sector’s institutions and operations are intrinsically linked to workable partnerships. If these new partnership ideas fail to catch on and fuel virtuous circles, it may well be not just because the Africans are not up to it, as will be presumed by so many in the North, but because the political courage in that very North is lacking.

Ideas of this kind have been advocated by many Africans. They inspired Sweden to reassess its overall Africa policy. That policy was to be based, not on another set of consultancy reports, but on an intense listening exercise with African policy makers, academics and civil society. The year-long project was called “Partnership Africa”. A major conference in Stockholm in June 1997 in the presence of more than one hundred Africans, from civil society, government and academics was the major event in the process. The Vice Presidents of Botswana, Uganda and South Africa were some of the most prominent contributors. So were the people quoted above. The project report appeared soon after, and has then been the subject of consultations in many African nations, as well as in Sweden.

In a white paper Parliament will be asked to give a new mandate to guide Swedish policy, not just an aid policy but an integrated policy covering political cooperation, trade and broad societal contacts, into the new century.

Three ideas to guide us seem to emerge:

– change under African democratic control,
– space and respect for African voices in the world, and
– long-term, broad-based relations between our societies.

How such an approach can be carried out in practice, beyond the many changes that have been pursued over the past years, remains to be proven. But that there is reason to hope for a favourable acceptance in Parliament is confirmed, one might say, by the already achieved Parliamentary approval to increase overall Swedish aid by almost 20 per cent by the year 2000. As the greatest part of that will benefit Africa, such a decision crucially depends on the perceptions of development prospects on that continent.
Allow me to set the African transformation in the context of that of my own country. When my parents were born, in 1918 and 1923, Sweden was a developing country. It was not a democracy. Agriculture, much of it small-holder, dominated. Infant mortality rates were like East Africa’s today, life expectancy like South Asia’s. There was malaria. How could people create, during a period easily within living memory, the welfare of modern society? I see three factors:

- The poor organised to demand their rights. Civil society created a democratic culture. This followed a political struggle, where the elites defended their privileges and opposed democracy. Furthermore, this was not the result of economic progress, it was a factor in creating it.
- Once democracy was established, capital and labour compromised around a social market economy. Private enterprise remained the backbone of the economy, but public responsibility was recognised for social justice, welfare and efficiency.
- Education unleashed the creative energy of the many, for the first time in our history. Sweden already had universal primary education, a decisive asset, but it was shallow and of poor quality. Take-off came when the poor gained access to higher levels. Adults got a new chance, not least through informal channels.

For the past half century Sweden has benefited extraordinarily well from free trade and international integration, regionally among the Nordics, in Europe and globally. The country depends on the multilateral system, with the United Nations at the core.

And that is why strengthening and renewing multilateralism, in security, in development, in environment, is such a central national objective. Africans often express mixed experience with the multilateral system. Yet it is the only system that in the long run can secure small countries their place in the world system. It is in our common interest that the UN reform pursued under Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s leadership succeeds and is even further developed. And despite the often-voiced and partly justified critique, the invaluable importance of the World Bank as part of that system, especially with its new leadership under Jim Wolfensohn, should be recognised as well.

The point about Sweden here is that our experience was not unique. This century has seen so many countries transform. I believe Africa will do it early next century. The speed and complexity of global change makes transformation more challenging today. The challenge, however, will be to make the new opportunities benefit Africa. Africa fears marginalisation in an interdependent world. Globalisation can work in Africa’s favour—but there are many ifs. I will point to three choices.

First of all, to deepen or disregard the culture of democracy. Democracy has roots with all peoples. Progress over the past decade has changed Africa.
More countries have had a second round of free elections. Some countries have had constitutional change of leadership more than once. But stable democracy is some way ahead for many countries, not only where ethnicity divides or an authoritarian legacy is heavy. Challenges to democratic progress exist even where, or rather precisely where, civil society has long been active. Backlash is possible. Stagnation cannot be ruled out. There is no choice but to move forward decisively in the democratic struggle.

Partnership will follow those who lead their countries to greater openness, respect for human rights and deeper democracies. Those who do not will see their legitimacy erode, and with it the basis for partnership. The world must understand the difficulties of Africa’s history. Real democracy can only appear from within, in Africa as elsewhere. Yet the other side of the respect that this insight calls for is that African nations must actually persevere in their pursuit of democracy and human rights.

Africans don’t have different individual rights from anybody else. The challenges may seem formidable to transform African nations into modern, open societies where the respect for human rights seems to come easy, but African governments must be held accountable for how they respect human rights.

Among the specific challenges that democratic culture faces are making room for ethnicity, respecting minorities, respecting the standing of the opposition, creating practical rules for the financing of political parties, and much more.

African nations, both on official and civil society levels, need much more to share experience of what has worked in their specific contexts.

Key attributes of democracy, beyond constitutions and elections are, of course, openness, critical understanding, tolerance, respect for the other, women’s equal rights and opportunities, no fear of making use of freedom of expression and of association. The point is that in the information age no country, no economy, will prosper in the long run without them. The much freer and assertive media of today’s African societies is one of the most promising developments of the past decade. Another group that today is in a key position to influence events are the academics, young or established, independent or in the public service. They will often be the ones who stand on the fault line of democratic change.

Of the many aspects of democratic transformation now going on—the stronger local communities, independent trade unions, emerging real civic organisations, not just consultancy NGOs—one dimension deserves particular understanding. Africa is in fact undergoing a tremendous political revolution—the gender revolution. It belongs in this context of democracy and human rights, but is of course a much wider economic challenge as well. Many claim to have understood these issues. Many donor nations have tried to mainstream them in their own domestic politics and also in development cooperation. But few have adequately come to realise the dimensions of
what is going on. Women all over Africa are taking the step out of “gender apartheid”, as Ugandan Vice President Speciosa Kazibwe calls it. This is happening on a major scale, not always recognised, and, of course, neither is progress easy or self-evident, but it is happening. And society will be the better for it.

Women often choose to seek voice in organisations of their own. When these organisations gather enough strength they become a political factor in civil society. In the rapidly emerging democratic cultures this is a phenomenon that established structures do not easily adjust to, as witnessed by the obstacles faced by the Tanzanian Bawata movement. With more and more women organised, however, African politics is not likely to be the same again.

At the Partnership Africa conference in Stockholm, 40 per cent of the participants were women. They transformed the discussion. Explicit anger and frustration combined with confidence, humour and readiness to act. The presence of a critical mass of self-confident women galvanised the meeting. Nations who do not link up to this groundswell of creative energy are foregoing one of their richest resources.

Second choice, a social or a captured market economy. No longer is the choice between a free and a non-free market economy. That choice is made. We know that a free market with private enterprise gives more people more freedom, capacity and opportunity to create better lives for themselves and their societies. The real choice is whether to develop, temper and sustain that free market and give it a social and human-oriented character, or whether to let that market be captured by elites of various kinds.

An economy can be captured through too little or too much regulation, by elites, old or new, political, economic, family or military, through outright corruption or in more sophisticated ways. Both on moral and sustainability grounds such a market remains fundamentally flawed, even if free in the everyday sense.

The choice is most apparent where economies are in transition such as Russia, South East Asia, Latin America, but is highly relevant also in the modern Western economies. But Africa may be well be more vulnerable. Loyalties that stem from family, regional or ethnic ties are strong. The scope for non-price factors to influence demand and supply thus increases manifold. The micro-institutional basis for a market economy is poorly recognised. This is reality, with many societal institutions of value built-in. That has to be kept in mind as we wonder why the supply-side response is weaker than expected to structural adjustment.

These difficulties only require us to be more sophisticated in our approaches, not to cut down our ambitions. The anger in Africa today over the widespread corruption is one of the surest signs that we are not yet seeing a social market appear. I believe, contrary to what is sometimes said, that a social market economy is fully possible in Africa.
A social market integrates social policy into overall policy. It makes inclusion its basis. It is not an add-on or a safety net, and of course it cannot replace bad macro- or market economic policy. It nurtures the institutions at all levels which provide the framework for an efficient market. Thus it contributes to releasing productive potential. Capital will work more efficiently. And we may achieve the leap from bare per capita growth to the three or more per cent that we need to make a difference.

A social market economy is the sustainable relationship between a free market and democracy.

In Africa, this insight translates into the whole development agenda. But there is one task that today stands out more clearly than others: rooting out corruption. The anger in African societies today over the scale and growth of corruption and the impunity with which it is carried out is volcanic. Dealing with it now is absolutely essential. Or else, the gains in democratic and market economic change may be lost. Free media is an essential requirement to expose corruption, better policies and regulations certainly necessary, but only political leadership, in parliament, in government and in local institutions, can deal with it in practice. Offenders, from the public or private sectors, must be brought to courts. Impunity is unacceptable. Otherwise the normal control mechanisms of everyday life will not set in. And as it takes two to tango, the corruptor must face his responsibility as well.

There is sometimes a much too facile approach to corruption: abolish regulations and open the market, and corruption will go away. That is not so. Over-regulatory economic policies have surely helped to create the rent-seeking class that for long, and in many places still, thrive on their privileged access to resources and permits. But world-wide experience shows that market economies are fully compatible with market economic systems.

On a global scale, as well as on the national and local level, the corruption and the risk of seeing captured, not social, markets emerge is the major threat to democratic development. The third choice is whether to create a capacity revolution or see further capacity deterioration.

Capacity, like partnership, is the word in vogue in developmental discourse today. There is good reason. Efforts to support must be calibrated to nations’ and societies’ capacity to lead and manage the developmental processes. That is the most important lesson learned and the now the recognised key to “efficiency”. Much effort is thus being put into strengthening capacity, by both multilateral and bilateral partners. The thing to understand is that capacity, a bit like democracy, cannot be created from outside, supported yes, but essentially it is formed by internal dynamic.

What factors need to come together to create a capacity revolution, to enable societies to leap onto another capacity level, triggering off virtuous circles and creating increasingly self-reliant and sustainable developmental processes, is as yet not fully, and certainly not broadly, understood. Leaders and civil society in countries which are intent on breaking out of the bare
per capita growth that is all that present policies and cooperation forms seem to allow in most places should concentrate on identifying these factors, and dealing with them with purpose and clear priority. If not, deterioration and marginalisation is what the future will hold. Some African countries are clearly in the risk zone of further decline, holding much suffering in store for the poor. But many nations are on the point of decisive progress.

The agenda may seem obvious enough. It encompasses the whole socio-political field, human development in its broadest sense, policy formulation, public administration reform, civil society engagement, progress in relevant research etc. Is talking of a capacity revolution then just another way of talking of the whole developmental process, i.e. nothing really new? And is there a risk that attention is detracted from African economies’ pressing need of greater capital inflows and debt relief, to fill that gap in saving which is still real enough and has its economic logic? These are pitfalls to be avoided. However, to see the developmental challenges from the perspective of creating a capacity revolution should help to concentrate minds on priorities.

Of the many areas in need of action, education stands out in particular. Universal primary education is a sine qua non. The Social Summit in Copenhagen 1995 committed world nations to achieve this target early next century. Basic education may be expensive, but not more so than the world can afford it. Maybe the most difficult issues will be assuring quality, teacher commitment, parent priority, and especially girl participation.

Basic education for young and adults provides a first ticket to modern society, it increases productivity and strengthens the ability of young women and men to plan their families. But education must be seen as a comprehensive system. Secondary schooling allows young people to escape from low-productivity rural, or slum, life. Africa needs a new push in improving the coverage and quality of its secondary education.

And the universities: centres of excellence, and of national memory, breeding ground for just critique, African universities have suffered tragically over the past two decades. Societies need their universities.

With so much African academic competence in Africa and around the world, an academic renewal should be possible. Sweden, through Sida, SAREC and the Nordic Africa Institute, will want to be part of that academic renaissance.

Three messages to those responsible for education in governments might be the following:

1. Fight for the education budgets! Use what resources you have efficiently. Then challenge the ministers of economy and planning to prove that there are investments that have a higher rate of social return than education. If the ministers of finance still claim budgetary constraints and won’t deliver the money, demand that they be more efficient in raising
taxes. And while you are at it, tell ministers of industry, customs and others to root out corruption. Public service needs its resources.

2. Wire Africa! Information technology, internet, offers precisely the kind of technology which might allow Africa to relink, to leapfrog into modernity. Use globalisation, don’t let it intimidate you.

3. Don’t settle for anything less than a full African renaissance! Education is the key to capacity. And capacity the key to sustained growth. And to Africa’s place in the world. Education can lift that capacity faster than just waiting for growth to do its job. Education defines the social market economy. Education fuels the culture of democracy. Within a generation Africa can transform.

To that Africa Sweden wants to be a reliable partner. Allow me to end by again quoting Angela Ofori-Atta. For our conference she wrote a perceptive and challenging letter, addressed to “Dear little brother Sweden!”. At the very end she states:

So what is it I am saying, my dear little brother Sweden? Basically that we get to know each other better, get to like and respect each other more, work out a good partnership based on transparency of agenda, mutuality of need and build this on egalitarian principles.

You do not need to come as a helper, only as a partner. This your people can understand and respect, and my people will applaud. We will welcome you and your expressed self interests. We will give and we will take, fully acknowledging the mutuality of the benefits we reap from each other.3

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3 Her two letters are included in full in this volume.