



“It is almost half-time”

Will the SADC Region Achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the Target Date of 2015?

Introduction - Summary of MDG Progress in SADC

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The SADC region is likely to achieve the universal primary education goal. However, poverty, food insecurity, child malnutrition, gender inequality in secondary and tertiary levels of education, in the economy and political sphere, high child and maternal mortality, deforestation, rural water and sanitation remain major challenges. The falling trend in the otherwise generally high coverage of child immunization is a cause for concern. The region remains the epicenter of HIV and AIDS with double digit prevalence and on the increase in most countries.

This underlies the high morbidity, mortality and orphan burden. This is against a background of weak economic performance, declining official development assistance (ODA) to the land locked SADC countries and a high debt burden. MDG Indicator graphs showing progress are provided in Appendix.



MDG 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger

For most SADC region countries, the target of halving the proportion of the population below the US\$1PPP per day seems unachievable. Hunger, food insecurity and child malnutrition remain a problem in the SADC region, and most of the SADC region countries may be unable to achieve the hunger reduction targets.

MDG 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education

The number of children attending primary school in SADC is high with most countries likely to achieve the universal primary education goal and targets. Internal efficiency has been maintained in the primary education system as Grade 5 completion rates have generally increased in all countries between 1991 and 2004. Literacy rates for the 15-24 year olds are very high in the SADC region.

MDG 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Gender parity in primary and secondary education has been reached or is likely to be achieved in most SADC countries. Consequently, gender parity in the number of girls and boys aged 15 -24 years who are literate is achieved or likely to be achieved in most countries. Gender inequality in enrolment at tertiary school level remains a major challenge even though overall there is an improvement in gender parity in tertiary education in the SADC region. Eight of the SADC countries still have a bias against girls and 5 countries a bias against boys. Thus, overall gender parity in tertiary education may not be achievable in SADC by 2015. It should be noted that at secondary school level, the NERs are generally low such that the issue of concern should not only be to achieve parity but to increase enrolment of both boys and girls.

The share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector remains very low in the SADC region; as such the overall target of 50 percent by 2015 is not achievable for most countries. More women are in parliaments in all SADC countries today than ever before. However, in most countries women remain vastly under-represented in politics.

MDG 4: Reduce Child Mortality

Under-five and infant mortality rates remain high in the SADC region with half of the countries experiencing declines which are not large enough to meet the 2015 MDG targets and five countries experiencing increases. While high immunization levels of one year olds against measles have generally been sustained in most SADC countries since 1990, the recently declining coverage in five countries by 2004 is a cause for concern.

MDG 5: Improve Maternal Health

Maternal mortality remains high and is falling at a painfully slow rate in most SADC region countries and this is combined with alarming increases in two of the countries. The target of reducing by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio will not be met by most countries in the SADC region. The most recent increasing trend is due to the impact of HIV and AIDS pandemic.

MDG 6: Combat HIV and AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases

The SADC region remains the epicenter of HIV and AIDS with HIV prevalence still in the double digit and on the increase in most countries in the SADC region. The target of halting and reversing the spread of HIV and AIDS by 2015 is not likely to be met by most countries in the SADC region. Deaths associated with tuberculosis have drastically increased in most countries in the SADC region in the past decade since 1990. Given the current context of high HIV prevalence, the 2015 target of halting and reversing the incidence of tuberculosis will not be met. Although school attendance by orphans is generally very high, a notable proportion of orphans continue to be disadvantaged in terms of school attendance in some SADC countries. The 2015 MDG target of universal school attendance by orphans is achievable.

MDG 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Deforestation is on the increase in the SADC region with most countries experiencing a fall in land area covered by forest. The proportion of land area maintained to protect biological diversity is slightly on the increase in the SADC region with most countries maintaining stable proportions and the rest slightly increasing. However, given the high rate of deforestation, the 2015 targets of reversing the loss of environmental resources are unlikely to be achieved.

Most SADC countries have achieved or are likely to achieve the 2015 targets of sustainable access to safe drinking water in urban areas. Even though most of these countries have seen an improvement in the sustainable access to an improved water source in rural areas, meeting the 2015 targets remains a challenge in the SADC region. Most SADC experiencing a decline in access to improved sanitation in urban areas and a rise in such access in rural areas. However, overall, the 2015 MDG improved sanitation targets will not be achieved in the SADC region.

MDG 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development

Official development assistance (ODA) to the SADC region is declining with most countries experiencing this decline between 1990 and 2004. Debt burden is still high in the SADC region with about half of the countries experiencing high double digit debt service ratios.

Challenges in Meeting the MDGs

The SADC region crises of high levels of poverty and the raging HIV and AIDS pandemic pose great challenges towards the attainment of MDGs. For example, in six countries in the SADC region – Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe – there were serious food shortages since 2000 to date and, related to this, the HIV and AIDS pandemic in the SADC region is continuously endangering the lives and livelihoods of millions of people. The combination of HIV and AIDS with chronic poverty, erratic rainfall, natural resource degradation and also the inextricable link between gender and poverty all culminate in an acute humanitarian crisis that demands immediate action. Just like in many other regions of the world, governance and institutional challenges overarch the development context of the SADC region. All these have resulted in the reversal of progress already made in many SADC countries towards the attainment of the MDGs.

Economic growth remains the major challenge constraining the attainment of MDGs in the SADC region. Declining, low or stagnating economic growth characterises most SADC region economies. The largely agriculturally-based economies are being negatively affected by climatic changes in particular droughts and floods. This has resulted in the region being susceptible to high food insecurity of humanitarian proportions since 2000 to date. Historical structural rigidities in the economies have persisted and the economies have not optimally diversified to become dynamic economies. The SADC region economies with the exception of South Africa and Mauritius largely depend on primary commodity production rather than high value manufacturing and value addition. This economic context has generated and sustained high poverty in the SADC region.

Recent experience of economic growth in the agriculturally dependent SADC region economies is sobering (see Table 1). Sub-Saharan Africa has experienced stagnant and declining export earnings, export concentration in primary commodities has increased and terms of trade (TOT) have declined all culminating in severe balance of payments (BOP) problems and sluggish and/or declining growth.

Table 1: Real GDP Growth Rates , percent per annum, by Country, SADC region 2000 – 2004

Country	2000	2001	2002	2003E	2004F
Angola	2.4	3.5	11.7	10.5	8.5
Botswana	4.7	4.8	4.1	5.4	7.4
Lesotho	4.0	2.8	4.0	4.0	4.0
Malawi	2.3	-1.5	-2.0	1.8	2.6
Mauritius	4.0	5.4	5.2	4.8	5.1
Mozambique	1.6	13.9	12.0	10.2	8.0
Namibia	3.9	3.0	2.3	4.0	4.5
South Africa	3.1	2.5	3.0	2.7	3.5
Swaziland	2.5	2.6	1.6	2.4	3.0
Zambia	3.0	5.2	3.7	3.2	3.1
Zimbabwe	-4.1	-7.3	-8.5	-8.8	-4.7

Source: ECA-SA Economic and Social Conditions in Southern Africa 2003. Data for DRC, Madagascar and Tanzania was not available.

External debt remains a serious burden in the SADC region with many countries well above the ideal debt-service ratio of below 5 percent. Past debt relief strategies, including the contemporary HIPC initiative have not, as yet, resulted in debt sustainability in the SADC region and debt-service obligations are severely constraining poverty reduction efforts. A number of SADC countries are experiencing high double digit debt service ratios and these include Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The attainment of the MDGs in the SADC region will be a costly exercise requiring enormous financial resources for the massive public investments needed. Given that the SADC region is home to some of the world's poorest countries, the scale of the funding requirements necessary to achieve the MDGs is beyond the means of many SADC region countries. Domestic economic growth will be critical in expanding the 'resource envelope' necessary to finance the MDGs. It has been estimated that US\$ 17.6 billion in external financing is required to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and hunger in Southern Africa by 2015. The costs of funding the remaining MDGs have been calculated at US\$ 10.5 billion.

External debt is a serious resource constraint to achieving the MDGs. Southern African countries have a total debt stock of US\$ 78.1 billion with total annual debt service amounting to US\$6.8 billion. Excluding South Africa, debt as a percentage of GDP in Southern Africa is 100 percent. According to UNDP (2002), some countries in Sub-Saharan Africa spend more on their debt-servicing obligations than they do on the social sectors necessary to achieve the MDGs. Past debt relief strategies, including the contemporary HIPC initiative have not, as yet, resulted in debt sustainability in the SADC region and debt-service obligations are severely constraining the public expenditures that are necessary to accelerate progress towards achieving MDGs in the region.

Neo - Liberal macroeconomic stabilization and adjustment

Most of the SADC countries have gone through various policy changes in the last three to four decades. Most efforts at structural adjustment in Africa aimed at promoting stabilisation and economic growth have been assisted and encouraged by in International Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). There is no universally accepted definition of structural adjustment or economic reforms. What is often referred to as structural adjustment/economic reform is basically macro-economic stabilization policies, i.e. structural adjustment in the narrow sense. Macro-economic stabilization usually precedes or accompanies proper structural adjustment and is normally a precondition for adjustment. According to the IMF, macroeconomic reform is necessary for successful stabilization to be attained and maintained. The IMF therefore conditions its Balance of Payments support to developing countries on policies consistent with macro-economic stability. Thus although at theoretical level the dividing line between adjustment and stabilization is very clear, in practice this line becomes blurred since stabilization measures constitute important elements of adjustment.

Macroeconomic stabilization can be defined as change of policy in response to a non permanent monetary shock to the economy in order to achieve internal and external balances in the short to

medium term. Stabilization policies thus aim at restoring the economy to the financial/monetary equilibrium position that existed before the shock. On the other hand structural adjustment/economic reform seek to change the configuration of the economic equilibrium by encouraging efficient resource allocation thereby increasing economic growth. Adjustment policies are particularly in response to permanent and irreversible shocks on the economy. Structural adjustment lending which entails lending conditioned on specific economic policies such as reforms to free market forces so as to get prices right and promote long term growth has emerged as an instrument of the World Bank.

There is little controversy on the need for good macroeconomic management as most governments accept that macroeconomic instability and poor macroeconomic policies are not conducive to growth. By contrast the premises of adjustment are the subject of considerable debate and controversy. While macroeconomic stabilization requires that governments act prudently and live within their means, *adjustment demands that governments withdraw as much as possible from intervening in resource allocation*. Given the extent of government withdrawal and economic restructuring that structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) have demanded on adjusting countries, it is not surprising that they have been very controversial especially in Africa.

Essential Features of SAPS

SAPs are based on very strong assumptions that markets are efficient and the government intervention on resource allocation is essentially inefficient and distorting. Thus government intervention is only accepted in cases of market failures in the provision of infrastructure, education and health etc. The need for market prices to reflect relative scarcities applies as much to factor as to product markets though greater attention is generally paid to the latter. According to these neo-liberal policies of adjustment, distortions in the product market are corrected through the use of three policy tools :

1. An adjustment in the nominal exchange rate;
2. Trade liberalization; and
3. Product market liberalization.

There is doubt that neo-liberal adjustment advocates for an export-orientated growth strategy.

Factor markets are also covered by the WB philosophy of getting prices right. This explains why SAPs emphasize the need to carry out financial sector reforms which are generally aimed at improving the functioning of the domestic financial market , removing distortions and controls and allowing interest rates to respond freely to market forces. A well functioning financial sector raises both the level and efficiency of investment in the economy thereby encouraging growth. However, the banking system in Africa has been bedevilled by large fiscal deficits, the reliance of Public enterprises on the domestic financial system, and an increasing portfolio of bad debts. Under these circumstances adjustment policies have sought to achieve the following three financial sector objectives;

1. Reduction of financial repression;
2. Restoration of solvency to the financial system; and
3. Improvements in the bank infrastructure.

Adjustment programmes also target the labour market encouraging real wage flexibility. This is because in the medium to long term structural adjustment implies resource transfers which in turn require labour market flexibility to allow free movement of labour in the economy. Basically under the neo-liberal adjustment programmes, there is no room even for the infant industry protection, a critical requirement for most developing countries to industrialize.

Thus under the neo-liberal adjustment programmes economic planning , particularly indicative planning was thrown out and the corresponding infrastructure including planning ministries was largely dissolved in the 80s and 90s. In the late 1990s there was a paradigm shift in adjustment programmes with more focus being placed on poverty reduction. In this regard, most SADC countries are pursuing economic development policies under the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) frameworks, National Development Plans (NDPs), Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEFs) etc. Most countries are now in their second generation PRSPs which are largely growth and development strategies for poverty reduction in contrast to the first generation PRSPs which were largely social sector oriented. The overall thrust of these policies still includes liberalization of the financial, capital and labour markets, import and export markets, privatization of formerly state owned companies, budget reforms, and institutional reforms, among other policy changes with a view to promoting growth for poverty reduction. The practical results of these reforms have been mixed so far.

Critique and challenges of Neo - Liberal economic policies

The need for structural adjustment in many African economies is not questionable as this is the very essence of development. What is debatable is whether IMF/WB type programmes can eradicate structural deformities in these economies and generate the required sustainable growth and development to meet the 2015 MDG targets. Overall, the experience and outcomes in the 1980s and beyond with the neo-liberal macroeconomic policies has been negative with economic growth stagnating or declining in many countries, poverty increasing in the context of rising inflation and unemployment. In addition, food shortages have increased particularly in Southern Africa due to the combination of natural and policy related factors and HIV and AIDS has ravaged the sub-continent.

Among the sub-Saharan African countries that adopted adjustment policies since the 80s, about three quarters recorded declining per capita incomes, over half experienced declining investment and accelerating inflation. The adjustment policies did not succeed in restoring economic growth except in a minority of countries. In the latter countries the WB poured in disproportionate amounts of aid and soft loans in support of the adjustment programmes, (Stewart 1991).

Some analysts have observed that the developed world does not adopt IMF/WB type programmes to effect structural change in their economies. Structural changes in the developed countries have occurred overtime and did not lead to disruption of the social, political or economic fabric of their societies as the case in most African countries. Thus, developing countries should also insist on symmetrical structural changes which take into account the realities of their environments.

Wholesale liberalisation has proved to be an inappropriate strategy in the context of Africa. In the initial stages of adjustment in the 80s it resulted in the collapse of indigenous industries both large and small as they were outperformed by the internationally exposed companies in production. Recently, the experience of flooding of cheap and generally poor quality mostly Asian goods (particularly Chinese) in Africa remains a big challenge for both governments, local industry and consumers. There is no doubt that some level of protection to the young African countries is required to avoid total collapse. Given that international capital has high mobility in search better investment conditions and returns, it is necessary for governments to intervene to reduce exposure of countries to this high globalization risk. A case in point is that of Swaziland where the foreign dominated textile industry has experienced a decline as about 14 textile factories have closed their operations and left the country affecting about 15 000 – 30 000 people who have become unemployed in 2004. There is no doubt that if Africa is to achieve its 2015 MDG target including halving poverty there is need to consolidate local production first while attracting meaningful foreign investment.

Opening up economies to foreign finished goods undermines technological development and transfer of technology into African economies. It is also important to note that not all technology is freely mobile except communication technology such as televisions, cell phones, computers etc which are best distributed by the market. Otherwise there is need to search for appropriate technology at a cost.

Given the historical structural inequalities in access to major means of production in Africa, reality has shown that this cannot be resolved by market forces alone. A lot of deliberate government intervention is required in the redistribution of key means of production, for example, the case of land redistribution in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa. A strong social state is necessary if the redistribution of means of production and wealth is to take place in Africa to facilitate the attainment of the 2015 MDG targets. The experience with labour market liberalization under SAPs has not been encouraging either. Rolling back the state in regards to labour laws in export processing zones, for example, resulted in the nullification of the decent work requirements in many countries.

Governance discourse in developing countries has questioned the efficacy of the policy of rolling back the state under SAPs. Critiques argue that this has weakened many states over the decades of economic reforms and with it came increased poverty and weakened social delivery systems. Now with the MDG agenda coming back to those very same social issues, one can ask to what extent a weakened and rolled back state can meet its social responsibilities? In this regard, it is now difficult to find a strong social state in Africa. Cost recovery in health and education which was introduced under the neo-liberal macroeconomic reforms continues in many countries even in the face of a raging HIV and AIDS pandemic. Weakened governments find themselves reneging their social responsibilities in health and education to households and communities under seriously under funded programmes such as the home-based care programmes.

Infrastructure development is a precondition for sustainable economic growth and there is no doubt that a strong government hand is required in this respect. However, efficiency in infrastructure development

can be improved by building strong partnerships with the private sector in actual programme implementation.

Radical critiques of neo-liberal macroeconomic adjustment conceptualize SAPs as essentially a privatization programme (Mwanza, 1992) and others see them as a new form of recolonization of Africa, (Chakaodza, 1993). It would appear that the actual reason for IMF/WB type of SAPs is privatization for improved debt servicing via the export-led growth. They argue that initially failure to service accumulated debts by developing countries led to increased donor pressure for adoption of SAPs. Subsequently, continued failure to service accumulated debts has led to the suspension or cutting of macroeconomic support to countries, for example, in Zimbabwe. The proponents of the recolonization argument say that the colonialists are the bankers, the foreign investors, economic consultants and international technocrats under these programmes. Thus, money and power remains in their hands. The SAP model unduly focuses on the domestic policy factors as the cause of socio-economic dislocation and crises and fails to acknowledge the contribution of the hostile external environment.

In countries implementing SAPs or their more recent version, there is a general tendency to de-emphasize development planning and to emphasize budget planning, monitoring and control. Although the latter are also important, they need to be in the context of a clear development plan. Thus, the main African critics of the neo-liberal paradigm as reflected in SAPs revolved around a number of arguments which included; erosion the role of the state whilst the process of African development necessitates a central leading role for the African developmental state, underestimation of the weaknesses of the African state institutions, the social repercussions of the erosion of the role of the state and the role of the market in creating corruption. Others argued that the post independent African state was predatory, clientalist, elitist and patrimonial etc and as such cannot not serve as an engine for economic development. However, both agree that a central role for the state will be needed to promote development in Africa.

SAP is basically a programme targeted at changing the incentives structure in favour of tradeables against non tradeables. Thus, developing countries should specialize in the production and export of primary products since they have a comparative advantage in these. However, structuralists argue that prices of primary goods have fallen relative to those of manufactured goods during the past century and so developing countries will continue to face deteriorating incomes from the trade flow.

Following all these criticisms on the neo-liberal macroeconomic frameworks, Stiglitz, 1998, criticising from within the Bretton Woods institutions, proposed a mode of partnership and dialogue between the state, private sector and civil society. He argued that a New Development Strategy must include components aimed at developing the state (public sector), the private sector, the community, the family/ household and the individual. According to the 1997 World Development Report the most successful experiences of development have proved to be the models where the state balances the role of markets to correct its failures and maintain justice. A similar orientation was proposed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) which promoted the logic of private, public partnership in which trust is built between the state and the private sector to work on the basis of complementarity instead of competition with the aim of building an institutional framework for the development process that does not hinder the role of the market and at the same time does not ignore the social aspects of development, (OECD, 2003). Overall, the post Washington consensus indicates the demise of the state market dichotomy and the rise of a debate that is not concerned with state intervention per se but with the form and extent of that intervention and with building the capacity of the state to match its development tasks.

African alternatives to Neo - Liberal economic policies

Following the failure and resultant frustration from SAPs, African governments and other development players in Africa have come up with several alternative development frameworks. As Africa enters the 21st century her people are faced with the same basic problems of survival that they expected to have overcome after almost half a century of political independence. This is despite the goals set at independence in virtually all African countries declaring war against poverty, ignorance and disease, the onset of HIV and AIDS and increased violent conflicts in Africa have further aggravated the precarious situation. Africa has had several proposals and processes relating to regional integration and seeking to realize development in the continent and some of these include:

1. Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) for the Economic Development of Africa, 1980-2000;
2. Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER), 1986-1990 later converted into;
3. The United Nations Programme of Action for Africa's Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD), 1986;

4. The African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP), 1989;
5. The African Charter for Popular Participation for Development (ACPPD), 1990;
6. The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), 1991; and
7. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), 2002.

Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) for the Economic Development of Africa, 1980-2000.

African governments noticed as early as 1980 under the Organization of African Unity's Lagos Plan of Action for the economic development of Africa 1980-2000 that the then neo-liberal macroeconomic frameworks were not robust and not achieving intended results. The key alternative strategies to economic development suggested then included the following:

1. Self-reliance based on Africa's huge resources which must be utilized for the benefit of the people of Africa. This was not to say that the continent should cut itself from outside contributions in development but that such contributions should only supplement local effort and should not be the mainstay of Africa's development.
2. Move away from total reliance on the export of raw materials to include value addition under restructured and expanded markets;
3. Pursue an all embracing economic, social, cultural and political development strategy which includes mobilization of Africa's entire human and material resources for development; and
4. Pursue with renewed determination efforts for Africa's economic integration and economic cooperation.

The Lagos Plan of Action had specific strategies for all key sectors of development. In the area of food and agriculture it was highlighted that the fundamental requisite is a strong political will to channel large volumes of resources to agriculture and support small farmers in order to achieve higher levels of productivity and improve the welfare of the majority of the people who reside in rural areas. The development of agriculture should not be considered in isolation but integrated within the economic and social development processes. Priority actions would include reduction in food wastage, attaining a higher degree of food security, increased food production particularly cereals and agricultural diversification. The set up of agricultural production should be based on adequate and realistic agrarian reform programmes consistent with political and social conditions prevailing in each country.

It was realized that the industrialization of Africa in general and individual countries in particular constitute a fundamental option in the total range of activities aimed at freeing Africa from under development and economic dependence. Industrialization will help meet the basic needs of the population exploitation of natural resources, creation of employment, establishment of a base for the development of other economic sectors, creation of a basis for assimilating and promoting technological progress, resulting in overall development. Emphasis should be put to establish links between industry and other sectors so as to promote backward and forward linkages and thus achieve harmonized industrialization and development. Industrialization should aim at self sufficiency in following sectors; food, building materials, agricultural inputs (fertilizer, pesticides, agricultural machinery etc), clothing, energy, intermediate and capital goods etc

Exploitation of natural resources such as minerals, water and energy resources remains a key strategy in the development of Africa. The aim of African government should be the rational development and utilization of their natural resources, employing technologies that are appropriate to their local conditions and paying due regard to the conservation of natural resources. Key strategies include, establishment of joint regional and sub-regional facilities for applied research, specialized services and training and participation in multinational projects for the exploitation, production and processing of usable natural resources.

Since Africa's greatest asset is human resources, full mobilization and effective utilization of the labour force (men, women and youth, both trained and untrained) for national development and social progress should be a major instrument for national development. In accordance with the principle of self reliance individual countries should give special priority to the development of scientific and technical manpower and skills at all levels. A primary objective of socio-economic development is the improvement of life of the entire population. The attainment of this objective requires full participation of all segments of the population in gainful and productive employment and provision of all essential services for the enrichment of life. It also requires effective programmes of social welfare, community development, social security and mobilization of the population for the development of public works and community services is effective social safety nets.

Adopt measures to ensure the development of an adequate science and technology base and the appropriate application of science and technology in spear-heading development in agriculture; transport and communications; industry, including agro-allied industries; health and sanitation; energy, education and manpower development, housing, urban development and environment. Science and technology development should also target low cost technologies for rural development. Science and technology training at all levels remains a critical component of this strategy.

African governments have always recognized that transport and communications constitute an important sector on whose development depends not only the growth in other sectors but also the socio-economic integration of Africa as well as the promotion of intra and extra African trade. Strategies in this areas included promotion of the integration of transport and communication infrastructure, coordination of the various transport systems in order to increase their efficiency, opening up land locked countries and isolated regions, harmonization and reduction of national regulations to facilitate the movement of persons and goods, standardization of networks and equipment for communication infrastructure, promotion of industry in the field of transport and equipment etc.

In the area of trade and finance, in which the aim is to expand intra-African trade the following measures were recommended; reduction or elimination of trade barriers, put in place mechanisms and measures for the facilitation and development of trade including establishment of import/export banks, establishment of African multinational productions and joint ventures and the establishment of an African Common Market.

The priority areas of environmental concern included; water , sanitation, desertification, drought, deforestation, soil degradation, marine pollution, human settlements, mining, air pollution, environmental information, communication and education (ICE) and exploiting renewable energy sources.

One major critique directed at the LPA was that the state was seen as the leading actor, if not the sole economic actor in African economies. It should bear the burden of elaborating the social, economic and cultural policies that enable the mobilization of resources and capabilities of the country. The LPA also emphasized the role of the state in the distribution of both developmental burdens and benefits to ensure their fair distribution. Implicit in the LPA is that the state was part of the development crisis and therefore the main agent for its resolution. In concentrating on sectoral programmes the LPA dealt with the African development predicament as a predominantly economic crisis. However, there is no doubt that that the African crisis was more than just an economic crisis.

Other African Alternatives

(United Nations Programme of Action for Africa's Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD) and the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP)

The United Nations Programme of Action for Africa's Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD) avoided some of LPA's shortcomings. The programme emphasized the central role of the state in the development process but added the need for building the capacity of state institutions to enable it to perform its role. The programme also asserted that admitting the central role of the state does not negate supporting the role of the private sector.

At the end of the 1980s the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) mobilized its intellectual resources to design the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP). One of the main arguments of the Alternative Framework was to get rid of the ingredients of SAPs especially those that defend the minimal role of the state. For the AAF-SAP, the role of private capital is highly sceptical since privatization had failed because of lack of an efficient robust private sector in most of the African countries and the danger of the domination of foreign capital over African economies. The Alternative Framework states that four imperative categories should be applied in order to pursue the path of adjustment with transformation and these are;

1. Strengthening and diversifying Africa's production capacity;
2. Improving the level of people's incomes and the pattern of its distribution;
3. Adjusting the pattern of public expenditure to satisfy people's essential needs; and
4. Providing institutional support for adjustment with transformation.

While many African scholars celebrated the AAF-SAP for its severe criticisms of SAPs and its attempt to elaborate an alternative plan based on mobilizing alternative resources and supporting regional integration, others do not regard it as a real alternative framework and criticize it for being a state centred plan that calls for the domination of the state. The architects of the framework in defence stressed that the framework is drawing a balanced non-ideological vision which neither calls for a strict intervention of the state nor promotes a total reliance on markets. The efforts of elaborating an alternative framework to SAPs were complemented by the Arusha Conference on Popular Participation in Development, 1990 which adopted the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation. The Charter introduced a mode of partnership between the state and civil society for promoting development based on popular participation in the continent. The Charter, enthusiastically welcomed by African civil society organizations however, lacked an implementation mechanism leading to its general non implementation.

Thus, African development plans of the 80s and 90s concentrated on establishing an alternative development strategy to SAPs, a strategy in which the state plays a central role, leading the process of development. Some of them realized that for that to happen there should be an adequate reform of public management systems and capacity building for state institutions, others drew a partnership project between the state and civil society to achieve a people centred mode of development. However, most of these plans were sceptical about the role of the private sector.

New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), July 2002

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), now Africa's strategy for achieving sustainable development in the 21st century, went through various adjustments over some years before it was formally adopted in Durban South Africa in July 2002 as the economic programme for the newly launched African Union (AU). In many respects the NEPAD is the ultimate culmination of the African alternative frameworks for development. It provides an African initiated and driven framework for interaction with the rest of the world with the long term vision of eradicating poverty and promoting the role of women in all activities.

The prime vision of the NEPAD is to attain and sustain regional integration in Africa, embracing positive African concepts and promoting self-reliance and self-sustenance. The stated vision in the NEPAD of eradicating poverty and propelling Africa into the 21st century and solidly onto the path of sustainable development is critical.

Keys values in the NEPAD process include:

1. Genuine commitment to broad consultative processes in decisions and programmes affecting the African people;
2. Respect for life over profit which includes ensuring access to basic and essential services by all citizens;
3. Commitment to integrating gender to all aspects of development and to reversing elements in culture and development programmes and projects that are inherently oppressive to women disrespecting their human rights;
4. Basing development efforts and initiatives on African values such as espoused in *ubuntu* which involves an African system of peace and re-kindling the human spirit.
5. Developing new concepts about what is African in relationship to the meaning of life, democracy, governance, peace, security and integrating these in all development efforts;
6. Integration of respect for human rights and democracy by African leaders to their peer review process in NEPAD and in all aspects of development initiatives particularly concerning governance; and
7. Adoption of clear social contract between the state and citizens.

NEPAD proposes six programme areas namely, infrastructure development, human resource development, agriculture, environment, culture and science and technology. The programme accords a high priority to capacity building for state institutions. The NEPAD document clearly states that *"State capacity building is a critical aspect for creating conditions for development. The state has a major role to play in promoting economic growth and development and in implementing poverty reduction programmes..... It is for this reason that targeted capacity building should be given high priority. Programmes in every area should be preceded by an assessment of capacity followed by the provision of appropriate support."* It is not surprising then, that some African analysts praised the trial of NEPAD to deal with the reality of weak states in Africa, arguing that the emphasis on governance issues in NEPAD reflects the view that state weakness is the underlying cause of lack of development in African countries.

The effective state is seen as NEPAD's goal as the initiative realizes that promoting the role of the state in the development process needs first to build the capacity of the state to perform that role. According to that vision practical steps have been taken to build the capacity of African institutions, one of which has been the inauguration of the fourth Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public Service, held in May 2003 which adopted a programme on governance and public administration aimed at ensuring that African states and governments have the capacity to govern effectively and deliver public goods. The impact of this move is yet to be seen.

The partnership aspect of NEPAD is clear in urging the African countries to *"Organize dialogue between the government and the private sector to develop a shared vision of economic development strategy and remove constraints on private sector development"* Thus NEPAD presents a new paradigm in development thinking on the African continent, that states and markets are complimentary partners in socio-economic development. Hence, it is imperative that African governments strive towards creating an enabling market friendly environment in the development process and in so doing private sector will be the engine of economic growth while governments concentrate on infrastructure development and creation of the enabling environment as well as social service provision.

The responses to the NEPAD have been varied, reflecting varying view points with some calling for a total rejection of the NEPAD unless it is completely overhauled after intensive debate by all African people. The critics argue that NEPAD represents *"tying the African canoe to the ship of the North in the waters of globalization"*, thus propagating the neo-liberal economic agenda and consequently reintroducing neo-colonialism by the North in Africa. The other perspective offered on NEPAD is that African leaders deserve a chance to reverse the numerous crises in the continent which they are proposing as outlined in the NEPAD document. Their acknowledgement of the need for a renaissance in Africa and the concepts of democracy, accountability, transparency and peer review should account for more than the pessimistic criticism and call of dismissal of the document by others.

The emphasis put on foreign direct investment (FDI) into Africa's economies at the rate of US\$64 billion per annum is seen by others as deeply flawed and unrealisable due to a number of factors including the high risk perception and also the diversion of FDI to Eastern Europe. The distrust and absence of confidence that the people of Africa have in their leaders should not be underestimated after decades of unfulfilled promise. The enthusiasm with which the NEPAD proposal was received by the North was viewed by many with suspicion, particularly in connection to the call within the document for *"more aid and freer trade"*. It was suggested then that NEPAD should be pitched on the principles of self reliance, self-sustenance, the democratization of the development process and fair and just distribution of the fruits of development which had been identified in the LPA. Given that poverty is one major consequence of the neo-liberal frameworks, there is need to consider redistribution of wealth rather than the sole focus being on economic growth as a feasible strategy.

Some feel that neo-liberalism and classical economics is the framework that informs NEPAD even though there has been a slight attempt at capturing African reality. Some critics view the emphasis on good governance in NEPAD as *"total endorsement of the neo-liberal agenda"*, a way of creating an enabling environment for the implementation of SAPs and international private sector development. From the background of the NEPAD it is reasonably safe to assume that partnership intended in this development framework for Africa is first and foremost amongst Africans and African countries and then with the rest of the world. However, there is a widespread perception that the partnership is more with the outside world constituting a selling out or a recolonization of Africa. Africa remains too donor dependent and needs to be more inward looking in its resource mobilization strategies, including protecting its infant industry and closing resource leaks through capital flight. While partnership with the private sector is much more clearly articulated in NEPAD, the same is not true for civil society who are normally roped in to satisfy the demands for popular participation, particularly in the APRM initiative. However, what is needed is to specify the developmental role that civil society can play, for example, in meeting the needs of local communities, given their long experience in this area.

To sum up NEPAD just like other previous African development initiatives has its shortcomings but it also opens up new opportunities for materializing a balanced relationship between the state and the market, promoting the capacity of the state institutions and that of civil society institutions as well as increasing the autonomy of the state by combating corruption and promoting transparency and accountability. However, one cannot ignore the criticism that the initiative depends heavily on foreign capital for its implementation and that it does not declare how it will match people centred development with private sector led growth.

Economic Recommendations towards the Attainment of MDGs

Political Commitment

SADC governments should have clear political will to implement economic strategies aimed at achieving sustainable growth and development and attainment of the 2015 MDG targets. In this regard, good governance is a prerequisite for the creation of an environment conducive to development progress. Key elements of good governance include accountability, transparency, participation and inclusiveness to ensure prudent use of national resources to achieve economic growth and development for poverty reduction. Political commitment at higher levels would include the domestication and full implementation of United Nations resolutions and SADC regional integration commitments and programs.

Efficient Resource Allocation

SADC governments should clearly align their national budgets with national development priorities as reflected in their strategic macro-economic frameworks and other key policy documents. Some of the national priorities in the SADC region include agriculture and mining development, industrialization including value addition manufacturing, infrastructure development, protection of social sectors (education and health) and HIV and AIDS prevention, mitigation and care. These should ensure food security, foreign exchange generation, employment creation and poverty reduction. Development strategies should be driven by national resources, first and foremost, with donor/development partner assistance playing a complementary role.

Broad Partnership

Given that the MDGs are a tall order for any developing country to deliver on, governments on their own cannot manage to address the demands of attaining the MDGs. At local level, there is therefore need to build strong partnerships and alliances for development between the government, private sector, civil society and NGOs, communities, households and individuals to ensure faster progress in the attainment of MDGs. Strong local partnerships are important for the sustainability of development progress based on a strong sense of commitment in the context of national ownership.

Global partnerships also play a critical role in the attainment of MDGs through resource mobilization, technology, technical expertise, markets etc. Given that both the state driven macroeconomic development frameworks as well the market driven have not delivered on the development agenda in Africa, it is time that a model in which the state balances the role of markets to correct its failures and maintain justice is pursued. In the same vein, such a "new" development model should promote private, public partnership in which trust is built between the state and the private sector to work on the basis of complementarity instead of competition with the aim of building an institutional framework for the development process that does not hinder the role of the market and at the same time does not ignore the social aspects of development. Overall, there is need to build the capacity of the state to match its development tasks.

Private sector partnerships

For the private sector to act as an engine of growth, governments must facilitate the creation of a conducive environment for private sector operations. One such conducive environment is a stable macroeconomic environment. On their part companies need to ensure good corporate governance and to intensify their work on the corporate social responsibilities, especially in the areas of environmental protection and the provision of social services such health and education. On the other hand labour remuneration should largely be productivity related in the context of a social contract between government, business and labour.

Civil Society partnerships

Civil society should not be roped in (consulted in a nominal way) to satisfy the broad consultation demands. Instead, they should be substantively involved in the design and implementation of macroeconomic frameworks and strategies in the region capitalizing on their strengths in implementing development programmes and projects at community level.

Global partnerships

Given that MDGs are a global compact, developed countries should honour the commitments they have made at different international fora to increase the quantity and quality of ODA to least developed countries and to harmonize their policies to align aid with the 'needs' of recipient countries. In this regard, support for HIV and AIDS programmes particularly the provision of ARVs should be given priority in the SADC region. Donor policy reforms should be in the direction of making ODA long-term and predictable thus amenable to planning by recipient countries. Aid should be oriented to support the MDG based poverty reduction strategy rather than to support donor driven projects. There is need to deepen and broaden debt relief including canceling the external debt of the poorest SADC region countries and finance new commitments through grants not new loans.

For aid to generally be effective in the SADC region there is need for home-grown institutional competence and transparent budgetary processes to be able to manage the resource flows effectively and avoid the currency overvaluation problem. Aid should now be tailored to long-term poverty needs and the attainment of MDGs rather than short-term agendas of the donor countries.

While debt cancellation has provided financial relief to allow some governments in the SADC region to redirect critical resources from debt repayment to the provision of critical social services, reports such as the Commission for Africa reveals that debt cancellation is inadequate and more resources are required for poor countries to attain the MDGs. It is desirable for developed countries to offer developing countries grants rather than loans for social service provision with minimal conditionalities to avoid undermining local accountability.

Broad-based, Pro-growth, Pro-poor, MDG-Based and Gender-Sensitive Macroeconomic Frameworks

There is need to adopt sound broad-based, pro-growth, pro-poor, MDG-based, gender sensitive economic policies in the SADC region in the current context of first and second generation Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and growth and development strategies. This inclusiveness approach would ensure the participation of usually marginalized groups such as women, youths, the disabled etc. as well as taking on board the two-way link between HIV and AIDS and economic development. Such macroeconomic frameworks will be in line with the NEPAD spirit on development in Africa and at the same time will not suffer the demise of "still" births due to lack of donor support as happened in the earlier decades.

However, the issue of growth and development for the attainment of MDGs is more than the requirement for macroeconomic stability, to include policy imperatives such as debt sustainability, cautious trade liberalization and promotion of fair trade, job creation, promotion of sustainable livelihoods, poverty reduction and good governance. These actions need to be reinforced by stronger international action and partnerships, including reforming trade, delivery of more effective aid and stronger private flows in order to make progress on MDGs. Thus, there is urgent need to realign and reorient domestic policies and institutions including the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEFs), and other Macroeconomic Frameworks towards meeting specific MDGs.

Decent Employment Creation

Decent employment creation remains the key link between economic growth, creation of livelihoods and poverty reduction and these elements have to be a major component in the design of macroeconomic frameworks and poverty reduction strategies and interventions for attaining the MDGs. The private sector is a key player in wealth creation and in the decent work agenda.

Gender equality and women empowerment

Given that, generally, in the SADC region, poverty affects women more than men, addressing gender equality and women empowerment in macroeconomic frameworks will lead to policies that are attuned much more effectively to addressing women's economic empowerment, education and health issues such as maternal health, child mortality thus leading to poverty reduction.

Agrarian Reform

Given that agriculture remains central to the development of the region, the SADC region should pursue comprehensive agrarian reform programmes that include land re-distribution, support to improved agricultural productivity, environmental conservation and creation of decent employment opportunities. Improved agricultural productivity requires timely availability of agricultural inputs such as seed and fertilizer, improved agricultural technology, effective agricultural extension, marketing and distribution services, effective price incentives among other factors. Such programmes need support at both the SADC regional and national levels. Successful agricultural development will ensure food security, foreign currency generation as well as strong backward and forward linkages between agriculture and industry in the SADC region.

Industrialization and Value Addition

Given that the economy of the SADC region is strong in agriculture and mining, there is need to actively promote value addition in support of the growth of a strong manufacturing sector in the region. Value addition will generate the much needed foreign currency to sustain growth and development in the SADC region thus accelerating the attainment of MDGs. The region's new development models should endeavour to strike a balance between export-led growth and import substitution industrialization for the protection of the SADC region's infant industries against the ravages of globalization. In this regard, there is need to implement clear, small and medium enterprise (SME) growth strategies in the region

with the clear vision of growing indigenous private sectors. These SMEs would benefit from having strong backward and forward linkages with bigger and more established companies.

Efficient Exploitation of Natural Resources (Minerals, water, energy, tourist attractions etc) and Infrastructure Development

Given that the SADC region is well endowed with natural resources such as minerals, water, energy and tourist attractions, there need to design and implement strategies to ensure the efficient and sustainable utilization of natural resources. SADC governments should promote the creation of joint ventures between companies in SADC countries in the exploitation of the region's natural resources to ensure that the returns from these remain in the region.

Infrastructure development remains central to the SADC region's sustainable growth and development agenda for the attainment of MDGs. There is need to intensify the implementation of regional infrastructure programmes in the areas of water and energy development, tourism, transport and communication networks etc to exploit the region's economies of scale.

Commitment to Combating, Reversing and Mitigating the Impact of HIV and AIDS

Given the fact the SADC region remains the epicenter of the HIV and AIDS epidemic, there is need for more aid and increased public spending to tackle the epidemic in the region. In this regard global partnerships for the provision of anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) remain critical. Combating, reversing and mitigating the impact of HIV and AIDS may require expansionary rather than contractionary fiscal and monetary policies depending on the circumstances in a particular country. Increased public spending although it may pose challenges for macroeconomic management is unavoidable under such circumstances. Inflation management should not mean curtailing essential expenditures needed for MDGs.

Human Resource Development

The importance of human resource development has always underpinned Africa's economic development strategies. Given the complexity brought about by the massive brain drain from the region to the North, issues of human resource development including training and capacity development in critical areas such as health, science and technology etc remain a priority in the region. In addition a way should be found to formalize the export of labour to the other region, in a way which benefits the countries of origin of the migrant labour.

Effective Social Protection Systems

Given that, adjustment of one form or another of the economies of the SADC region remains inevitable, there is always need to cushion those that may be negatively impacted on during adjustment processes. Macroeconomic planning and implementation processes generally take time to yield tangible fruit such that in the context of a region bedevilled by poverty and severe health problems related to HIV and AIDS, there is no substitute for effective social protection systems for some time to come. Social protection is needed to ensure food security, education, health, shelter and other basic needs. Once more there is need for strong partnerships between governments, private sector, civil society and communities in this area.

Regional Integration

Given that the SADC region consists of a huge market of about 240 million people, there is need to promote economic SADC regional integration particularly in the area of trade and investment in the context of the AU, SADC, NEPAD, COMESA etc. SADC as a body should continue to develop protocols around the core social dimensions of the MDGs. To strengthen delivery, SADC should devise systems of closely monitoring the pledges agreed to in the protocols.

Rules of trade in the region should accommodate the regional context of high mobility of the population in the form of informal cross border traders so that they can trade freely and this will go a long way in reducing poverty.

Harmonized Regional Data Bases for Development

Up-to-date, harmonized data is critical for designing development strategies and monitoring progress in the SADC region. Given that there is no harmonized regional or SADC regional database for the monitoring of MDGs and development in general, there is urgent need to compile such a database. It is

also imperative for national statistical offices in the SADC region to be proactive in submitting recent statistics to the international databases.

Conclusion

With vibrant economies in the SADC region all MDGs can be achieved. Broad based growth is sustainable unlike enclave growth. Robust economic growth and development increases resources to government, households and communities to reduce poverty. However, governments in the region should continue to protect social sectors (health and education) whether or not high economic growth is generated from the current macroeconomic frameworks and strategies. This is important for the sustenance of human development which remains a prerequisite for sustainable growth and development.

Key areas of focus in economic management and corporate governance in the SADC region include; adoption of sound economic policies which balance the role of the state and the market, creating effective public sector management, having strong political leadership to mitigate the impact of the HIV and AIDS and ensuring public participation in economic policymaking.

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Folding the Sleeves for the MDGs

By Jack Jones Zulu Programme Manager: Economic Dimensions SARP

The chilling reality of our time manifested in the widespread and growing scourge of poverty necessitated a Millennium Summit seven years ago in New York where the nations of the world represented by the Heads of State, Prime Ministers, Monarchs and other heads of government converged together to set minimum measurable targets for reducing world poverty and other indicators that spell human deprivation all by the year 2015. For instance, in 1990 more than 1.2 billion people—28 percent of the developing world's population lived in extreme poverty. In 2002, the proportion decreased to 19 percent. During that period, rates of extreme poverty fell rapidly in much of Asia, where the number of people living on less than a \$1 a day dropped by nearly a quarter of a billion. In sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), although the poverty rate declined marginally, the number of people living in extreme poverty increased by 140 million (UN MDG Report, 2006) Therefore the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) eight in all which were set in 2000 and embodied in the Millennium Declaration form a blueprint agreed to by all the world's countries and the world's



leading development institutions. The first seven MDGs include measures of human development in poor countries while the eighth Goal on partnership spells the principles and sets of actions that the developed countries and developing nations ought to embrace in order to operationalise the first seven goals.

What is holding back the World and Africa in Particular?

A strong and powerful statement on the plight of Africa was released by the United Nations to demonstrate how determined the member states were in dealing with the moral challenge of our times: "We will assist Africans in their struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development" (UN Millennium Declaration, 2000). In 2001 Mr Nelson Mandela, albeit concerned over the alarming global poverty levels amidst so much wealth in the world asked: "*Will the legacy of our generation be more than a series of broken promises?*" These statements are an indictment on the consciences of the world leaders and development institutions across the globe to break with the *business-as-usual* mentality and get the work done by 2015!

A cursory glance at the Millennium Declaration Statement reveals beautiful intentions cleverly crafted in the officialdom of the development agenda but intentions without actions are dead! Recent reviews on MDGs in Africa show that most African countries save for North Africa will not be able to attain the MDGs by the target date of 2015 due to both internal and external factors (African Union, 2006). Some of the internal factors are the widespread corruption in the public and private sectors (an endemic feature common in many countries although some countries are tackling the scourge), weak institutional and organisational capacities, ineffective policies, poor infrastructure, low levels of economic growth, political turmoil and civil strife (e.g. in Sudan, Ivory Coast, Somalia, and DR Congo) while external factors are bad weather conditions (droughts and floods), heavily protected western markets, huge external debts, capital flight, low donor inflows, among others.

Unbundling the Mystery of a Global Partnership

One of the main keys to the realisation of MDGs in Africa lies in the principles of the eighth goal--a global partnership or compact for development. Nancy Birdsall and Michael Clemens in their classic 2003 article, *From Promise to Performance: How Rich Countries Can Help Poor Countries Help Themselves*, provide some useful observations and insights. The eighth goal is about a compact between partners. But no compact, whether it is a marriage or an arms-control treaty can be strong if there is no way to assess whether the parties are making a credible effort to keep their promises. The developing countries' efforts on the seven Goals are being monitored by their own citizens and by the international community in the context of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and the bilateral aid programmes.

And the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is coordinating a massive effort to track progress toward the first seven Goals. Every developing country was asked to work with the UNDP field offices to prepare annual reports on the current progress toward and future prospects for meeting the Goals and these useful reports are posted on UNDP country websites. However, what you won't find on the UNDP websites are any reports from industrial countries about their efforts to keep the promises summarised in the eighth Goal. For instance, in 1970 rich countries pledged to give 0.7 percent of their gross national product (GNP) as development assistance to poor countries. Today, 37 years after that promise they collectively stand at 0.25 percent and to add salt to injury, in recent years aid has been declining in real terms.

The fact is that rich countries' efforts also need to be monitored, by their own citizens and the citizens of the developing world to whom they made their promises. Without benchmarks to measure and monitor rich countries' efforts, they cannot be held to account for the eighth Goal. In fact many of the flashy newspaper headlines about aid volumes do not represent new money that can be used to fight poverty and achieving the MDGs. For instance, the \$60 billion promised at the last G8 Meeting in Germany to be delivered over the next five years translates into \$9 billion in old and unfulfilled promises and only \$3 billion as new money. Africa does not need new pledges but a fulfillment of the outstanding promises! This is the more reason civil society organisations and recipient countries need to develop mechanisms to hold donors accountable for their words and actions. Let us take some principles of the eighth Goal and examine them in detail:

Develop a Multilateral Trade Regime

Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory, includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction—nationally and internationally. This principle, both in spirit and letter talks of developing a multilateral trading and financial system anchored on good governance as a practical platform for lifting the welfare of the billions of people that suffer hunger and other forms of deprivation. It is generally accepted that international trade under the right conditions can be a powerful vehicle for economic growth and

consequently poverty reduction in all developing countries.

In the face of worldwide prosperity many of the poorest countries have continued to lag behind and grow poorer. Among the reasons is their overdependence on primary commodities for their export revenues whose prices are highly volatile in international markets. As rightly noted by one researcher, Thomas Lines in 2004, despite some cyclical recovery over the last few years or so, prices of commodities on world markets have in recent years been at all-time lows. Real commodity prices have declined since the late 1970s at an average rate of around 3 per cent a year.

At a policy level, there are still a lot of roadblocks and restrictions in Western markets camouflaged in policy instruments such as sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, stringent rules of origin (RoO), farm subsidies, winding export procedures and requirements, among others. Obviously one can not run away from the fact that subsidies in the rich North are politically correct because they guarantee votes during elections but they are economically indefensible as they represent a misallocation of scarce resources in the face of world poverty. Some analysts have argued that if all forms of subsidies were removed and money reallocated to poverty reduction, global poverty will decline by 75 percent!

The on-off multilateral trade talks at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) represent lost opportunities to remove trade injustices at the global level. For instance, the trade deal meant to lift millions of people worldwide out of poverty collapsed in July 2006 without a new timetable for completing the round. The WTO's most powerful members failed to agree on steps toward liberalizing trade in farm and manufactured goods. The 25-country European Union (EU) criticized U.S. intransigence over agricultural subsidies for the breakdown, while the United States blamed Brazil and India for being inflexible on cutting barriers to industrial imports and the EU for refusing to make deeper cuts in its farm import tariffs. Rich countries were accused of hypocrisy for urging poor countries to open their markets but not being prepared to open their own or reduce the huge subsidies to their farmers.

Regrettably, the aborted talks at the multilateral level ended in finger pointing without really getting to the core of unfair trade practices which are at the heart of poverty on the African continent. There have been attempts in recent months to revive the talks but the issues on the agenda remain sensitive and divisive among the WTO members.

Promote Fair Trade

Address the least developed countries' special needs. This includes tariff- and quota-free access for their exports; enhanced debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries; cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous official development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction. While a lot of efforts and energies have been expended to deal with issues of creating a duty free, quota free (DFQF) market access for less developed countries (LDCs), international trade talks since 2000 have assumed different dynamics of a "*scratch-my-back-I-will scratch-yours*" affair where Africa's major trading bloc—the European Union (EU) is insisting on a new trade regime based on the principle of reciprocity as espoused in the WTO rules and principles on international trade. The current heated negotiations in the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries are centred on enforcing the principle of reciprocity among the trading partners. EPAs are basically trade arrangements embedded in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement of 2000 whose sole purpose is to promote free trade areas between the EU and the ACP countries. The idea is to remove current preferential market access for ACP countries in order to create a level playing field among all WTO members. Theoretically, free trade is supposed to lead to increased welfare gains among the trading partners. But the reality and experience are different—free trade has tended to produce more losers than winners! Even the little benefits of free trade have not been equitably distributed among nations.

To add salt to injury, most LDCs are still grappling with supply side constraints characterised by poor infrastructure, obsolete technologies and low production levels, high production and transportation costs, low human, capital and financial capacities that hinder them from competing effectively in the international markets. On the other hand, developed countries have the state-of-art technologies; well functioning research and development laboratories coupled with the high level industrial capacities and so are able to produce goods in mass quantities at low costs. Given this scenario, is it realistic to expect free trade to be beneficial between two unequal partners? Without taking away anything from the EU, they have pledged financial resources under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) to assist LDCs especially the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries to help them deal with the supply side constraints. However, the history of the EDF does not inspire confidence in the ACP countries as no single country has ever been able to draw the earmarked funds in full due to a plethora of conditionality.

Debt Cancellation and Quality Aid

Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt problems through national and international

measures to make debt sustainable in the long term. For decades, African countries have been spending billions of dollars each year repaying debts to creditor countries and international financial institutions (IFIs). Many of these loans were given for political reasons during the Cold War to prop up particular governments, and in many cases, were wasted by corrupt and unaccountable regimes (DATA, 2005). For instance, most Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries have experienced an increasing external debt burden over the last two decades. In several countries, the debt burden has become extremely onerous. The stock of external debt in SADC stood at \$69.12 billion in 2001 (SADC, 2001). These large debts are a serious impediment to poverty reduction and economic development. Prior to debt relief under the heavily indebted poor countries' (HIPC I and HIPC II) and multilateral debt relief initiative (MDRI) arrangements many countries were recycling loans i.e. taking on new loans to repay old ones! Some countries spent more each year to service debt payments than on health and education combined.

During the last three decades the creditor community introduced several measures to deal with the debt crisis of poor countries; however a lot of development practitioners including the anti-debt groups called them half-hearted responses to a growing problem because the responses did not deal with the fundamental causes of debt but merely offered palliative prescriptions. In recent years, debt relief has been offered to a number of poor countries nearly targeting 40 of the most impoverished countries in the world, 34 of them in Africa (DATA, 2005) In exchange for debt relief, poor countries adopt economic policy reforms and agree to channel the debt savings to poverty reduction activities.

To date, over 14 African countries have qualified for 100% debt cancellation, resulting in close to \$2 billion per year in savings that can be directed to health and education rather than paying old debts. Despite the debt relief provided, however, substantial debts still remain in many countries striving to meet the MDGs (DATA, 2005). Full debt cancellation anchored on clear, accountable, transparent and open national mechanisms coupled with parliamentary oversight is therefore a critical step in paving the way for economic development and poverty reduction, but it alone is not sufficient to jump start development. Impoverished countries need increased development assistance in addition to debt cancellation if they are to stand a chance at breaking the cycle of extreme poverty.

As Mr. Abdoulaye Bio-Tchane, Director of the African Department of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) rightly noted at the Annual Conference of the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank, in Cape Town, South Africa, on 17 March 2007, "Donors must continue their effort to coordinate their actions and provide more and more predictable aid to those countries that will use it well. Making aid work in countries where conditions are less favourable remains the challenge although there, the catalytic role of aid, its ability to spur reforms maybe the greatest". He went on to say that it is of course not only about aid but there other policy imperatives as well. One needs to add that it is not the quantity of aid that will make a difference in Africa but the quality of aid coupled with good governance, strong institutions and ability to absorb aid effectively. In the long run, countries need to find exit strategies from the aid syndrome that makes countries behave like drug addicts! Why is it that the more aid countries receive the more aid they want? Is it realistic to think that aid will now lead to development when it has not done so in the last forty to fifty years of IMF and World Bank presence in Africa?

See DATA: Issues and Analysis on <http://www.data.org/issues/debt.html>

See the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) on <http://www.sadc.int/>

Capacitating the Private Sector

In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies— especially information and communications technologies. The private sector is seen as the engine of growth and many countries have since developed private sector development plans(PSDPs) to establish conducive policy environments that can unleash the potential of this vital sector to create wealth and consequently reduce poverty. In this new economic dispensation governments are expected to provide predictable policy direction rather than getting actively involved in economic activities as the case was under the command economies. To this effect, governments working in close collaboration with international financial institutions (IFIs) are preoccupied with the issue of getting the macroeconomic fundamentals right—simply put; countries need to provide sound and stable macroeconomic policies that take into account the unique features of each country in order to facilitate development.

While the private sector is critical in fostering development, it is also important to remember that the private sector is driven by the quest to maximise profits subject to government policies and so may not be able to meet all the development challenges of regional economies. Strengthening and enabling the private sector should not mean a weak State in economic affairs—governments have a crucial role to play especially in the provision of public and merit goods as these goods cannot be effectively provided through the market system.

If MDGs are going to be attained in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, then there is need to begin to promote a developmental state with the necessary capacities to be able to complement rather than supplant private sector initiatives. Success, as Mr Tchane observed, will require a vital and growing private sector, expanding exports and banking systems that safely and efficiently convert money into investment. But it will also require deliberate efforts to reinvigorate states to deliver their mandates to their citizens (provision of basic services and protection of fundamental human rights). In addition to these, countries need to put in place clear legislative and institutional measures together with appropriate regulatory frameworks that are 'friendly' to both local and foreign investments. Furthermore, financial haemorrhage through capital flight needs to be stopped if Africa is to benefit from foreign direct investments. That is the gist of the matter but is the world ready to take such a bold move?

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is clear that MDGs need bold decisions and steps from a range of actors and stakeholders— governments, donors, multilateral and bilateral agencies, civil society, faith-based organisations and others. The battle will not be won in the air-conditioned conference rooms using state-of-the-art PowerPoint presentations! Nor will it be won by the number of conferences and meetings that we attend! Leaders and donors need to reinvigorate their efforts and commitments as espoused in the various international instruments and conventions many of which are lying idle on the shelves. Civil society needs to increasingly take up its advocacy and watchdog roles and hold leaders and donors accountable for their words and actions. Time to act is now! We need to fold our sleeves and go out there and get our hands dirty if MDGs are to be achieved by the target date of 2015!

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MDGs Promises and actions - It is almost half-time

By Henri Valot - CIVICUS

Introduction

Being a staff member of CIVICUS, and part of the Global Team behind the Global Call for Action against Poverty (GCAP), I am inclined to limit my contribution to the role and responsibilities of civil society organizations on the MDG agenda. Indeed, CIVICUS is a convenor within civil society and defend and promote civic existence, civic engagement and civic expression. CIVICUS also has a track record of constructive engagement with the multilateral institutions. Therefore, CIVICUS utilizes the MDG's as a recognized framework for advancing a more progressive advocacy agenda for social, economic and political justice.



This text presents the engagement of the world of CSOs in the MDG agenda (section 1 and 3). It attempts to take stock of the MDG progress so far (section 2); it discusses some of the key policy questions on financing for development and highlights key policy changes which would enable the attainment of the MDGs (section 4). It then concludes with some directions and tools for the future engagement of CSOs (section 5).

MDG and CSOs

Early, CIVICUS adopted the MDGs agenda, convened CSOs dialogue on it and developed related tools, as an MDG campaigning toolkit. But, can we say in 2007 that the MDGs are now part of the CSOs' development agenda? Many of us still consider them as "Minimalist Development Goals" or "Most Distracting Gimmick".

CSOs globally did not see the MDGs as their agenda for obvious reasons:

1. The commitments made at the Millennium Summit betray previous commitments made at international Summits, such as Copenhagen and Beijing
2. There was not a single consultation with the CSOs for the elaboration of this development agenda
3. It took two years to elaborate the targets and indicators and those appear unacceptable for most of the CSOs
4. The UN builds around the MDG agenda a multi-stakeholder approach which is for many of us a way to engage the privatisation of public services or to throw the responsibility of public service delivery at CSOs
5. And for most of us, the MDGs maintain a systematic silence on the learning and experiences of policy reforms and institutional changes. As Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir writes: *Evidences suggest that the gap between the rich and the poor, between and within the nations have widened in an unprecedented scale. The blanket privatization, deregulation, liberalization, and competition do not automatically yield prosperity and wellbeing for the nations. The institutions, structure and process that create and sustain poverty are ignored too. They have maintained heightened silence about unequal market power, consolidation of corporate power, restricted migration and access to rich economies, and local political realities (elite capture, under-regulated monopolies, rising global and local inequalities). Hence, to link the MDGs with a particular set of policy prescriptions as has been done in the developing world including Bangladesh is a wrong approach, no matter which policies are prescribed, precisely because there is no single "correct" policy for all societies and circumstances.*

Still, at the time of the War against Terror, one can say that the MDGs are a "revolutionary" agenda. An agenda which can be taken seriously and that can offer a window of opportunity for CSOs engaged with governments and international organisations.

Are the MDGs a Priority? Are we on track?

A recent publication from the United Nations states: "At the midway point between their adoption in 2000 and the 2015 target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, sub-Saharan Africa is not on track to achieve any of the Goals. Although there have been major gains in several areas and the Goals remain achievable in most African nations, even the best governed countries on the continent have not been able to make sufficient progress in reducing extreme poverty in its many forms".

The World Bank 2007 Global Monitoring Report on the Millennium Development Goals, published last April 13, focuses on gender equality and the lack of opportunities for women as well as the vulnerability

of fragile states. Main findings include that an estimated 135 million people were lifted out of extreme poverty between 1999 and 2004, due largely to strong growth in developing regions. The share of people living on less than US\$1 a day in Sub Saharan Africa dropped by nearly 5 percentage points to 41 percent over the same period, although the absolute number of poor remained near 300 million due mainly to high population growth. The report also states that progress in gender equality and women's empowerment has been uneven.

On the same issue, we could go much further. Brian Tomlinson writes: "Women as development actors are particularly absent from the MDGs. Progress on gender equality and women's empowerment revolves around Goal 3 and its basic education target and indicators, but are also embedded in other social development Goals. For the most part the MDGs characterize women as vulnerable victims, instrumentally important for achieving certain goals, rather than as agents of development, acting to claim their rights".

And our sources confirm and amplify the situation. Social Watch asks "When will dignity for all be achieved? What is the bare minimum for a decent life for all? The world leaders who signed the Declaration did not define it clearly but its principles are embedded in the commitment to achieve certain targets by 2015. When will we achieve the basic standards of material dignity for all the world's people? Not in a hundred years unless we substantially accelerate the current trends of progress in social areas"! For Sub-Saharan Africa:

1. In food security (under 5 children malnutrition and undernourishment): 50% of the region register no progress and at the current pace, the goal would be reached by 2282
2. In women reproductive health (births attended by skilled personnel): 32% of the region register no progress and at the current pace, the goal would be reached by 2130
3. In basic education (adult literacy and primary and secondary school enrolment ratio): 21% of the region register no progress and at the current pace, the goal would be reached by 2079
4. In child mortality: 41% of the region register no progress and at the current pace, the goal would be reached by 2155
5. In water and sanitation: 28% of the region register no progress and at the current pace, the goal would be reached by 2159

Are MDGs simply unrealistic for many countries, asked Brian Tomlinson? Quoting a detailed study by Michael Clemens, Charles Kenny and Todd Moss, the costing approach to MDGs, as part of northern campaigns to make the Goals "realistic", creates a false sense of their achievability. They point to numerous sectoral studies that demonstrate that financial resources are sometimes not even the most important constraint. Of the 47 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, 42 are considered off-track for half of the targets and 12 countries for all of the targets. These researchers conclude that "many of the MDGs are simply unrealistic for many countries" where the world community is "asking [them] to perform at the top end of the world's historical experience of the best performers of the last 50 years. The rate of growth expected of Sub-Saharan Africa, after a decade of very marginal growth, has in fact only been accomplished by 5 developing countries in the world in the past 15 years. In primary education, for example, the expectation is progress at a rate over 11 years that took rich countries close to a century.

So what's in it for us?

What is the role of CSOs in the MDG agenda? Are we factually participating, and how do we want to participate? Are we helping to localise the MDGs and in some cases to deliver the services needed? Are we here to play the role of a watchdog and to monitor the fulfilment by Governments of their promises and the implementation of the internationally agreed goals? Are we campaigning, as invited by the UN Millennium Campaign, or are we responding to the MDGs by lobbying and presenting alternative policies and practices?

We are everywhere in the world, and notably in the SADC countries, doing all of this. The Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP) was launched at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in 2005 as a civil society response to the MDGs. But the movement started before with consultations being held in the SADC countries (in Maputo, in December 2003, and in Johannesburg, in September 2004). As a loose alliance of civil society formations, GCAP has gained energy across the world in 2005 and 2006. The national campaigns that make up GCAP have mobilised citizens and conducted lobbying work on GCAP's four policy demands, 1) trade justice, 2) debt cancellation, 3) a major increase in the quantity and quality of aid and, 4) national efforts to eliminate poverty and achieve the Millennium goals that are sustainable and developed and implemented in a way that is democratic, transparent and accountable to citizens. The Global Call to Action against Poverty is far more than an MDG campaign, as it responds to the MDG agenda by offering a wider platform for policy analysis, lobbying activities and on the ground mobilisation.

Monitoring progress and holding governments accountable

At the occasion of the Millennium Summit + 5, in September 2005, several civil society coalitions produced MDG shadow reports alongside those of National Governments which were prepared for the Summit. The civil society reports which were produced in an exemplary consultative manner, have observed amongst others things that many National MDG Reports had failed to consult with civil society organisations which deal directly with communities. Most of them overstated their achievements with regards to MDG.

Civil society groups involved in development and poverty alleviation agree on the necessity of facts and reliable statistics as a base for any advocacy campaign. But what is the ultimate goal of those exercises? As Roberto Bissio, Social Watch Director, says: the purpose of these initiatives "are not intended as pure research but are used to interpellate authorities and help shape better pro-poor and pro-women policies". Indeed monitoring help:

1. To underpin policy asks and advocacy, and informs mobilization
2. To make National Governments fully accountable and transparent in the use of public resources;
3. To actively involve civil society, particularly poor and excluded groups, in the formulation of national development priorities, policies and plans;

And are we only monitoring the MDGs? Brian Pratt writes: "Commitment to the MDGs is no doubt worthy. However, we need to be wary of allowing them to be used as an excuse for avoiding difficult political issues, and ignoring the very real complexity of human development in its widest understanding. Development cannot, and should not, be reduced to simple physical and technical indicators and we should question the real motives of those organisations and donors who adopt such methods. (...). We need to ensure that we maintain a vision of social justice, gender equity, and human development that relates to more than just the MDGs." Action Aid International with its "As if people matters" global report in 2005 attempted to look further than just the MDGs, including in its analysis a Human Rights and Gender based approach.

Finally, how should we do it, avoiding reinventing the wheel? We can then use existing tools and networks, notably the ones established over 10 years of existence of the Social Watch network. Social Watch's reports, provides a very comprehensive account of the state of poverty and gender equality, globally and more specifically in 50 countries. This international network follows up the fulfillment of internationally agreed commitments on poverty eradication and gender equality. All previous international commitments are being screened and national groups report on the progress or regression towards these commitments and goals. In order to do so, Social Watch has developed over the years two powerful tools, which are the "Basic Capabilities Index" and the "Gender Equity Index".

Finally, one important regional monitoring initiative has been recently developed, that deserve our attention: the "African Monitor Initiative", led by the Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane of Cape Town, envisages the creation of an independent body, rooted in Africa's civil society, to monitor and promote effective implementation of development commitments to Africa.

Debt, Trade and Aid

The Global Call to Action against Poverty is based on existing networks, campaigns for economic and social justice. It wants to develop and disseminate further the existing policy changes and mobilisation tools by offering bridges between civil society organisations.

In terms of lobbying and presenting policy changes, some important work has been done on each of the Goals, and especially on Goal 8 (Partnership for Development). Authors as Charles Abugre and Terry McKinley present rich analysis of the present economic trends and policies. They also propose viable alternatives.

Charles Abugre wrote on the resources for development, and the role of debt, trade aid. According to the economist, the rationale behind the "more and better aid, debt cancellation and more just trade policies" is that these will create the conditions to ensure adequate resources to finance Africa's development. He argues however that these demands will not provide the resources adequate for Africa's development. These demands, though relevant, are slightly misplaced in their singular focus on sources of "inflows" to the total denial of the mechanisms of "outflows".

On debt, Abugre believes that the issue is not so much what we demand but whom we address with what messages. The message of ending the debt burden has been directed largely at one direction – the creditors. The message itself has been one of appealing for understanding whether based on justice or empathy. By directing the energies at appealing to northern creditors suggests our lack of belief in the power of the debtor. However, Abugre states that the Nigerian debt relief effort and the Argentinean debt restructuring initiative suggest that debtors do have power and can force change. Some would say that Nigeria and Argentina could do what they did because they hold large debts - \$34bn and \$32bn respectively – and that they fit the classic case of “if you owe the banks \$50,000 you are in trouble but if you owe hem \$50bn the bank is in trouble”. If so, Africa’s debt overhang of over \$200bn provides the muscle for a successful collective African threat. The cancellation of \$200bn, poses no threat to the global financial system but can save millions of lives. Even a threat of a collective moratorium will send the message clear and loud, especially if this threat were accompanied by an enforceable commitment to transparency and ant-corruption and the channelling of the money so saved into revamping public services. Abugre proposes the following principles in relation to debt?

1. Welcome the principle of debt stock cancellation but condemn the selectivity and divisive approach.
 - Develop a strategy to pressurise the AU and its member states to adopt a debtor-led strategy
 - Campaign for an International Law to regulate international debt.

The trade policy focus has been in 4 areas: defending domestic markets from further harmful liberalisation; defending producers – especially farmers – from demise resulting from “dumping” of subsidised imports; seeking market access without reciprocal market opening obligations and promoting regional integration. These demands are relevant and we should continue to maintain a focus on them. So what do we do in relation to trade and investment?

1. Encourage national governments to be more proactive in protecting their markets especially in the area of consumer goods, agriculture and essential public services. They will not necessarily suffer punitive action. Even if they did, their economies may still come out better-off.
2. Drum home to national governments that opening markets will not necessarily bring FDI and even if it did, FDI will not necessarily bring about develop. Encourage the AU to promote a critical debate on the role of FDI in Africa’s development.
3. Continue the campaign for policy flexibility and end to coerced liberalisation. This is crucial for defending Africa’s producers.
4. Scale down the export focus of agriculture (market access in the north) and emphasise its food security and rural development objectives.
5. Support the Stop EPAs campaign

On aid, the key problems are its purpose, its governance and its impact on the psychology and accountability of our governments and elite. Abugre proposes the following:

1. Support our northern partners’ efforts to make their governments fulfil their part of the global compact but scale down its importance in Africa’s plan of action;
2. Support the establishment of a Peer Trust Fund to assist the AU to deal with the governance issue;
3. Increase domestic CSO interests and involvement in budget processes so as to reduce the influence of donors on budget governance and steer budgets to deliver public services and fight corruption;

Oppose donor-driven budget management arrangements that undermine parliamentary oversight and propose parliamentary oversight procedures that are transparent and inclusive of civil society.

Aid Effectiveness

The Reality of Aid network works since 1993 on the issue, and presents regularly complete analysis of the forms of Aid. The network is leading the current dialogue on Aid Effectiveness, which started with OECD some time ago, as CSOs were already present at the adoption of the Paris Declaration, in 2005. Since then, with the political support of the Canadian and the Norwegian governments, the OECD/ Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Working Party of the Aid effectiveness initiated a more formal consultation with civil society groups from the South and the North. This dialogue takes place in the context of the preparations for the High Level Ministerial Forum, convened by the OECD, to be held in September 2008 in Accra, Ghana.

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness adopted in March 2005 is the culmination of ten years of donor discussion on ways to improve aid effectiveness. Key foundations of the Paris Declaration are the notion of "partnership" which replaces the traditional donor/recipient relationship (donors and "aid partners" make a total of 56 "partnerships commitments across all five areas); and the "Programme-based approach", in which a number of donors pool development resources in support for a defined development programme. It then takes two main forms: the sector-wide programme (programme coordinated by a sector Ministry) and the budget support (support to the central budget of the government to implement its Poverty Reduction Strategy).

The Paris Declaration implies that its principles and objectives are applicable to all country-level development actors, including civil society organizations. Nevertheless, to date, the aid effectiveness agenda is largely focused, as seen in the targets of the Paris Declaration, on the need for institutional reforms by donors and developing country governments. While CSOs have welcomed many aspects of the Paris Declaration, they reiterated that the Declaration has very little to say on essential questions: aid effectiveness for what purpose, for whom and as measured by whom? How much aid actually reaches the poor and mobilizes them to address their own problems? CSOs also assert that the purpose of the aid should be the true measure of its effectiveness.

The Paris Declaration actually sets out an unfinished and narrow agenda for reform. It ignores the role of citizens and CSOs as development actors in their own right who have a long history in organizing economic, social and political initiatives with and on behalf of the poor. CSOs involved in the aid effectiveness debate propose change in four areas to achieve real impact on poverty with aid resources:

1. Understanding the role of civil society as development actors related to efforts by poor and marginalized peoples to claim their rights
2. Aligning donor approaches with a more complex understanding of aid modalities to support the poor
3. Resolving the tension between local ownership and donor conditionalities
4. Assuring independent assessments of progress for improved development results

On the principle of **local ownership**, CSOs advocate for a real country, or democratic, ownership which require participation from citizens over development policies. The Paris Declaration commits in several places partner countries to "encourage broad participation of a range of national actors in setting development priorities". But we know that the public space for participation is never given and granted and requires strong political determination. We also note that macro-economics associated with Structural Adjustment Programs remain a strong consensus among donors, and have remerged for debt cancellation, PRSPs, as well as in the coordinated donor programme-based approaches. The use of aid as a policy tool to impose economic policy and other conditions has no place in an aid paradigm rooted in a commitment to local ownership.

On the principles of **alignment and harmonization**, CSOs affirm that these reforms rest on the untenable assumption that a limited donor/recipient partnership made up of State officials can represent the consensus interests of major development actors in any society. We have now a static state-centred approach that ignores and devaluates the critical importance of communities of poor and marginalized people, and their role in organizing local knowledge, and articulating local demands to respond to unique local conditions. Civil society efforts complement, but also sometimes challenge the directions of state policy. If the Paris Declaration aid modalities undermine autonomous and responsive aid support to civil society development actors, the Declaration will reduce the chances of achieving the MDGs.

Finally on the principle of **mutual accountability**, CSOs call for a more comprehensive approach. Accountability is not just about technical and contractual relationships in aid spending, but also about addressing the political inequalities in donor/recipient relationships. Strengthening independent institutional monitoring of donors against clear and enforceable benchmarks for donor performance is essential.

All CSO involved in the Aid Effectiveness debate would agree that the principles and objectives of the Paris Declaration are to be applicable to all country-level development actors, if the Declaration acknowledges and includes clearly not only the role and responsibilities of all development actors but also aid as an important support to the development agenda. Let us seize now the opportunity and contribute to the aid effectiveness debate in 2007/2008, by pushing our development agenda. What can we do?

1. In the SADC countries, we need to assess the multiple role in development of CSOs, and to liaise and consult with Northern CSOs present and work on joint policy positions;

2. We can manage and contribute to wide national consultations on the aid effectiveness in order to prepare the regional workshops which will take place between August and October 2007;
3. With the support of the analytical framework being prepared by the Reality of Aid network, we shall produce our own monitoring and evidence-based national reports on the effectiveness of aid;
4. Since the "Paris Declaration" came after the "Rome Declaration", adopted in 2002, let us acknowledge that those texts are not cast on stone. Therefore, we shall lobby and seek support from local and national government officials and advocate for a new comprehensive Declaration, to be adopted in Accra;
5. We also finally need to build bridges between two parallel processes on aid effectiveness; the OECD/DAC process and the Financing For Development (FFD) process, starting at the Spring meeting of ECOSOC in April 2007 and culminating with the Follow up conference on FFD, to be held in Doha, Qatar during the second half of 2008

Financing Development: Beyond aid debt relief and trade

According to Abugre, the reality of Africa is that the resources that leak out far exceed those that flow in. This is why Africa is a net exporter of capital. Njukumana et al estimate that between 1970 and 2000, whereas Africa received about \$100bn aid (including loans) it lost \$274bn in capital flight induced by debt, trade mis-invoicing and imputed interests. Add also losses that African countries have incurred simply by opening up their markets. Africa was made to reduce their rates of protection at a pace 3 times as fast the countries of the OECD. This has left the continent ridiculously open relative to its stage of development. Christian Aid recently calculated that over the past 2 decades, Africa lost in income terms the equivalent of over \$270bn from the negative growth effects alone of trade liberalization. This amount alone more than matches the accumulated value of grants, loans and net FDI channelled into the continent.

Add also, continues Abugre, losses due to tax competition, tax evasion and tax avoidance. Losses from tax competition have largely benefited multinational corporations whilst the tax burden has been transferred to wage earners and small businesses. Some analysts suggest that African oil producers command less than 20% of the profits. The rest are lost to complicated network of unfair trade practices. The transfer of revenues to tax heavens by these corporations and rich individuals further exacerbates the revenue loss. It is estimated that at least \$11.5 trillion is currently held in about 74 tax heavens – lost to tax authorities – by wealthy individuals. This does not include laundered profits of businesses which operate through tax havens to avoid tax nor does it include money illicitly transferred abroad through corruption, drugs and money laundering. These latter elements in any case comprise a much smaller share of resources losses than is generally believed.

As is obvious from above, Africa is not as poor or as helpless as is often presented. Instead, it is a continent that leaks heavily. The task is to plug these leaks. To do so, African civil society must turn attention to addressing:

- Support campaigns aimed at corporate transparency
- Campaign against tax concessions and for progressive tax policies
- Work with relevant networks to campaign for the end to banking secrecy and tax havens
- Follow-up on the recommendation of the Africa Commission report to pursue and return stolen wealth from Africa and to put in place measures to discourage illicit transfers abroad.

Reliance on domestic sources for financing development also provides a more conducive environment for promoting democratic accountability than the dependence on aid. We have an obligation to *plug the leaks*, concludes Abugre.

More ambitious economic policies needed

We could the ask ourselves if the resolution adopted by the General Assembly-2005 World Summit Outcome, *"To adopt, by 2006, and implement comprehensive national development strategies to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals"* has been at all followed up.

In the paper *"MDG-Based PRSPs Need More Ambitious Economic Policies"*, Terry McKinley advocates that if 'Second-Generation' Poverty Reduction Strategies are based on MDGs, they should have economic policies that are less fixated on macroeconomic stabilization and more geared to accelerating growth with equity and promoting long-term human development. To reach the MDGs, economic policies have

to be bolder and more expansionary. Fiscal policies should be focused on substantially scaling up public investment, financial policies geared to channelling considerably more lending to productive private investment and monetary policies reshaped to target, not just inflation, but also real economic variables, such as increases in incomes and jobs and big reductions in poverty.

The call for substantially larger ODA contributions to many developing countries, especially in Africa necessarily involves making PRSP objectives much more ambitious. Such an injection of funds should rapidly scale up public investment in physical and social infrastructure. But a sizeable share should be targeted, upfront, to enlarging 'absorptive capacity'—i.e., each country's ability to effectively disburse these monies for development purposes (Nebie 2004). Otherwise, national ownership of poverty reduction strategies will be sacrificed in the process. Thus, central to this campaign is a major agenda of national capacity development.

One of the most common excuses that donors give for not substantially increasing their assistance is that countries lack the "absorptive capacity" to disburse such large new sums of money. In some cases, this is certainly not true: adequate capacities do exist. In many countries, donors contribute to the problem by over-burdening national capacities. Aid management systems are geared to donor requirements, not national priorities and are often run parallel to government structures. As a result, government capacities are weakened, not strengthened. In addition, donors often place multiple, diverse and uncoordinated demands on governments—even when they co-finance the same project. Governments often have difficulty in complying with complicated donor procedures, which, to make matters worse, frequently change, along with donor staff and policies (Nebie 2004). In those cases where national mechanisms are, in fact, lacking to disburse development funds, the priority for donors should be to rectify this condition, instead of lamely using such a problem as an excuse to hold back funding. Building up absorptive capacity involves increased expenditures, particularly during the early stages, on personnel and governance institutions and increased investments in a foundation of social and physical infrastructure.

The best use of ODA is to finance public investment, such in physical and social infrastructure or in the restructuring of institutions, such as the banking system, that can galvanize private investment. In economies with under-utilized capacities—a characteristic of most low-income countries—such investment is unlikely to cause more than a moderate increase in inflation. At the same time, a positive supply response is likely to be rapid (because new capacities do not have to be immediately created).

To avoid long-term aid dependence, governments also need to mobilize more domestic resources: boosting revenue or borrowing domestically, if necessary, for public investment.

McKinley sparks, in order to advance 'national ownership' of the development agenda, a broader policy dialogue—based on creating wider policy choice—on the macroeconomic and adjustment policies that govern Poverty Reduction Strategies. The economic policies under-girding 'Second-Generation' PRSPs—namely, PRSPs firmly anchored in an MDG framework—should be less fixated on macroeconomic stabilization and more geared to stimulating rapid growth and long-term human development. Unless economic policies are revamped along these lines, and fully backed up with ample development resources, the prospects for reaching the MDGs will remain remote. And PRSPs will remain short-term, tactical instruments designed primarily to legitimize stabilization measures and set up social safety nets in order to mitigate the inevitable adverse consequences for poverty.

Ways forward

As Brian Tomlinson puts it: "Being unrealistic about the MDGs in our public rhetoric and campaigns over the next decade "runs the risk of creating a climate of inaccurate pessimism about development and aid". Indeed, in the absence of radical reforms greater global equality on the part of developed countries, beyond delivering more aid, an exclusive emphasis on MDG targets potentially sets up poor people and poor countries to take the blame once again for "their failure" to achieve the unachievable. Yet again, it will be said these countries failed to take the advice of the international community and squandered billions of dollars of aid and debt relief without reaching the Goals".

We then need to deconstruct the language used on and around the MDGs, question the governments' reports being issued and answer to the MDGs with our tools. As seen previously, several indexes have been established and provide excellent tools to respond to the MDG and development language. Some Northern NGOs are also attempting to capitalize on the efforts being made. The KICC "Monitoring project", launched recently by Oxfam NoVIB, attempts to build a community of organisations involved in monitoring governments and by large in participatory governance. The KICC project already had regional workshops in Bamako and Lusaka.

National initiatives as in South-Africa, Uganda, Malawi and many others show the interest and the will to challenge official data, to implement tools, and to interpellate decision makers at the national but also the local levels. Still, there is a need for a better national ownership and capacity. This applies for national economists and policy makers, but also to CSOs. What Reality of Aid is attempting to do, is to involve a large community of CSOs in the aid debate, at the international, regional and national level.

Clearly, in some of the SADC countries, aid has such a political and economic importance that CSOs must engage in its overall management.

For us at CIVICUS, one of the opportunities the MDG's and the GCAP campaign offers civil society is the possibility for collective and collaborative action, notwithstanding the specific goals that different sectors support. Engaging around the MDG's can boost civil society's capacity to engage national governments and intergovernmental bodies, while increasing their collective experiential knowledge of the politics and operational dynamics of engagement with governing institutions. The civil society response to the MDGs needs to be diverse and united. Exemplarily in South-Africa, Naledi, which essentially underpins COSATU's work, offers to civil society organisations a simple and ready to use toolkit on fighting poverty. In Zambia, The GCAP campaign is united with Micah Challenge. This unity within civil society is an important strength in achieving our goal.

As the work of Amartya Sen demonstrates, people-centred development for poverty eradication is ultimately about recognizing the rights of the vulnerable transforming the power relations, as well as affecting the cultural and social interests that sustain inequality. The poor are not objects to be acted upon by development officials who "deliver" the MDGs. The impoverishment of large numbers of people in the South has been the consequence of complex national and international economic, social and political processes. Consequently, the poor will be central actors in sometimes conflictual politics, with their aim to strengthen the hand of a political constituency supporting pro-poor development strategies. The challenge of combating poverty therefore is not so much "political will" of donor governments, as it is strengthening the means to address unequal power, capacity, and access to resources for those whose rights are systematically denied – the poor, impoverished women and children, and other marginalized peoples.

Progress in meeting the MDGs will also require a much more comprehensive set of policy changes by governments and other development actors, reflecting a holistic approach to poverty. Initiatives that promote democratic governance and citizens' rights, at all levels, without externally imposed conditions on directions for development strategies, are fundamental. They must be accompanied by international actions on the part of governments to radically reform current trade, investment and environmental agreements. And the impact of development policies must be measured against our human rights obligations, the Right to Development and the responsibility to give priority to ending global poverty.

MDGs and good Governance

By Peter Henriot - Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection

Imagine that one day you visit a village in some far-off place in one of the SADC countries and find the local people very happy as they enjoy enough good food, with healthy children going to good schools, families living in peace and harmony, good agricultural fields well taken care of, and young people content to stay in the local area. Then the next day you visit another village where people are complaining and grumbling, looking very hungry, with a broken-down and a dilapidated clinic with no teachers and nurses, empty fields, and most of the youth gone off to the big cities.



You might ask yourself why the difference in these two villages? Something you would very rightly suspect is that the leaders of the first village – the chief and advisors – are doing a good job of governing for the benefit of their people, while in the second village the leaders are only looking after themselves and their own advantages.

Well, this comparison of good and bad villages points to an obvious truth that also certainly applies to countries. Where there is good governance, there can be true development. But where governance fails in its purpose – serving the people – then there can be no development.

As leaders of the countries of the SADC region prepare to meet in Lusaka this coming August, the moral of this story of the two villages should be taken seriously to heart. Because it is clear that without good governance, meeting the much-desired Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is simply impossible, truly an illusion.

The MDGs set targets for the improvement of people's lives in every area of human development: reducing poverty, increasing literacy and health, empowering women, protecting the environment, etc. We are now more than half-way through the 15 year period set down as the time to achieve these goals with both national and international cooperation. But it is becoming increasingly clear that the MDGs will

simply not be met without significant improvement in the good governance of all of our countries in this SADC region.

What we mean by good governance and how it is related to meeting the MDGs? The easiest way to describe good governance is to say that it occurs when the structures and attitudes of governing a country are operating in a way that the common good is being promoted. By the common good, I mean that situation in which everyone is *contributing* to the fullness of life of the community and everyone is *benefiting* from that fullness of life.

Good governance means that people are able to participate in decisions that affect their lives. People are not cheating or being cheated. The laws of the community are clear and beneficial for all. The resources of the country are oriented towards overall improvement of everyone, not only those who might be in power at the moment.

Let me mention four key elements of good governance and note how these elements obviously affect whether or not a country can move towards meeting the MDGs.

A People-Oriented Constitution

The fundamental instrument of governance is obviously the basic rule of law in a country, its Constitution. The Constitution embodies the vision of the people – that is why it usually begins with the sacred phrase, “We the People.” As a document of basic rule, its two most important parts are the description of the powers of the government and the listing of the rights of the citizens.

A people-oriented Constitution will assure that the leaders of the government – MPs, judges, President and Ministers -- are truly servants of the people, with power limited to the ways in which all the citizens benefit from the national resources. Simply stated, power is for service, and a good Constitution assures that this is true. The “rule of law” will mean that government officials responsibly promote the anti-poverty programmes, the health and education projects, the gender involvement, the environmental protection that the MDGs stand for.

Moreover, a people-oriented Constitution will contain a Bill of Rights which explicitly sets down the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCRs) that assure that each citizen is guaranteed the means of a decent human life in community. The new Constitution of South Africa, for example, shows how these ESCRs can be incorporated in a Constitution, with explanations, for example, of “justiciability” and “progressive realisation.”

The MDGs are targets that enable the ESCRs to be realized in everyday life, and thus a people-oriented Constitution is so essential for the achievement of the MDGs in our SADC countries. That is why it is very sad that the leader of one well-known SADC country that is in very deep economic and social trouble at this moment has adamantly stated that there is no need at all for new constitutional reforms. In his opinion, everything is OK with the governance system. In another country, with many bright hopes for true developmental progress toward the MDGs, leaders of the current government have been too long resistant to the overall constitutional reform so strongly called for by review commissions and the public at large.

People's Participation

A second element of good governance is the widespread participation of people in the decisions that affect their lives. And we surely know from experience that the achievement of the MDGs will never be possible unless the people whose lives these goals intimately affect are involved in the decision-making process. Two ways in which this occurs is in the electoral process and in the operations of civil society organisations.

Good elections – uncomplicated, open, honest, regular, efficient, etc. – can mean good governance. People can feel that their vote really matters and really will be counted. Hence they will take their vote seriously. Voter apathy usually reveals a bad electoral system as is seen in several SADC countries. Poor registration mechanisms, ineffective poll set-ups, dishonest oversight, biased media coverage, all mean that people will not have a sense that elected officials really will advance their good, e.g., in the pursuit of the MDGs.

Electoral reform, then, is essential in many SADC countries if the good governance required to meet the MDGs is to be a fact of life.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) play an indispensable role in good governance because they provide opportunities for people to be involved in voluntary and practical ways of promoting the common good. For example, some CSOs directly serve the people's needs, such as the Red Cross or a legal aid society. Other CSOs advocate for better government programmes to meet people's needs, such as women's lobby groups or justice and peace commissions. Both kinds of CSOs are surely necessary.

In some SADC countries right now there are CSOs that are specifically focusing on the MDGs. This is a way of making good governance a reality.

Planning for Priorities

We all know that unless the MDGs are seen as real priorities at the core of national politics, they never will be achieved. Hence there is need for governance that really places priority emphasis on the human elements embodied in each of the MDGs.

In so many SADC countries, it can frankly be said that the problem in advancing human development is not *resources* but *priorities*! Surely there is a scarcity of resources, but resources like money, time and energy can always be found for some things but not for others. For example, resources to secure fancy cars for MPs and government officials seem always to be available while books in schools and drugs in hospitals may go lacking. Or trips abroad by Presidents get greater emphasis than agricultural inputs for peasant farmers.

This is why national budgets are such key elements in good governance that will achieve the MDGs. Budgets are more than technical or bureaucratic allocations of resources; they are moral and ethical statements of priorities. Good governance therefore requires (1) citizens have a chance for input into the design of the national budgets; (2), the government and MPs set priorities that really meet peoples' needs (like the MDGs); and (3) citizens monitor that the allocations expressed in the budget really do reach the people quickly and fully.

Anti-Corruption Struggle

Unfortunately, the good governance that is needed for promotion of the common good is all too often undermined by the cancer of corruption. It is referred to as "cancer" because if it is not checked, it spreads rapidly and affects all the organs of governance and eventually breaks down the whole system. We have seen that in several countries of the SADC region the effort to meet the MDGs is being blocked by the three levels of corruption.

First, there is *grand corruption*, or that committed by major government officials or private actors that contributes to what in one country has been called "plunder of the national economy." Money intended to meet public needs is banked in private banks for personal use. Some former heads of state have been accused of this corruption and are actually on trial.

Second, there is *middle corruption*, or that committed by public servants by theft of public funds. This is sadly revealed in the annual reports of the government auditor general. And sadly, too, it is not often effectively prosecuted. Third, there is *petty corruption*, or bribes taken by minor government officials – "facilitation fees," as they might be called! One thinks of paying a police officer a small amount to avoid a large fine. In many of our countries, it provides a significant source of income to poorly paid personnel.

As is obvious, corruption at any of these levels weakens good governance and hence the ability to achieve the MDGs. The struggles against corruption must be intensified and this requires two things: (1) new and effective structures that prevent, investigate and prosecute so that corruption is no longer a well-paying venture; and (2) new and strong attitudes that change social and cultural patterns that accept and even condone corrupt practices.

The struggle against corruption is a struggle for good governance. And it is an absolute necessity if the MDGs are to be met.

Conclusion

There are surely plenty of things that can be said – pro and con – about the MDGs. Many people criticise them for being unrealistic or not addressing the deeper structural causes of lack of true development in our countries of the SADC region. But one thing is clear: the MDGs embody and

emphasise a framework of integral and sustainable development that clearly is the right of citizens to experience and the duty of governments to promote.

To return to my story of the two villages with good and bad development, so much does depend on the chiefs and their colleagues. And so it is true for what we might say to the SADC leaders when they meet in August in Lusaka. These leaders must show in deeds and not simply in words that they are committed to good governance. And that good governance must include a people-centred constitution, people's participation, planning for priorities and an anti-corruption struggle.

The MDGs require good governance. And the people must demand that!
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