

THEME: “*Commission for Africa in Mozambique: Brainstorm around the progress in the implementation of the recommendations in the Report*”

Introductory Note: this report is a synopsis of the civil society brainstorming meeting concerning the progress achieved in implementing the recommendation in the CFA report. The meeting was held on 15 February 2006 at Hotel Tivoli (City of Maputo). Besides the civil society organizations, invitations to participate in the discussions were also extended to members of Government and international cooperating partners. Given the importance of knowing the position of government and the partners, representatives of the Ministries of Finance, Planning and Development, and Industry and Commerce as well as the Embassy of Russia and the consulate of Great Britain were invited to form part of the panel of speakers.

This document not only presents in a systematic manner the information supplied by the main speakers at the meeting but also sets out the main points discussed by other participants at the meeting. For a better understanding, we will first explain the context that led up to the establishment of the CFA.

Contextualisation

The year 2004 started with exciting news for Africa’s development agendas.

After decades of political and economic stagnation resulting from the combined effects of the Cold War and a World Economic Order prejudicial to the purposes of developing countries, Africa slowly starts rising and recovering its place in the *stage of nations*: This recovery is intrinsically linked to the emergence of a new generation of leaders who are committed not only to peace and democracy on the continent but also to the reduction of

poverty. This last objective was dependent on the establishment of a New Economic Order based on international cooperation, in which rich and poor countries could share interests and responsibilities for mutual benefit. The international response and, in particular, the response from rich countries, towards this African effort (even if partially biased) has been positive and progressive, and the *Africa Commission* is proof of this.

The Africa Commission was launched by the British Prime-Minister, Tony Blair, as an initiative aimed at speeding up progress “towards a strong and prosperous Africa”. With the Commission, the intention was to generate greater support for the NEPAD - New Partnership for Africa’s Development Initiative, the G8 plan of action for Africa, the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and other processes contributing towards the reduction of poverty in Africa.

The initiative gained impetus in 2005 with the launch of the CFA Report on the theme “Our Common Interest”, a result of analyses, debates and contributions by a wide variety of role-players amongst which politicians, academics, intellectuals and civil society. In the form of recommendations, this report presented guidelines for the establishment of favourable conditions for the implementation of development initiatives in Africa. Taking as its basic presumption the guiding principle according to which “*Africans must take responsibility for solving African problems and the international community must create an external climate that allows them to fulfil this responsibility*”, the CFA report makes the following recommendations: **African States** need to significantly improve *their governance and institutional development, consolidate peace and security, develop inclusive policies by investing in people and concentrating on rapid inclusive growth favourable to the vulnerable sectors of the population*. It bodes on the **richer countries**, particularly the **G8**, to *create conditions for the establishment of just rules for trade, the cancellation of the External Debt and, above all, make available more and better (financial) support for development programmes in Africa*. The greatest merit of the report is that, besides issuing a set of recommendations for African governments, it also appeals to the need for the international community to assume responsibility in the search for viable / favourable political options for the development of African countries.

Since then, various efforts have been made at international and continental level to concretise the recommendations emanating from the report which, although not binding, have been accepted by political leaders, particularly at the level of the African Union and by the British government. In the British case, and taking advantage of the fact that it holds the chairmanship of both the European Union and the G8, the Blair government has been trying to influence the agenda of these for at least as concerns three key issues, namely: debt cancellation, more and better assistance for development and better international trade rules. Certain progress has been attained in respect of these issues although it is unclear to what extent this progress responds to Africa's concerns.

Being aware of the importance of this report and recognising the opportunities it gives rise to, African civil society decided not to stay on the sidelines but has tried by various means to actively participate in the concretisation of these recommendations. It was in this context that FDC, in partnership with CIVICUS, held an international civil society meeting in April 2005, essentially for the purpose of disseminating the CFA Report as a guiding document for development actions in Africa and with a view to developing ways in which it can become increasingly involved in this process.

A year after the launch of the CFA Report, Mozambican civil society saw the start of 2006 as an ideal moment for a (joint) reflection on the progress achieved on the implementation of the CFA recommendations in Africa, particularly as concerns Mozambique. Between the G8 Summit at Gleneagles and the meeting of the International Trade Organisation, including the EU and UN summit on the progress on the MDGs, several decisions were taken that impact on Africa. From the perspective of Mozambican Civil Society, it is imperative that these decisions be assessed with a view to analysing to what extent they were relevant or, in other words, the positive effects for the continent and for Mozambique in particular. On the other hand, civil society also questions the sustainability of the CFA recommendations given that the Blair Government no longer holds the chairmanship of the G8 or the UE and that the new leaders may have other marginal ideas for Africa.

These scenarios give rise to some concerns amongst Civil Society Organisations, such as: how will the rise of Russia ensure the continuity or the rupture of the progress attained by the outgoing British chairmanship of the G8? What implications could this have for

the fulfilment of the CFA recommendations? How can Civil Society Organisations influence the decisions of the G8, with Russia at the helm?

Civil society, being desirous of benefiting in a tangible manner from the “CFA Initiative” and being in a better position to deal with new occurrences wishes to give continuity to the activities carried out last year has decided to start this process with a joint brainstorming session. The government, civil society organisations and international cooperating partners were the main participants at the meeting. Each participant, according to his area of intervention, was expected to present concrete suggestions as to his contribution towards the objectives set out in the report. This can contribute towards the strengthening of the interventions, following on the recommendations in the CFA Report, particularly as concerns the Reduction of Absolute Poverty in the Country.

Points Discussed at the Meeting

1. The CFA Recommendations and the PARPA II¹

Ministry of Planning and Development - Dr. Cristina Matusse.

The purpose of the presentation by the Ministry of Planning was to demonstrate the relationship between the CFA Recommendations and PARPA II. Dr. Cristina starting by explaining that every international commitment by the country has impacts on internal planning. Beside the CFA, the MDGs can also be included in the list of foreign commitments that guide domestic planning policies. In the specific case of the CFA recommendations, Dr. Matusse mentioned that although the CFA Recommendations had not yet been officially assumed in a direct manner, the issues raised in the Report already form part of the government’s plans and refer to problems that aren’t new and the solution of which is already foreseen in the government’s plans. Within the national context, according to Dr. Cristina, marked progress has already been attained as concerns many of the recommendations, more specifically: the reduction of poverty from 69.4% to 54.1% between 1996/7 and 2002/3; expansion of the Mozambican economy; expansion

¹ PARPA – Plano de Acção para a Redução da Pobreza Absoluta – Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty (Mozambique)

of the delivery of basic government services in priority sectors; growth and alignment of foreign aid with the government's strategy. However, Dr. Cristina warned that the implementation of the recommendations poses a huge challenge, given that there is no concrete plan of action to guide the implementation of the measures set out in the CFA. The challenge lies in defining a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the fulfilment of the CFA recommendations pertaining to foreign trade.

2. “More Trade and Fair Trade”

Ministry of Trade and Industry - Dr. Cerina Banú.

According to Dr. Cerina, an increase in domestic production levels is required in order to take advantage of international trade. In Mozambique, where livelihood of 70% of the population depends on family farming activities, the huge challenge lies in transforming family agricultural systems to commercial agriculture systems in order that local products can be made available in the international market. The problems faced by Mozambique in placing its products on the international market are not limited to the lack of market access, given that this LCD has been given preferential market access, but in the lack of capacity to produce the sufficient quantities required by the international market and at competitive prices. The high production costs of local products, as is the case with sugar, forces the producer to place his product in the market at prices above international prices. Hence, for Dr. Cerina, the issue of fairness in trade is a very complex one that requires from the wealthy countries direct support for the production sector and the elimination of the obstacles or barriers imposed on the poor countries. The production process in poor countries must also take the consumer into account, as the consumer plays a determining role in deciding *what to produce and how to produce it.*

3. Assessment of Activities carried out and Future Contribution towards the Consolidation of the CFA Recommendations.

British High Commission - Louise de Sousa

As far as Dr. Louise was concerned, significant progress has been made in supporting development in Africa within the scope of the CFA initiative. An example of this was the increase (doubling) of aid by USD 50 billion by 2010. Another example is the fact that the European Commission has committed itself towards increasing aid for Africa. She warned, however, that the increase in aid should also take into account the government's capacity to use the aid it received. The progress achieved in development aid can also be seen within the context of the total cancellation of debt for 19 countries, as recently announced by the IMF. An agreement with the World Bank and the African Development Bank is also expected by the end of the current year. In the area of trade, Dr. Louise felt that no significant progress had been made, taking into account the disappointment felt as the last World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting, which brought nothing new. The CFA recommendations have also not yielded positive results in the area of HIV and AIDS, despite large amounts of aid and funding having been given to programmes aimed at combating the disease. Dr. Louise recognised that Civil Society has an important role to play as the pressure it exerts on donors can go a long way towards fulfilling the CFA recommendations, not only as far as the governments are concerned but also as far as the international partners are concerned.

4. Future Prospects for the CFA Agenda

Embassy of Russia: Attaché at the Embassy

In the presentation made by the representatives of the Embassy of Russia, it became clear that Russia, as current chair of the G8, will be strictly adhering to the promises and undertakings made by the previous leadership. Africa will occupy a special place in Russia's agenda during its leadership of the G8. In this respect a meeting of the Africa Partnership Forum will be taking place in Moscow in October. In the case of Mozambique, Russia stated that it is willing to study the possibility of supporting to a certain extent the meeting of the Africa Partnership Forum to be held in Mozambique in May, in which Russian representatives have undertaken to take part. Within the scope of the APF, some events on Africa have been planned, and in which will be participating

personal representatives of the “G-8” leaders, with a view to fulfilling the tasks set out in the final documents of previous meetings, in particular as concerns support to poorer countries. The representatives of the Russian Embassy took advantage of the opportunity to stress that Russia has undertaken to cancel the debt of African countries to the tune of USD 11, 3 billion, including USD 2, 2 billion within the HIPC initiative.

5. The CFA Recommendations and the Implications for Planning Development in Mozambique_ Nuno Castelo Branco.

For Nuno Castelo Branco, as opposed to several reports prepared by international institutions such as the World Bank, the CFA Report introduces something new. The various reports do not set out any practical elements that have resulted in concrete changes, whereas the RFA constitutes an in-depth and complete approach to the problems affecting Africa. There is a change in the outlook towards Africa. An example of this is the emphasis given to the improvement of the quality, and not only the quantity, of aid. However, as concerns the need to establish a plan of action to support the CFA, Dr. Castelo Branco expressed the view that it is not this concern that should guide the debate on (foreign) initiatives for development support to Africa. The concern should reside in the domestic definition of priorities in line with the realities of our situation. As opposed to what has been happening, African countries tend to define their priorities in accordance with the donors’ agendas. In the CFA report, the donors propose to support the government’s priorities and, as such, it is up to the governments to identify priorities based on their vision of the country and so negotiate with the international partners. Another issue put forward by Dr. Castelo Branco in his presentation deals with the dualism in the PARPA vision – *Economic Growth and Absolute Poverty*. As far the author is concerned, the recourse to external aid for economic growth should be guided by the need to eliminate the dependency on foreign aid. What has been noticed to date is that the more we count on external aid to develop our economy, the more aid the country needs, in other words, the more the economy grows so does the need for foreign aid so as to sustain the expansion. For Dr. Castelo Branco, now is the appropriate time to start

thinking that the purpose of foreign aid is to reduce the country's dependency levels. Now is also the time to start investing in production sectors that will ensure the sustainability of our economy. The investment in social areas should be conducted in a sustainable manner. The expansion of the school, health and even road networks, must be intrinsically linked to economic development, which has not been happening until now. For example, there is no point in increasing the number of schools if the teachers and the maintenance resources are insufficient. The greatest challenge faced currently by public planning authorities is to harmonise existing policy documents which are not only varied but also complicated. An example of this is the Ministry of Education about 40 policy documents at present.

Other Countries' Experiences - SARPN_Bárbara Kalima-Phiri

In her presentation, Bárbara Phiri referred to the experience of other African countries that also benefit from the CFA initiative. Using the Zambian experience as an example, Dr. Barbara tried to show how the government, donors and civil society were engaged in the CFA process. From 2004 to 2005 no relevant action by Zambian Government or by Civil Society has been reported as concerns the fulfilment of the CFA recommendations, at least openly. Some actions were carried out, such as the Monitoring and Evaluation of government programmes in the fight against poverty but this was not directly linked, at least not formally, to the CFA recommendations. However, as Dr. Barbara mentioned, this doesn't mean that Zambia is not committed but it is simply an initial phase that is critical for the buy-in and ownership of the processes and recommendations set out in the report.

After the presentations, some points for reflection, doubts and comments were raised around the various themes covered in the CFA report and its linkages to the realities of the country. Some of these are:

- I. Both the Government and Civil Society must acquire a deeper appreciation of the CFA recommendations;
- II. There is a need to clarify the alignment and harmonisation between the government's national programmes and the CFA recommendations;
- III. The challenge of establishing a monitoring and evaluation system for the CFA recommendations in harmony with other programming tools at national level;
- IV. The need to create a mechanism of mutual accountability between donors and African governments;
- V. The need for civil society to exercise strong pressure for greater domestic and international accountability as concerns the CFA recommendations;
- VI. Introduce improvements not only at the policy development level but also at the level of the implementation of the recommendations in the Report;
- VII. The need for government to concentrate on rural extension programmes so as to improve agricultural production and create more advantages for placing local products in the international market.

Some Recommendations made by the Participants

- On another occasion, civil society organisations should meet to discuss interventions towards fulfilling the recommendations in the CFA.
- The government, donors and civil society must arrange regular meetings to promote better cooperation in the implementation and monitoring of activities within the framework of the CFA recommendations.
- The government should promote multi-sectoral meetings for internal discussions on the follow-up to the CFA recommendations.

Comments

It became clear at the meeting that there is a willingness on the part of the government and the current chair of the G8, Russia, to push forward with the CFA recommendations in the country. However, civil society, in the various issues raised, appealed for the

government to establish a vision and define internal priorities in order to better negotiate and take advantage of the opportunities created by the CFA Initiative.

As for the recommendation on “**More Trade and Fair Trade**” it was noted that neither the government nor the international development partners were happy with the progress attained. Dr. Cerina Banú, when referring to the need to improve the quality of local products and to change the agricultural sector from family production to commercial production, also mentioned that little advancement has been made in this regard at national level whilst, at international level, the existence of (technical) barriers constitutes a constraint in fulfilling the recommendations. Dr. Louise also agreed that little advancement had been made and referred to the latest discussions at the World Trade Organisation, which did not yield positive results. Dr. Louise also referred to HIV/AIDS where the results don’t seem to be very positive despite the fact that financial support has been on the increase.

In general, and judging by the doubling of financial aid flows, have been complying with the recommendation on “more financial aid” for development. However, the issue concerning “better support” still needs to be dealt with. Although the government has not formally bought in to the CFA recommendations, its programmes fall within the scope of these recommendations. Civil society is evermore interested in becoming involved in actions aimed at complying with the CFA recommendations. This, actually, was the purpose of the meeting.