



Spotlight on Development

Towards the Millennium Development Goals



An occasional newsheet from The NANGOF Trust, the umbrella for Civil Society in Namibia

Millennium Development Goals

By 2015 all UN member states, including Namibia, have pledged to:

Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Achieve universal primary education

Promote gender equality and empower women

Reduce child mortality

Improve maternal health

Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Ensure environmental sustainability

Develop a global partnership for development

Poverty in Namibia

Namibia is today a lower middle-income country with an average per capita income of US\$2,975. Despite an improvement in the Gini coefficient from 0.707 in 1993/94 to 0.6 in 2003/4, Namibia still has one of the highest rates of inequality in the world, with parts of society having standards of living equal to levels to be found in Europe with other parts of society experiencing levels of poverty to be found in any part of Southern Africa. Classed as a middle-income country, 30% of the population – mostly black – are considered poor.

High unemployment in particular among young people adds to growing discontent about the persistence of inequalities. Cheap manufactured imports from South Africa and Asia limit possibilities for job creation outside the civil service, farming, the growing tourism sector and the capital-intensive mining sector.

Namibia's economy relies heavily on extraction and processing of minerals as well as on processed fish for export. Namibia is the world's fifth largest producer of uranium and a primary source of gem-quality diamonds. Cattle and sheep rearing dominates agriculture, and the country has one of the richest potential fisheries in the world. Policies adopted since independence have aimed at sustaining economic growth, diversifying the country's productive base and attracting foreign investors.

The civil service employs 4.3% of the population, a share 2.5 times larger than the sub-Saharan average. The current wage bill eats 43% of government spending and is, in the IMF's assessment unsustainable, making civil service reform an urgent requirement.

Civil Society seeks programmes that improve the coverage, quality of and access to basic social infrastructure and services and take account of local needs and specific needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, thus reducing the inequalities of access to general services. In short, economic growth needs to be closely linked to the Millennium Development Goals.

For example, Civil Society has been lobbying through the Basic Income Grant Coalition for a national income grant to provide a basic income for all. Civil Society programmes of small business support are based upon clear evidence that encouragement of small businesses is one major tool in enabling the unemployed, marginalised and disadvantaged to gain access to economic activity; women in particular are able to gain a livelihood through running small businesses.

Civil Society notes and welcomes the fact that the economic growth targets set as part of the 2nd National Development Plan were exceeded. It also notes that the main source of that performance came from the private sector and believes that an important feature of this, in relation to Social and Economic Justice, was the growth of small businesses. Policies that advance small businesses need to be encouraged.

In addition, Civil Society believes that accountability and transparency are essential components for both economic and social justice. Namibia needs a Freedom of Information Act. But even without this, all sections of society need to work to the highest standards of openness and integrity. The government, in particular, needs to lead by acting upon the highest standards of public accountability and needs to challenge corruption wherever it is found.

Social safety nets

While Namibia is one of the few countries in Africa maintaining social safety nets for vulnerable groups such as senior citizens, orphans, and people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS,

disabled people and war veterans, there are challenges to these social grants due to a host of problems. As a result, too many beneficiaries do not receive their entitlement due to factors such as lack of awareness, insufficient legal documents such as Identity cards and social exclusion. Moreover, while social pensions were recently increased from N\$250 to N\$300 per month, pension incomes have not kept up with general prices increases and in real terms pensions today are 14% lower than in 1990.

Traditional support structures and safety nets are under tremendous pressure primarily due to the AIDS epidemic, which erodes savings and coping strategies of communities and families.

Namibia has over the years developed policy instruments geared towards addressing past imbalances inherited from the legacy of apartheid and colonialism. A series of national strategic frameworks have been put in place to guide the development process. The primary guiding tool is the country's vision 2030 aimed at transforming the country from a lower middle-income to an industrialized nation by the 2030. The vision gives impetus and meaning to the traditional National

Development Plans which articulate priorities and the focus of government over a given timeframe. Since inception in 1995, the policies have identified poverty, unemployment and income inequality as major threats to economic development.

The effects of social challenges including the HIV/AIDS pandemic are having devastating effects on the nation and hence influence government planning and spending patterns. There are, however, commendable efforts and strides have been made in sectors such as health, fisheries and marine resources, and community based natural resources management.

The importance of the MDGs

The Millennium Development Goals cover all spheres of development aims notably:

- Economic Development is an extricable part of Human Development

"States have the right and duty to formulate appropriate national development policies that aim at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals, on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of the benefits resulting therefrom."

Declaration of Right to Development

- Peace and stability are prerequisites
- Good Governance is essential for Human Development
- Human Rights, Equality and Equity are fundamentals of Human Development
- The MDGs represent the most critical challenges facing Humanity for its development

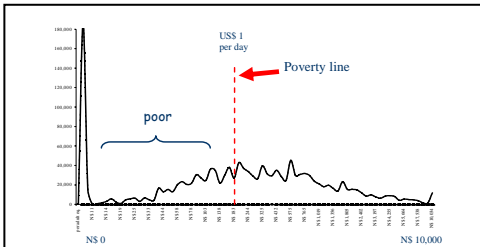
Challenging poverty practically through income redistribution: being BIG on action

A practical response to poverty in Namibia is the proposal for a Basic Income Grant (BIG). This is proposed as a monthly cash grant (e.g. N\$100) paid to every Namibian citizen. The money paid to people not in need or in poverty is recovered through taxation. Every Namibian would receive such a grant up until pension age – a household of 6 would receive N\$600 per month.

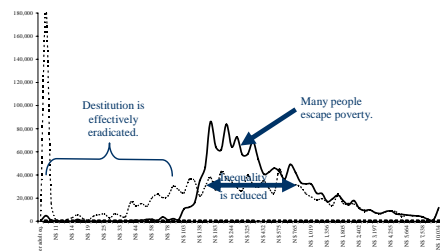
The impact:

- Better chances for employment: resources (like clothing, postal address, telephone etc.) are needed to successfully enter the job market
- the working poor: remittances to the extended families are a regressive tax on the poor. The BIG is a tax reduction for the poor, freeing resources for economic investment.
- Rural employment: N\$1billion buying power would be brought into rural Namibia
- Education: the BIG by securing nutrition is a human capital investment, increasing capabilities and real choices.
- HIV/AIDS: nutrition is a prerequisite for healthy lifestyle and taking medicine.
- Economic insecurity: Cash security enables people to save and to invest taking entrepreneurial risks (see social pensions)
- Power: income security gives bargaining power against exploitative employment and social labour practices

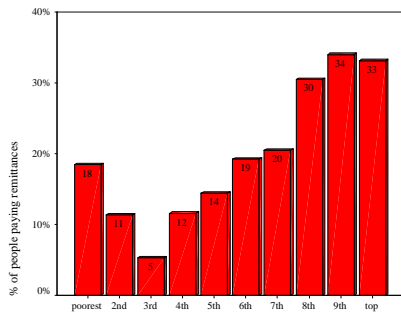
Goal 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger



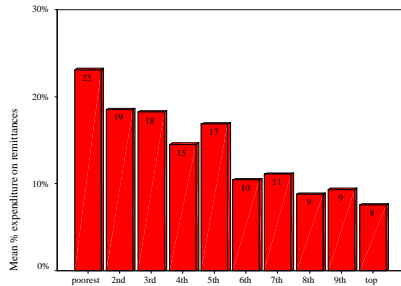
Poverty distribution before BIG



Poverty distribution after BIG



Buying power to poorer people before BIG



Buying power redistributed to poorer people after BIG

Eradication of absolute extreme poverty has made progress. Statistics from the National Planning Commission in 2007 reveal that:

Poor households (spending more than 60% of income on food) declined from 38% in 1993/94 to 28% in 2003/04; however, rural communities still face real poverty with nearly half of households (42%) spending more than 60% of their income on food (compared with 7% of urban households).

Extremely poor households (where more than 80% of household income is spent on food) declined from 9% in 1993/94 to 4% in 2003/04.

The Gini Coefficient, which measures the degree of inequality in a society, narrowed from 0.7 to 0.6 between 1993/94 and 2003/04; however, this remains one of the highest rates in the world.

Despite progress on poverty, unemployment is rising. In 2003/04 the **unemployment rate** of 36.7% compared with

33.8% in 2000 and 19% in 1993/94. Moreover, unemployment is particularly concentrated in rural areas and among youth. In 2003/04:

- Rural unemployment stood at 44.7 per cent
- Urban unemployment stood at 29 per cent

- Youth Unemployment: 15-19 year olds: 40% 20-24 year olds: 47%

Other aspects of poverty remain disturbingly high:

- Malnutrition in Under Fives shows little improvement: 26% (1992) 24% (2003)
- Poor households are differentially located by birth groups; for example, the Khoisan speaking households suffer the highest poverty incidence (63%) compared to 0% of German speaking households.

Moreover, the Participatory Poverty Assessment results (2003 – 2005), which are more subjective in nature (being based on what communities feel, as opposed to what a household survey suggests) show that HIV/AIDS, unemployment, inadequate access to quality social services, inadequate assets such as livestock and land and poor road infrastructure are seen to be the major problems in the Regions. Consistently throughout the assessments, people in rural communities feel that they are worse off than they were at Independence.

Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education

There is no doubt that Namibia has made significant progress in terms of access to basic education, but the quality of the education system remains a critical challenge that needs to be addressed urgently. Education has received the highest allocations of public expenditure - 8.3% of GDP in 2000 or 23.5% of GRN expenditure and 6.7% of GDP and 20.7% of total GRN expenditure in 2005/6. About 59% of spending goes on primary education. Of N\$8.094bn expended during 2002/3 – 2004/5, about N\$7.528bn was budgeted for operational expenditure while only N\$0.4568bn was earmarked for the development budget.

Primary enrolment was 91.5% in 2000, with 94% of children reaching grade 5. Indeed, between 1992 and 2004 net

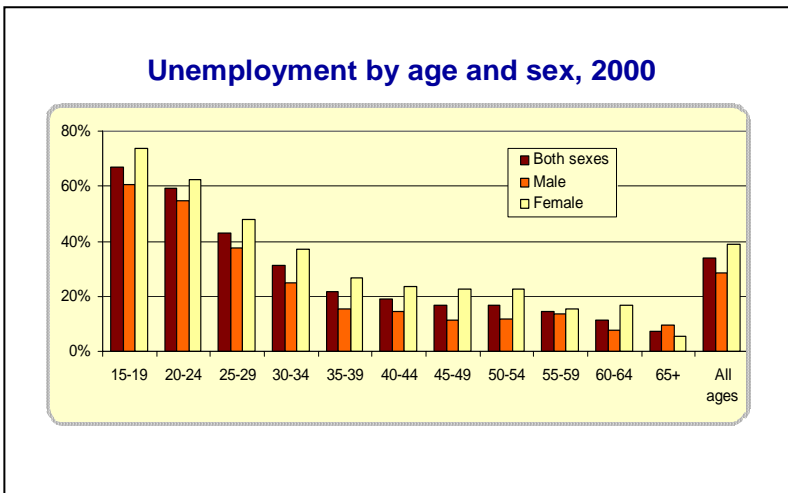
primary school enrolment shows improvement, rising from 89% to 95%.

Yet there are major issues:

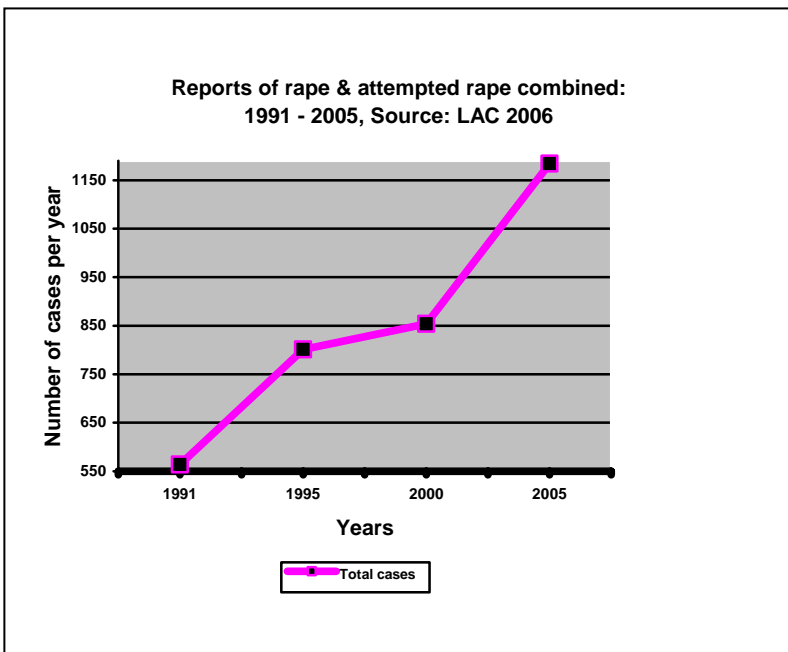
- Language Group disparities in enrolment rates: only 18% of San compared to 92% German and 89% Oshiwambo
- Adult Literacy Rate is stagnating at 89%
- NER Secondary School: 52%
- High quality primary education is still a challenge

Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

The 2004 gender-related development



index, published in the UN Human



Development Report, ranked Namibia at 101. However there is much to be done towards the empowerment of women in general.

Women in employment

A look at the estimated earned income in the same report indicates a major discrepancy between female and male incomes and workforce participation:

- Male/Female labour force participation: 60/48%

Violence towards women

Increasing violence against women and girls is to be found. Reported rape and attempted rapes have doubled

“I would particularly like to express my concern about the recent spate of violent crimes directed at women and children. These crimes represent a gross violation of the fundamental rights of our citizens and must therefore be condemned”

Dr Sam Nujoma, opening of Parliament 11 February 2003

since independence; a recent UN survey ranked Namibia’s rape rate 3rd highest out of 53 countries (although the high level of reporting could be indicative of positive factors such as higher official sensitivity to rape and good crime reporting practices). Gun crimes are significantly biased against women – between 2002 and 2006, the number of reported crimes in which firearms were pointed at women were 4.5 times as many as against men and 4.8 times as many women were murdered with a gun as were men.

Goal 4 Reduce Child Mortality

The current efforts of government in terms of reducing infant mortality rate seem largely successful but slow and are under threat due to the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Effectively addressing this Goal requires composite efforts in the areas of HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, general improvement of access for the poorest sections of our society to safe

water and sanitation, while also looking at strategies that will tackle poverty. Strategies to address regional inequalities in terms of access to public health facilities coupled to educational programmes targeting mothers and caretakers will also contribute to success in this area. Redoubling of efforts in primary health care would also contribute positively towards reducing the infant mortality rate as well as the under 5-years mortality rate, since that is the area in which least progress is being made.

partnership with faith-based institutions, traditional authorities, the school community and society at large is required to ensure meaningful progress in this area.

Goal 5 Improve Maternal Health

A look at the government's 2004 progress report on MDGs suggests that the relevant data in this area is insufficiently good to be able to determine real progress. Thus indicators such as the proportion of births attended by trained health personnel or the use of contraceptives show progress; but the maternal mortality ratio suggests that these inputs are not necessarily translating into reduced mortality rates among women – with the mortality rate apparently rising from 225 per 100,000 births in 1992 to 271 in 2000. With birth rates declining as a result of the impact of HIV/AIDS and increased use of family planning, the country should be able to see a downturn in maternal mortality arising from improved maternal health.

Success in this area will have a positive spin-off on MDG 4 targets (reduce child mortality) and similar strategies need to be explored to address this area successfully.

Goal 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases

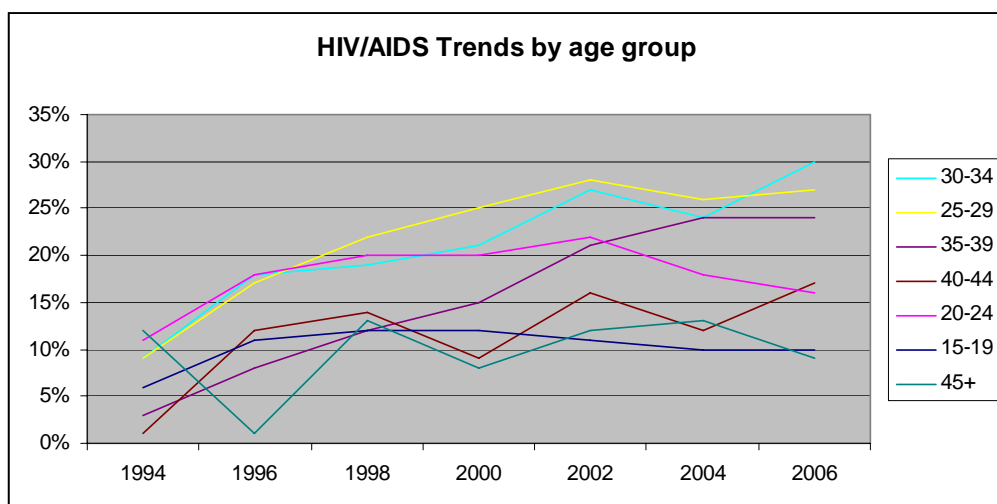
Goal 6 is the biggest challenge to Namibia, affecting all other progress. Namibia is at the impact stage of HIV and AIDS with multiple impacts on economic and social development

- Life expectancy is dropping
- Human Resource capacity is diminishing

INDICATOR	1992	2000	2006 Target
Infant mortality rate (per 1000 live births)	67	52	36
Under-five mortality rate (per 1000 live births)	87	71	54
Underweight among children under five	26%	24%	17%
Stunting among children under five	28%	24%	19%
Wasting among children under five	9%	9%	6%
Proportion of one-year old children immunized against measles	63%	72%	80%

Other than immunisation against measles, all under 5 children indicators are behind target

Civil society organisations believe that the general degeneration in the social fabric, that is characterized by erosion of societal norms, growing numbers of single-parents, increasing number of teenage pregnancies, impacts on this Goal significantly. A much wider



While falls in prevalence are seen in younger age groups (below 25), above 25 years the prevalence rates continue to rise

- The burden of care on families and communities is rising

HIV/AIDS prevalence declined from 22% in 2002 to 19.7% in 2004; however, hopes that this reduction represented the “turning of the tide” were put on hold when the 2006 overall figure stabilised at 19.9%.

HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death in Namibia for the past few years. Similarly, tuberculosis and malaria account for a significant number of deaths in Namibia. Each of the killer diseases interacts

on the others, with studies now

care of those infected (including the issue of food poverty) and supporting those who have lost carers. AIDS related deaths are expected to have risen from 13,880 in 2001 to about 23,220 in 2006. The figure of AIDS orphans is expected to follow a similar trend with about 118,050 orphans as a result of HIV/AIDS by the same date. Life expectancy is following a similar trend that will result in 40.2 years being the life expectancy at birth for Namibians.

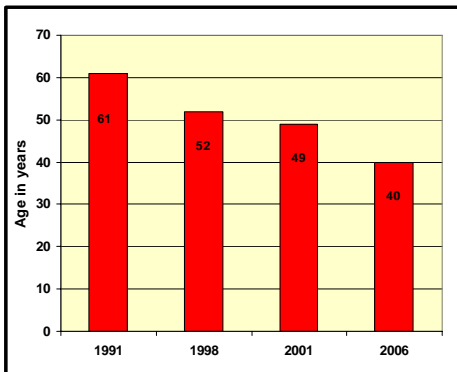
On a positive note, government has under its expenditure priorities recognized that “*HIV/AIDS affects every sector of the society*”. Consequently under the Medium Term Expenditure Forecast 2005/6 – 2007/8, the government has made special

allocations relating to anti-retroviral programmes for all district hospitals, maintenance and foster care grants for orphans and other vulnerable children, the continued funding of a special HIV/AIDS Programme to mitigate its effect on the education of the nation’s children and provision under its medical aid scheme for HIV/AIDS related treatment of its employees. What is of concern, however, is the extent to which investment in HIV/AIDS prevention is not having the desired impact in terms of behaviour changes and ultimately prevalence dropping to signify a turn-around of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

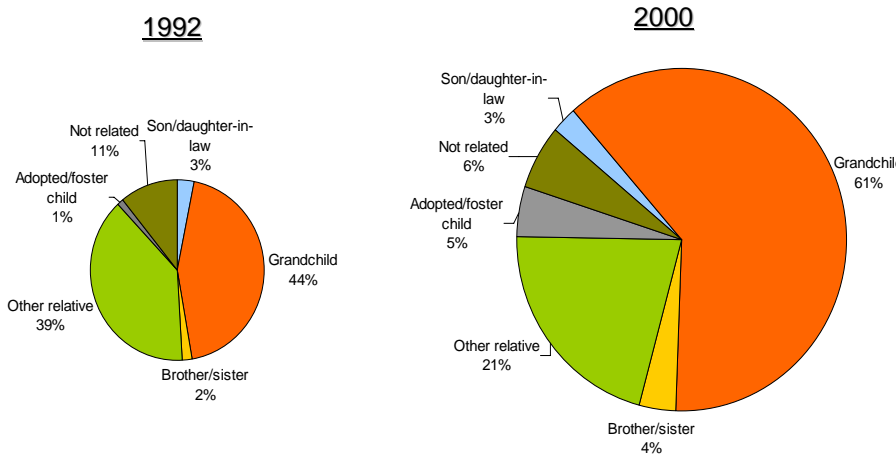
Moreover, government efforts are being outstripped by the scale of the problem – for example, only 44% of orphans are presently registered and in receipt of support; and food support for those on ARV is currently dependent on donor funds.

Goal 7 Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Rural-urban migration of people in search of employment and better



Life expectancy is falling fast because of AIDS

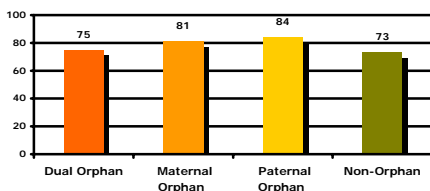


The burden of care has shifted significantly towards grandparents, with the rising number of orphans meaning that the absolute number of grandparents involved in care has risen by even greater numbers.

suggesting that malaria deaths are higher as a result of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. While Namibia is making good progress in terms of treatment –

in particular in achieving roll out of ARV treatment, more effort to raise public awareness and improve preventative measures is needed.

As importantly, more needs to be done in relation to



Orphans are concentrated in the rural communities, where poverty is the greatest

livelihood results in informal settlements in most semi-urban and urban centres. Most informal settlements face serious challenges in terms of access to basic amenities such as sanitation, access to water, etc., with many inhabitants of these poverty traps having to use the surrounding open areas as toilets.

Indicator	1990	2001	2006 Target
Protected areas	13.6%	16.8%	15.1%
Registered conservancies	0.0%	4.9%	10.9%
Freehold land	5.0%	6.1%	8.5%
%age of rural population with access to sanitation	15%	21%	50%

Mixed progress on sustainable environment use

commitments being made towards Africa, this falling trend must be reversed.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

Namibia has sought, with some success, to replace falling aid inflows by promoting FDI, although studies show that outflows from FDI into the broader economy are not as great as they might be.

The country's investment promotion efforts have been complemented by a spate of international trade agreements that offer reduced tariffs and preferential market access for certain products from Namibia. More recently, the "democratization of the SACU agreement" and the subsequent deployment of a SACU Secretariat in Windhoek seems to have further entrenched this regional trading block as a preferred arrangement to be emulated as regional integration in the sub-region intensifies.

The positive impact of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement's development assistance seems in contrast to the SADC-EU Economic Partnership Agreement being negotiated for completion by the end of 2007. The regional level integration efforts are already under threat as member countries of SADC and COMESA are induced to consider national interest above regional integration objectives, forging new alliances that could threaten the deepening of the regional integration process in the sub-region. While we may applaud the apparent

benefits to be accrued from trade pacts such as SACU, AGOA and the free trade agreement with the EU, the eventual erosion of tariffs and introduction of reciprocal

As is often the case, the legal framework in relation to the environment sometimes fails in the implementation. There are inconsistencies in applying Environment Impact Assessment study findings, a lack of nationwide awareness campaign on the fragility of our environment and environmental protocols; alternative income and employment opportunities presented by the natural environment are not pursued as vigorously as they should.

Sustainable energy for Namibia

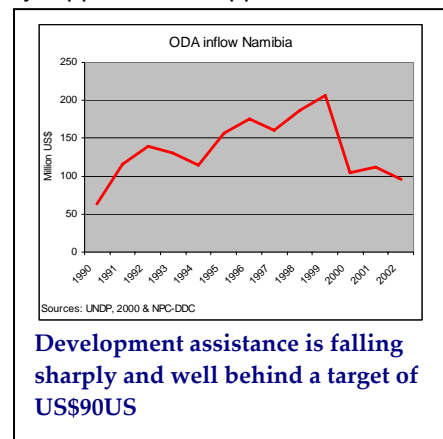
Although energy is not addressed in any of the eight MDGs, access to clean and affordable energy is a prerequisite to achieving sustainable development. Energy services have cross-cutting influences on both social and economic development, thereby influencing a nation's ability to achieve the MDGs.

Over 26m hectares of agricultural land in Namibia have become uncultivable because of bush encroachment, preventing the growth of useful grass species and resulting in the compaction of soils. This biodiversity loss leads to land degradation and reduced agricultural production. With over 70% of Namibia's population relying on agriculture, the resulting economic loss and increased poverty is enormous, having been estimated at N\$700million.

Removing the bush has proved too costly. The most promising method is to use the bush is to generate electricity through gasification. The project, Combating Bush Encroachment for Namibia's Development (CBEND), being conducted by DRFN, Namibia Agricultural Union and the Namibia National Farmers Union will put to trial a 0.6MW wood gasification plant. Preliminary studies have indicated that the sustainable harvesting of current invader bush can generate enough electricity to meet the country's entire needs. Manual harvesting of the bush will create much needed jobs and displace the 52% electricity presently imported from South Africa.

Goal 8 Develop a Global Partnership for Development

Overseas Development Aid (ODA) has been falling sharply, particularly since 1999 and this is a cause of serious concern. ODA per head has fallen from US\$130 in 1992 to US\$60 in 2003, despite the target being US\$90. The justification for the fall is the fact that Namibia is seen as a middle income group. But, given international



NANGOF

The NANGOF Trust is the umbrella body of NGOs in Namibia, which, through the combined resources of its membership, works towards the creation and sustenance of an enabling environment for NGOs, with an emphasis on democracy, poverty eradication and human rights promotion. The NANGOF Trust has a vision of a vibrant nation which harnesses the skills and resources of its entire people towards a socially and economically just society.

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trading regimes will have an undesirable impact on government revenue, nurturing of indigenous or infant industries and the stability of the emerging regional blocks. Previous experience with anti-competitive behaviour of larger economies such as South Africa and capacity constraints in terms of addressing supply-side issues and meeting prohibitive sanitary and phytosanitary measures imposed by major trading blocks does not augur well for the private sector, which is already struggling to compete with their international competitors.

There seems to be little effort accorded to building and mobilizing local partnerships for development as opposed to the preference given to global partnerships. To the contrary, adequate strategies to create an environment more conducive to local level partnership with CSOs including the private sector could potentially benefit the MDGs campaign significantly. The country seems committed to the opening up of our borders to international trade, while we seem unable to manage international dialogue to advocate for favourable conditions that serves our national interest.

The challenge for government

So much of the progress towards the MDGs comes back to the challenge of poverty. At the end of the day, this is in the hands of government which must:

- Improve the current income support mechanisms (for example in real terms pensions today are 14% lower than in 1990; grants for orphans for where both parents are dead are very difficult to obtain)
- Challenge poverty through redistribution – the Basic Income Grant is offered as a mechanism

The role of Civil Society

Government call for Private Sector and Civil Society “smart partnerships” are critical:

- HIV Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support – affects every facet of society – Government cannot do it alone.
- CSOs as actors: blame game or ownership and becoming part of the solution?
- Churches with the greatest outreach potential are still relatively untapped for social development.
- Traditional Leaders are a critical bridge between social and economic development and how this is responded to in communities

However, the creation of smart partnerships has to be resourced. Funds have to be available if civil society interest and engagement is to be translated into further action.

Gap Areas for Possible Civil Society Action

Civil Society already contributes hugely towards the challenges of the Millennium Development Goals. It is estimated that over 20,000 volunteers are engaged in tackling HIV/AIDS alone. More can be done, if the resources are made available:

- HIV prevention and behaviour change
- Stemming reversals in poverty, hunger, child and maternal mortality and basic education access and retention
- Gender equality and empowerment
- Reaching vulnerable families, areas and communities to assist with community capacity development towards the full range of MDGs – Community Health; home-based care; voluntary counselling and testing; care of orphans
- Environmental awareness and care – particularly water usage in a fragile ecology and promoting alternative energy solutions

Contributors

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