

Commission on Africa

An opportunity for Rethinking International Cooperation!

Costantinos Berhe Tesfu, PhD

This think piece is prepared and circulated as a
backgrounder for a continental dialogue on the strategic co-ordination of
diverse international activities supportive of democratic transition (and
development) in Africa. It is presented to the Commission for
consideration as a working document

Addis Abeba, 2004

Summary

The Blair Commission comes on the heels of many initiatives, symposia and action programmes for Africa. Some of these are the Monrovia Symposium, The Lagos Plan of Action and Final Act of Lagos, The Arusha Declaration, The Khartoum Declaration, The Addis Ababa Declaration, The Cairo Agenda for Action, The Abuja Treaty, The Abuja Declaration, UN Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, and Africa Alternative to Structural Adjustment Framework, UN PAAERD and Africa Alternative to SAPs, UNPALDC, Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: an Agenda for Action, and SSA: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth, NEPAD, US Proposal for a Partnership for Economic Growth and Opportunity in Africa; the Swedish Initiative Partnership with Africa; UK "Eliminating World Poverty: A Challenge for the Twenty-first Century", French Reenforcement des Capacites Africaines de Maintien de la Paix; the British African Peacekeeping Initiative; the US African Crisis Response Initiative and the OTI, the Tokyo International Conferences on African Development, the European Union - ACP partnership via the Lomé conventions where billions have been pouring into the continent for decades.

Mr Blair underlines the need action to open up opportunities for business in Africa to grow faster by trading with the rest of the world. He also stressed African leadership as vital at the continental level. He declared, "The African Union is already showing how important it will be, particularly on governance and security issues." Mr Blair must be congratulated at two levels. One is the fact that he stresses the importance and significance of strengthening the African Union. Secondly, he stresses the need for wider consultations in civil society that is ultimately responsible for its own development and hence African development. The author underpins the import of central elements of the various initiatives on African development since the Lagos Plan Of Action, analytical limitations in coordination of programmes and projects of developmental and democratic reform in Africa and a synthesis of human development ideas that contribute to recommendations that will enhance the Blair Commission work to impact additionality on the great traffic of Africa's democratisers and developers.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ACP	Africa, Caribbean and Pacific	NEPAD	Systems Africa New Partnership Agenda for Development”
AFNS	Africa Futures Network on Studies;	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations	OTI	Office of the transitional initiatives
AS-SLA	Adaptive Strategies SLA	PPA	Participatory poverty Assessment
AU	African Union	PPISL	Participatory Implementation for SL
CBD	capacity-building domains	PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
CBM	capacity building modules	RBA	rights/asset-based development
CBO	Community Based Organisations	SADC	Southern Africa Development Cooperation
CHED	Centre for Human Environment and Development	SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
COMESA	Common Market of Eastern and Southern African Countries	SLA	Sustainable Livelihoods Approach
COP	Conference of parties	SSA	Sub Saharan Africa
CoP	Communities of Practice	TRIPS	Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations	UDEAC	Union Douaniere des Etats de l’Afrique Central
EGS	Employment Generation Schemes	UMA	Union of Maghreb Arab Countries
EU	European Union	UMQA	Union Monetaire Quest Africaine
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trades	UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
GCA	Global Coalition for Africa	UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
ICT	Information communication Technology	UNPAERD	UN Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development African Alternative to Structural Adjustment Framework
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development	UNPALDC	United Nations Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries
IMF	International Monetary fund	WB	World Bank
IPR	intellectual property rights	WTO	World Trade Organisation
KM	Knowledge management		
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation		
MDG	Millennium Development Goals		
MIS	Management Information Systems		
MTAs	Multilateral Trade Agreements		
MTCS	Multi-track communications		

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BT Costantinos, PhD

Section I - Background

A pandemic of declarations and plans of action for Africa

Last week we had Mr. Tony Blair, the British PM was in Addis to attend the **Commission on Africa** or popularly known as the **Blair Commission** meeting that has promised a new face of partnership and aid for Africa. Whatever the outcomes, it is an opportunity to review the different initiatives that have come and gone with similar promises.

Programmes to provide and utilise substantial quality of resources to meet the challenge of development have been on the African policy agenda for quite a long time. Substantial financial grants and loans have flowed into all African countries beginning with the 1950's in support of 'human development' activities. Technical assistance programme to strengthen the flow and utilisation of resources within national economies have been mounted over the last three or four decades. Yet, like many other policy efforts, these have not yielded the desired results. Human capital flight has reached high proportions leaving behind an ill-prepared leadership, managerial and labour force. Skills, knowledge and positive work habits continued to be in short supply as learning systems decay in most countries.

African governments have launched many initiatives collectively, in their efforts to tackle the formidable development challenges facing the continent. Some of these initiatives are still alive and current. Initial efforts by the Organisation of African Unity (now African Union) included the declaration by African Heads of State and Government of **The Monrovia Symposium, The Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) and the subsequent Final Act of Lagos, The Arusha Declaration, The Khartoum Declaration, The Addis Ababa Declaration, The Cairo Agenda for Action, The Abuja Treaty, The Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS and ORID....**

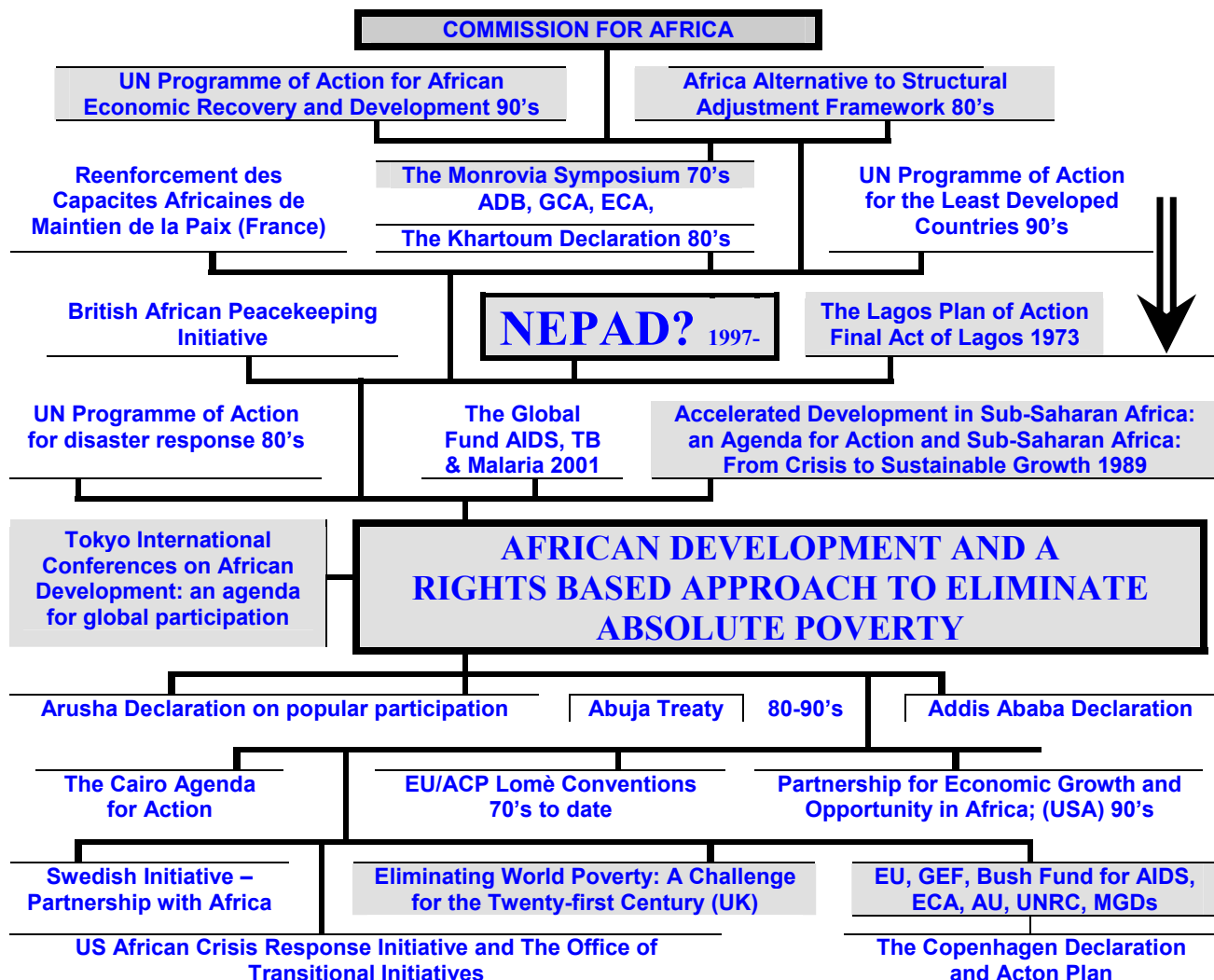
Africa also actively participated in the formulation of the **United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990** and **Africa Alternative to Structural Adjustment Framework**, as part of the search effort. These were aimed at presenting clearly the region's medium and long-range development priorities and strategic agenda within the global arena. Their overall desire was to achieve a broad-based "self-reliant" and "self-sustaining" growth and development process. International multilateral and bilateral initiatives were also taken to help define the African development agenda and to support its implementation within a global perspective. Among the multilateral initiatives is the

1. **United Nations Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries** for the 1990s.
2. The World Bank studies such as **Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: an Agenda for Action** (1981), and **Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth** (1989).
3. The most comprehensive initiative however, is the current "**Africa: New Partnership Agenda for Development**" **NEPAD**, adopted in 1997, by the United Nations and revised late 1998. A System-wide Special Initiative on Africa is currently in effect as the implementing arm of the "New Agenda". The focus is placed on the achievement of macroeconomic stability, economic growth and the equitable distribution of that growth. While it is too early to evaluate its trends, NEPAD is struggling to gain institutional acceptance among the majority of states and land on the development pedestal that all states would like to see.
4. At the bilateral level, initiatives covered both socio-economic and political issues. Those dealing with the former include the **United States Proposal for a Partnership for Economic Growth and Opportunity in Africa**; the **Swedish Initiative Partnership with Africa**; and the initiative by the

United Kingdom entitled “**Eliminating World Poverty: A Challenge for the Twenty-first Century**”. Initiatives related to peace and security, include the French **Reenforcement des Capacites Africaines de Maintien de la Paix**; the **British African Peacekeeping Initiative**; the **United States African Crisis Response Initiative** and the **Office of Transitional Initiatives**.

5. As Africa enters to the mainstream Globalisation, off direct significance to Africa’s survival within the process, is the **Tokyo International Conferences on African Development**, Japan-led initiative. Africa’s place in the globalisation, especially with the creation of WTO and its agenda such as TRIPS were considered and articulated and an action plan developed, defining institutional strategies aimed at ensuring enhanced coordination and feedback between global initiatives and Africa; defining strategies for harmonisation of various multilateral and bilateral initiatives, ensure effective follow-up, M&E and productive mobilisation of financial resources;
6. Under the **European Union - African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP)** partnership billions have been pouring into the continent for decades. The revised **Lomè convention** brings the two dimensions, viz. the citizen right dimension and the “developed” and “underdeveloped” nations interface; into one instrument where inter-state and citizen-state relations are examined through the discerning eye of human rights.

Fig. 1 - the various initiatives, declarations, action plans, funds and promises of change for Africa that are in need of coordination and stopping reinventing the wheel



Priority areas, desired goals and expectations:

The various initiatives taken over the years cover a wide range of priorities. Some are focused on specific issues or sectors. Others provide broad guidelines for policy makers and the donor community. Irrespective of the orientation, common positions emerged in one form or another, around several themes that are of essence to the development process. Issues relating to regional and sub-regional cooperation and integration, human resources development, governance and human rights, women and children in development, social and cultural dimension, democracy, peace, security and stability, debt, and the environment are included on the list. From a policy viewpoint, there are a few priority areas and goals in the various agenda that are either common to, or supportive of, each other that would enable Africa to capitalise on the opportunities of globalisation at a minimum risk. Africa's development agenda in policy priority areas are consolidating macroeconomic stability and ensuring economic growth and security, increasing the quality and composition of public expenditure, promoting private sector development and sustaining productivity, strengthening the financial sector and deepening financial intermediation, mobilising domestic and foreign savings and investment, boosting competitiveness and efficiency production and trading of African goods and services in the global market Fostering efficient regional economic cooperation and integration, ushering in an era of good governance, effective leadership, and popular participation, human and physical infrastructure development and deepening and strengthening policy reforms.

The expected out puts of increased rates of private capital flows and foreign savings and investment, improved public expenditure patterns, processes systems and management, developed financial intermediation and financial institutional infrastructure, improved equitable distribution of productive employment and income, a viable, active and productive private sector, improved physical and social infrastructures and institutions, increased productivity and income to the poor, rapid and internally sustained economic growth rates, liberalised inter and intra-regional trade, an active programme to provide micro-credit, training, efficient technology and management skills in both the formal and informal sectors have not taken off because (1) ownership and authorship of most of the prescriptions lie outside of Africa; (2) implementation criteria and mechanisms are not clearly established or followed to ensure that the prescriptions are free from undue internal and external conditionalities including domestic, inter-country and inter-agency power struggle, (3) prescriptions generally lacked clear goals, quantifiable targets and performance indicators needed to provide the necessary benchmarks for effective follow-up, monitoring and evaluation and (4) there were little or no consultations at the policy, operational and grassroots levels among the various development stakeholders and partners who are absolutely vital for synergy building and harmonisation of action plans and activities.

Implementing the Agenda: At the operational level, two major policy measures that are of significance were aggressively pursued during the last one and half decade. Existing structural imbalances in various economies underwent short and at times medium-term adjustments. Secondly, efforts at building democratic systems, processes, and institutions took on greater significance. The former measure was undertaken amidst controversies, shortcomings, apprehension, and with mixed feelings and results. The latter was largely demand-driven many a time under great pressure and inadequacies. The nature, trend and outcome of these two policy measures underscore the predicament and involvement of the region within the globalisation process. Their combined impact however, led to a modest progress in the partial achievement of the desired results.

1. **Structural adjustments programmes (SAP) in search of macroeconomic stability:** Following the publication of the Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: an Agenda for Action, major policy shifts towards short-term adjustments, spearheaded by the Bretton Woods institutions, engulfed the African continent. Stabilisation policies were designed and enforced in various shades and degrees. Many governments worked towards improving their fiscal balances by expanding

revenue base and controlling public spending. Prices of goods, services, and factor inputs were deregulated. In the monetary and financial sector, measures were taken towards establishing positive real interest rates. In the external sector, measures including currency devaluation and reduction in tariff and non-tariff barriers were undertaken to liberalise and facilitate trade and to move towards market-determined exchange rates. Foreign investment barriers such as restriction on foreign profit remittance, selective investment and import duties on imports were lifted or relaxed. Privatisation and commercialisation of state-owned enterprises were undertaken in a number of countries as part of the reform programme. Many governments were engaged in negotiations to reschedule their external and/or to bring down the rising interest rates on long-term debt.

Despite the anxiety and high hopes associated with the programme, activities have not improved economic and social indicators within Africa. The failure of SAP to redress structural problems, despite its name, and the consensus that it was a contributing factor to an overall decrease in human welfare, drew a lot of critical reaction. As a result, alternative policy direction and measures to SAP began to be sought and debated openly. Within the debate, many agencies pointed out the neglect of the programme to focus attention to the fact that African countries not only needed micro-economic adjustments but also needed to alleviate poverty. A more aggressive alternative was the one sought by African leaders themselves within the framework of the UNECA. The African Alternative Framework for SAPs had four main policy objectives: strengthen and diversify production capacity with emphasis on the agricultural sector; improve income and income distribution, including reductions in defence spending; increase social welfare spending; and ensure institutional support for adjustment and transformation. The African Alternative considered the fundamental problems facing the continent as being structural and people-oriented in nature, and hence, their transformation would require a longer time-span and drastic solutions beyond those prescribed by SAP. In short, SAP needed to be linked to a human-centred structural transformation strategy in order to be effective.

2. **Democratisation and strengthening civil society:** The incidence of military coups and assassinations, as a means of changing governments in Africa, diminished in the last decade. Since 1998, democratic means have produced political successions in almost all countries where changes in governing terms had occurred. Almost all changes in governments in the region in the last five years were done through elections, varying in degrees of fairness and protest. Of equal significance, is that efforts were made at various levels to strengthen partnership between, and build consensus around good governance and democratic practices among governments, NGOs, civil society, and the international donor community.¹ National efforts at multi-party democracy and civil society empowerment were supported by several agencies within the international community. The African Development and Governance Forums and UN summits on children, women, and human rights are all supportive initiatives. In addition, peace building and conflict management strategies have been reviewed and a few initiatives aimed at specific countries were undertaken in recent years. There were substantial strides in the direction of democracy, and bringing it backwards would prove difficult. I warn, however, that the wave could be a “one time event” and not necessarily a consolidated part of a developmental and democratic trend unless constitutional, institutional, transparent procedures for replacement succession are installed as necessary conditions for sustainability.
3. **Effective participation in sub-regional, regional and global groupings:** Africa needs top push on the regional and sub regional cooperation mechanisms it has put in place to participate in the global

¹ . The major contributing factors in increasing the demand for and support to these developments are the end of the “Cold War” together with the declining trend in the support for authoritarianism, an increasingly sensitised civil society to the negative effects of economic structural adjustments and impact of globalisation, and the increasing donor policy trend to bond cash incentives to recipient governments’ pledge level to political contestation and participation.

arena. COMESA countries are working to facilitate cross-border investment, trade and payments through accelerated tariff reductions between countries; and, the establishment of external payments and domestic regulatory systems. Discussions and consultation were held recently to transform the Union Monétaire Quest Africaine into a monetary and economic zone. Union Douaniere des Etats de l'Afrique Central is undergoing re-organisation. ECOWAS has revised its treaty and working on measures to rationalise the more than 30 inter-governmental groupings that exist within West Africa. SADC has been restructured, and is currently finalising a series of trading and capital movement arrangements between members. A review of some recent moves on the new approach to regional integration in SSA suggests a number of policy priority areas where collective action deemed necessary.

Section II:

Analytical problems in current perspectives of African Development

1. Naïve realism

Current discussions and analyses of transition to development and democracy in Africa generally are marked by several limitations. These include: **(1)** a tendency to narrow democratic thought and practice to the terms and categories of immediate, not very well considered, political and social action, a naive realism, as it were; **(2)** a nearly exclusive concern in certain institutional perspectives on democratisation in Africa with generic attributes and characteristics of social and political organisations and consequent neglect of analysis in terms of specific strategies and performances of organisations in processes of transition; and **(3)** Inadequate treatment of the role of international agencies and of relations between global and indigenous aspects or dimensions of democratisation in Africa. Let us look at each of these analytical limitations more closely.

The notion of naive realism is invoked here to point to certain conceptual shortcomings in current perspectives on development and democratic reform in Africa. These shortcomings can be seen as outcomes of more or less conscious attempts of indigenous government and their international backers to quickly get their hands on "urgent" or "practical" matters of development and democratisation of politics without worrying much about "abstract" theory. One manifestation of naive realism is the pre-emptive "socialisation" of democratic ideas and practices, as demonstrated, for example, by the definition, conceptualisation and "validation" of popular participation in local elections. A process, which often spawns an attendant rhetorical over simplification of difficult concepts, this socialisation is disabling as a method of both grasping development and democratic ideas and rules in all their openness and complexity, and making the ideas tractable to transparent and sustainable institutional practice.

Another manifestation of the naive realist approach is the simple equation of partisan or government elaboration of development and democratic ideology with the production of ideas, values and goals in civil society. Here, our attention and thought are diverted from the critical destination between, on the one hand, a system of abstract categories as a construct of an explicit rationalisation, a formal conceptualisation and design, and, broad and diverse domains of ideology and purposefulness in the plenitude of social experience, on the other. We are discouraged from acknowledging the distance and tension between these two spheres of development and democratisation. Instead, one is led to believe that ideological construction in one sphere is reducible to ideological construction in the other. As the statements "the constitution must be a creation of the citizenry..." and "... law should come from the populace rather than the palace" suggest, the form of a putative attribution of authorial agency in the making of a democratic constitution to an 'organisational underdeveloped', 'democratically inexperienced' and largely a civil society that has been rendered illiterate by successive regimes that fostered ignorance as a tool for disempowerment.

Still another expression of naive realism in existing perspectives and projects of transition to development and democracy in Africa is the common assumption that the proliferation of social

organisations, mainly indigenous NGOs, is in and of itself an index of democratisation. The assumption seems plausible. After all, what is more obvious in projects of democratic transition than the goal of increasing the number of NGOs and other social institutions that will build stronger civil societies which in turn will create favourable conditions for democratic development? Nevertheless, the assumption is open to question. The growing number and diversity of NGOs means that the organisations have very uneven political and professional capabilities, and differing levels of commitment to processes of development and democratisation in Africa.

True, they provide a range of social, humanitarian and relief services of varying proximity and relevance to the ends and purposes of human development. They have saved the lives of millions during the great African famine. Nevertheless, they do not function simply as instruments to those ends, but have their own inclinations, concerns and motivations, which 'developers' of Africa and 'democratisers' of politics and societies must take into account. NGOs may be challenging in that far from contributing to the strengthening of civil society vis-à-vis the state, they can function as instruments for the consolidation of a technocratic elite within the sector often through a proliferation of the sector as outcome of external donor agenda more than an indigenous 'grassroots' phenomenon. These could constitute significant obstacles to the realisation of the democratic development potential of African NGOs.

In sum, naive realism within existing perspectives and projects of democratic development in Africa emphasises the immediacies of institutional and political activity to the neglect of the constitutive and regulative concepts and norms that define, structure and validate democratic development institutions and practices. It attempts to establish a direct relation to social experience, largely by passing the intangible yet no less significant terrain of critical political thought. Its immediate turn to the practical tasks of inducing people to participate in ostensibly democratic activities such as elections, the full meaning of which is often beyond the grasp of the participants, tends to become a substitute for the making of transparent and open rules of political engagement.

2. **Overlay of generic institutional variables**

Institutional approaches to reforms in Africa call for analysis of the effectiveness of government and non-government sectors in contributing to the reforms in terms of the generic characteristics of the organisations. The characteristics include: **autonomy, capacity, complexity, cohesion and a combination of these**. Presumably, the more organisations and institutions are endowed with these attributes, the greater their strength, and the more likely they are to promote democratic transition. Let us then look at the hypotheses. The stress on organisational dimensions and traits, which borders on over-emphasis, is problematic.

- First, **it assumes or requires a level of development and strength of institutions in African societies** (prior to developmental and democratic transition or maturity) beyond that of the developing societies in question. This is particularly the case with countries severely impoverished and weakened by chronic under development, the ravages of famine, civil war, political instability and massive social dislocation, but it also holds true for all sub-Saharan African countries. The emphasis on generic organisational attributes begs the crucial question of how African societies, not very well endowed with strong indigenous institutions will make successful transitions to democratic development.
- Second, it makes the rather questionable connection between the strength of institutions and the likelihood of their promotion of democratic development. Why should one equate, for example, the cohesion of an organisation with what that organisation actually does, or how it might behave politically? Should we suppose that an institution, say, Governments would allow, in virtue of their autonomy and capacity, opposition groups to claim and win a share of power? It is possible to draw an analytical distinction between an organisation's structural characteristics, which are relatively independent of specific contents, and its political functioning (activities, operative ideology, leadership style, policies, etc.). In assessing the effectiveness of indigenous organisations in

contributing to democratic development, the measure of the ideas and practices articulated by the organisations and the strategies and forms of that articulation must not be neglected. One should be alive to the possibility that actual performances of autonomous and complex institutions may be indifferent, or even contrary to human development and democratic principles, notwithstanding the formal profession of such principles by the institutions in question.

- Third, **the stress on generic traits of government and non- government institutions in explaining democratic development in Africa largely overlooks substantive gaps in organisations' knowledge of democratic ideas and practices** as a source of problems of democratisation along with structural incapacities of organisations. While differences in general institutional characteristics provide a significant measure of effectiveness of contribution to political reform, they cannot account for improvements in democratic impact which can be made within an organisation through institutional learning and practice.

Through particular strategies, performances and self-evaluations, governmental and non-governmental agencies in Africa can make significant contributions to democratic transition even when the generic endowments they bring to the task are limited. Capacity building for democracy is important. But it is also important that institutions in civil society and the state in Africa make the most effective use of whatever actual capacity they have for promoting democratic change.

3. Inadequate Analysis of the Role of External Agencies

The hypothesis to be tested here are **the effectiveness of political conditionality is a function of the dependence of a recipient government on foreign aid**. Government compliance with donor conditions varies with the type of policy reform. Compliance is "high for measures that can be implemented by a small number of central government officials and low for reforms requiring extensive institutional change". The imposition by donors of political conditions on aid disbursements is alone insufficient to effect democratic political transitions or development, i.e. in the absence of organised domestic constituencies for political change within the state and within civil society. Intervention by international organisations disrupts transitions to the extent that it is perceived as partisan; international intervention contributes most to democratic struggle when it provides neutral arbitration services like support for election administration and election observing.

Section III

Rethinking and Priming the Partnership Agenda: The Commission's directional planning

The Commission for Africa's proposed programme of work are focused on improving governance; human development; peace and security; opportunities for growth and financing development. Indeed looking at the first two priorities as detailed in the Executive Summary of its report-- The Commission states that on improving governance ***"Africa needs more leaders committed to real and effective poverty alleviation: contributing to improved governance needs to be the defining feature of the Commission for Africa's work, contributors suggested"***. It demands practical action is needed across the continent in four areas: *"identifying incentives and rewards for African leaders and civil servants to adopt a more ethical, pro-poor perspective; providing them with good quality evidence-based information on policy options; at the same time supporting demand-driven improvement in service delivery through improving the rule of law and increasing access across society to information on rights and responsibilities – radio was highlighted as a useful resource; and establishing independent (non-partisan, non-political, non-state) government watchdogs. Overall, the relationship between Africa and the international community must develop into a more mature partnership of equals, recognising on both sides responsibilities as well as rights."*

On human development its slogan is ***"An educated, involved and well-disciplined population, aware***

and proud of its roots, would contribute to more effective governance". It underpins the fact that *"that education, training and better flow of information across society are critical for African development, and particularly for improving governance: Africa's people are its principle resource. Practical suggestions for action within the continent include: "involve a much wider range of actors in identifying needs and delivering services, including civil society organisations and also industry, whose needs secondary and tertiary education must try to meet more effectively; recognise and promote African cultural values, through mother tongue education and citizenship education based on African moral codes; make greater use of distance and open learning, for example through the various Commonwealth learning schemes"*.

Indeed Mr Blair has underpinned the need to focus on Africa. He asserted in his recent speech in Addis Abeba that "The beginning of the 21st Century is a time of unprecedented wealth and opportunity for the world. The European Union is enlarging to the east, restoring prosperity and political stability to those countries. In South East Asia, we have seen incredible economic progress. The face of Latin America has been transformed. And today, the world's two largest countries - China and India - are growing at as much as 9% per annum, lifting over 20 million people out of poverty every year. But when the United Nations meets next year to review progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, it will find that Africa - as a continent - has not enjoyed the progress, which other parts of the world have seen. In Africa, most countries are still as poor as they were 40 years ago. And in some countries, life expectancy, having improved for many years, has fallen back to what it was in the 1950s as a result of AIDS."

"This is why I have said that Africa will be one of my two priorities for the UK Presidency of the G8 in 2005 - along side climate change." He continues to underpin the fact that "the UK has shown the way... [by] more than doubling its aid budget since 1997. "We wish to continue increasing aid at this rate, which would mean that the UK would reach the 0.7% UN target in 2013. As a result of this, we will be able to increase aid directly for Africa to £1 billion next year. This will enable us to lift one million people in Africa permanently out of income poverty each year. We are calling for a revaluation of IMF gold to wipe out the debt owed by poor countries to the IMF. Finally, the UK has proposed a new International Financing Facility to front-load these resources, so that they can be invested in Africa's future now. However, aid alone is not the answer. We also need to increase private sector investment in Africa. "We need action to open up opportunities for business in Africa to grow faster by trading with the rest of the world. I welcome the progress made in the WTO negotiations in Geneva in July, in particular the agreement by other G8 countries to match the EU commitment to phase out all export subsidies on agricultural goods, which make it harder for Africa to compete with subsidised goods from richer countries. But we should not wait for the WTO to increase the opportunities for Africa to trade. African leadership is also vital at the continental level. The African Union is already showing how important it will be, particularly on governance and security issues."

Mr Blair must be congratulated at two levels. One is the fact that he stresses the importance and significance of strengthening the African Union. Secondly, he stresses the need for wider consultations in civil society that is ultimately responsible for its own development and hence African development. I will try to locate and evaluate these against the conclusions and recommendations that we drive from our analysis and synthesis above.

Section IV

Priming Partnership: A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

"There are no underdeveloped nations; there are only under-managed ones"

African governments and societies undoubtedly depend on international assistance in their projects of reform. Such assistance is vital for the projects in many areas and at many levels. Yet it must be

recognised that external support creates problems as well as opportunities for development and democratisation on Africa. In confronting the imperatives of social, economic and political change, nothing is more challenging for our polities than the strategic co-ordination of diverse global and local elements, relations and activities within themselves, nor has anything greater potential for enabling them achieve successful transitions to democracy. Two major conclusions are derived from the review above.

1. In the first instance, it has become clear that African countries have done much work over the last two decades in defining and suggesting the required policy prescriptions in response to the call for efficiency, competitiveness and regional integration. Policies related to ensuring conducive political, economic and social environment have been well articulated, adequately documented and fully debated by policy and decision-makers involved with Africa's development at various levels. Yet the analysis shows that despite the clarity and appropriateness of existing policy prescriptions, desired results were not achieved proportionately to the efforts and pronouncements made during their implementation. What went wrong? Countries in most cases lacked the will to nurture the **minimum qualitative and quantitative "human capacities"** needed and the requisite "human capacity utilisation" policies, strategies and institutional framework, to manage the outcomes of prescribed policies.
2. The second major conclusion to be drawn focuses on **the net impact of ineffective vs. effective participation within the international economic system, termed as globalisation**. The alacrity and dynamics present 'under-governed' and 'under-managed' African countries with little or no choice but to be active players within the process. Past failures of the region to participate effectively have dampened development efforts and aspirations. Most countries are yet to reach the minimum threshold required for maximising gains from local and global opportunities. Consequently, the process of integrating economic, political and social activities into the global arena has been slow relative to the rate of progress made in other developing regions. As a result, we are the most vulnerable group to the risks.

I present specific pointers to where we should travel. Programmes aimed at governance capacity building (including all the perks - regional integration, gender equality, financial sector reform, and private sector support) should be aimed at sustaining and enhancing with an added interest on strengthening their level of effectiveness for addressing the threats and opportunities; supporting effective engagement in constructive dialogue, based on common respect, mutual benefits, genuine interdependence and shared responsibilities, between African nations and other countries must as a priority be pursued by competent bureaucrats. Further national and regional laws and policies would need to be revised with an eye on the national interest where necessary.

Granted that modest progress was made in civil society participation, much work still needs to be done in expanding growth and fostering democratic practices. This is not only required to build on the progress made so far, but also to be responsive to policy issues associated with the process of change management. Policies would need to be owned and authored by the various stakeholders with implementation criteria and mechanism for monitoring clearly defined and established. **Development management** efforts need to take on a broader perspective if they are to provide deeper understanding of, and policy and institutional responses to, inter and intra-national policies and their outcomes.

Of direct import for alleviating poverty locally and our participation in the global space is a strategic agenda proposed here; with four components for promoting the development process.

1. The need to *search for and provide a fresh and renewed focus in the African Union* in response to national responsibilities in the coming decade and the demands of globalisation;
2. the need to develop *methodologies and approaches* and train policy makers and development planners in the art and techniques of analysing and integrating present and anticipated trends, challenges, opportunities and outcomes into development programming and management.

3. Finding out and *learning from best practices* in the areas of resource mobilisation, poverty reduction and cross borders trade.
4. The formulation and execution of a system-wide regional *programme* for the development and utilisation of human capacities

The proposed agenda recognises that a number of activities currently being undertaken by governments and partners could address some of the elements contained in the agenda. Consequently, the proposal is intended to strengthen on-going initiatives for increasing the human development index of African countries. Fundamental to the proposal are three special considerations.

1. the need to accord the critical role of the **HUMAN FACTOR** in creating sustained human development, its proper place within the process of development management in Africa.
2. A need exists to revisit and rethink ongoing regional programmes in search of a renewed development assistance framework in the light of the challenges, opportunities and risks of on the one hand absolute poverty and globalisation and future national responsibilities on the other.
3. Policy makers in Africa would do well to learn from experiences in other developing regions particularly, and adapt appropriate strategy in dealing with the dynamics of globalisation.

The critical role of human qualities in meeting the challenges of Africa: A brief review of the first consideration, **THE HUMAN FACTOR**, which follows, underscores the rationale for the need for a revolutionary action plan. A major contributing factor to the appalling situation is that there is and has been a shallow understanding of, and a feeble grip on, the essential components that constitute the required human qualities for development, and the intensive and comprehensive nature of their development and utilisation processes. Labour administration, employment laws and regulations and civil service policies and personnel management practices have long been on the books in many countries. Countries at international labour have made pronouncements and other conferences regarding workers' rights, reward, punishment and career development programmes. As such, important components and commitment required to build and use a quality labour force for accelerating and sustaining growth are not properly addressed in the education, training and productivity programmes. Efforts have failed to produce and retain the necessary pool of **self-confident, healthy, knowledgeable and skilled public and private sectors** labour force, which is full of initiatives and resourcefulness with a sense of purpose, work ethics, vision, integrity and direction. The constraining factors in the debate that are worth noting are predicated upon

1. the focus of human resources development policies and programmes that is placed generally on providing basic skills, which may not be as relevant or flexible to changing local and global imperatives. Hence capacity building (even when professionally executed) is traditionally regarded and treated not as a sustained process, but appended to nearly all sector-development projects or programmes. This approach neglects the intensity, complexity and comprehensiveness of the human quality development process. It is aimed particularly at upgrading only skills and knowledge of largely a redundant public service labour force.
2. On the part of policy and decision makers and funders, there is a fatal (killer) implicit assumption, which is left unattended; available workforce would motivate itself and be productive. It is essential that aggregate labour force productivity be induced, through deliberate strategies and policies as part of development management efforts not only for production to take on an increasing trend over time, but also to retain the qualified labour force. Lessons from Asia show a vital role to be played by government and private sector policies in these regards.

A consensus has emerged in the development literature regarding the treatment of the issues identified above: **a concerted massive action over a sustained period, on the development and utilisation of a pool of critical human qualities at all levels and spectrum of society would provide the foundation and engine for the elimination of absolute poverty and gaining a respectable and beneficial place within the process of globalisation.** A disciplined, healthy, nourished, and motivated

labour force is required to produce and distribute the goods and services needed for sustained human development. Leadership teams that are committed and willing with positive attitude to facilitate the process of opening up greater opportunities for every citizen are needed. The private sector would require a proactive and innovative managerial and entrepreneurial team with capacities and will power to understand and cope with “arm’s-length” trading modalities of external firms and investors with respect to subcontracting, alliances, licensing, franchising and other non-equity forms of international participation in the global economy.

The crux of the challenge therefore, is **creating, retaining and putting to productive use peoples with such qualities throughout the economy**. It is basically about having the ability and willingness to identify, sequence, and execute human-centred development priorities and programmes in the face of limited human, financial and institutional capacities. It boils down to formulating and executing national and sectoral policies that would enhance countries aggregate commitment, will power and capacities to mobilise, develop, motivate, encourage and utilise all segments of the population. To meet this challenge is synonymous to meeting the development challenge at large. The results, under all probability, would lead to the creation of a strong nation active in both domestic and world transactions. The suggested agenda would go a long way in meeting the challenge. A comprehensive human capital development and utilisation programme be formulated, launched and executed by private sector over a decade with governments providing the leadership role. *The overall objective is to develop a critical mass of human qualities and ensure their effective participation in the development process in order to provide, consolidate, expand and sustain the required base for development within a rapidly shrinking and competitive global environment.* The decade programme could seek to achieve a series of specific objectives including the need to:

1. Study, analyse and reform educational and training laws, policies, strategies, curriculum, systems, processes, procedures and programmes and integrate into a coherent framework human capital development policies and programmes linking it with policies and programmes on health, social capital, governance, private sector development, and sub-regional and regional integration;
2. Study, analyse and reform public and private labour organisations and employment laws, wages and work security schemes, rewards incentives and productivity policies and practices and assess educational, health and training physical facilities and renovate, develop required infrastructure, produce and upgrade the delivery capacities of trainers and administrators; including consolidation of various educational programmes, institutions and facilities;
3. Generate, consolidate, and release commitment and political will towards the development and utilisation of human capital for sustained human development. In this regard, the development basic education and best practice case studies on human development and productivity enhancement policies and strategies is significant;
4. Identify and resettle back into the African region the many specialised administrative, managerial, entrepreneurial, business, leadership, scientific, professional and technical African skills and knowledge currently distributed around the globe

A Rights-based approach (RBA). The RBA empowers people and making them capable to decide on the matters of their interest. It brings in legal tools and institutions like laws, the judiciary as a means to secure freedom and human development. RBA is expected to add missing element (human rights) that would provide enabling environment for equitable development by empowering people to take decisions affecting their lives. It provides both vision of what development should strive to achieve - to secure freedom and dignity of the people every where, and a set of tools and essential reference - human rights principles and standards. It is essentially based on values, standards and principles captured in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and human rights treaties. It also attempts to translate the people’s needs into rights recognising the human person as the active subject and claim holder. It further identifies the duties and obligations of those against whom a claim can be brought to ensure that needs are met. The value of this approach lies particularly in the transformative potential of human

rights to alleviate injustice, inequality and poverty. Human rights are moral norms, standards of accountability and weapons in struggle for social justice. The rights based approach to development would entail following main features that make it compatible to the needs- based approach, in depth assessment in which human rights values and principles are featured; analyse and assess by looking at the standards through the prism of human rights and programme development should be carried out on the basis of human rights values and principles such as non-discrimination, universality and participation. The programme would not necessarily be around a particular right or a set of rights but around areas such as governance, poverty, and environment - – as such it is compatible to the needs- based approach.

Priming the various initiatives on Africa

Multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental external agencies have in recent years taken a large number of initiatives aimed directly or indirectly at helping Africa "democratise" its way out of economic chaos and political instability. In doing so, they rely on a wide variety of programmes, institutional mechanisms and policies. Indeed, growing external involvement in African projects of democratisation and economic recovery has resulted in increasingly challenging problems of conceptualising and understanding the role and function of international agencies. The growth of foreign interventions seems in marked contrast to the limited thought and effort exerted by democratisers of African polity to put the interventions in coherent theoretical or strategic perspective.

1. What is the overall rationality or significance of the great traffic of international programmes of democratisation and development in Africa, (see matrix above and The Commission's priority areas) the proliferating activities that seem to show little regard for economy of co-ordination; not to mention new forms of 'participatory research' into social engineering that seem to haunt the rural landscape indefinitely?
2. How far and in what ways do various international agencies, programmes, mechanisms, forms of knowledge and technical assistance feed on one another in helping set the boundaries of democratic reform in Africa?

The important issues that these questions suggest are not sufficiently addressed, or even raised, in much of the current discussion of political transitions. Insofar as the activities of external agencies in Africa are not understood and engaged in partly as indigenous societal potentialities developing gradually into actual structures, functions and characteristics of government and societies, their democratic (and developmental) impact may diminish with their proliferation. This can mean little more than a weakly co-ordinated multiplication of programmes and projects which have immediately recognisable or measurable effects in limited areas, but which seem to suspend rather than serve the ultimate goals of democratisation of African political systems.

Once again, the strategic co-ordination of diverse international activities supportive of democratic development can become a challenge both for the international agencies and local actors involved. This is in part because of limitations in the individual characteristics of the activities - their narrowly technocratic orientation. It is also because of shortcomings in the relational and contextual articulation of external programmes and projects, their limited generalisability and variability. In addition, the neglect of the concepts and norms that define, structure and validate democratic development institutions and practices and immediate turn to the practical tasks of inducing people to participate in ostensibly 'democratic' activities such as elections, the full meaning of which is often beyond the grasp of the participants, tends to substitute the making of open rules of engagement.

True, economically, socially and politically there exist almost insurmountable obstacles to the flourishing of democratic governance as a precondition to the elimination of poverty and participation in the global market; however, other societies with identical features have managed to install and maintain systems in place. A skilled and committed citizenry and leadership and the marginalised African Diaspora, home grown think tanks, intelligentsia, and faith communities can mitigate conditions that are hostile to it and spearhead much need human development.

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