Aid, Aid Politics and the Commission for Africa

Mohabe Nyirabu[*]

Abstract

Africa's position in global development politics has once again become an issue of considerable attention. One school of thought urges more aid to help Africa. Another school speaks of too much aid being given to Africa without tangible results. This article begins with a review of the international community's efforts in providing aid to Africa, focusing on "Our Common Interest: Report of the Commission for Africa." What is new about the Commission? Is it different from prior international undertakings? Why is Africa still poor despite aid? This article concludes that the Commission for Africa brings nothing new to the table as far as ending Africa's poverty. Arguably, the development of Africa can only come from Africans themselves.

Introduction

> *"If Africa and the donor community chose instead to apply the mantras of the Commission for Africa then, by 2020, Africa will – like an addict unable to kick the habit – be so hooked on aid that its chances of independent development by the end of the century will have evaporated." (Mistry, 2005)*

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, commonly referred to as the World Bank, is once again at the nucleus of new international ventures to stimulate development in African countries en route to realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).[1] Indeed, the leaders of the Group of Eight (G8), who gathered at a summit held in Scotland in July 2005, confirmed the World Bank's prominent role as the world's largest development organization. Apart from promises to clear the debt that some of the poorest countries owe to the World Bank, the

[*] Associate Professor, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Dar es Salaam.

International Monetary Fund, the African Development Bank, and the G8 the summit called for the doubling of aid by 2010 with an extra $25 billion going to Africa. Additionally, they agreed that the World Bank under the then leadership of Paul Wolfowitz should increase aid.[2] Captivatingly, Paul Wolfowitz also promised not to let the World Bank repeat the mistakes of the past and to make aid to Africa his top priority. Wolfowitz hoped to see significant improvements in African countries during his tenure. Under Paul Wolfowitz, the World Bank declared 2005-2015 to be the "Decade of Africa." To be sure as the single prime source of funds for development, the World Bank has for a long period set the standard for investment in the continent.

In 2005 the World Bank embarked on a new Africa Action Plan (AAP) that pledged more infrastructure development to reduce poverty on the continent (World Bank (b), 2005). The AAP, which was formally presented to the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors in September 2005, highlighted the importance of improving donor coordination and assistance to African governments in using aid skilfully. The AAP's priorities are to be transformed into country-specific development programs. For some it might look premature to appraise the AAP. However, it is in many ways evocative of previous failed plans such as the Special Program of Assistance (SPA), which the World Bank established in 1987, as donors recognized the need to work with African governments. This type of partnership is also to be a centrepiece of the AAP, which promises to focus on measurable results, construct monitoring and evaluation capacity to assess results, and provide an annual report to the World Bank's board. Whether this promise represents a genuine departure from current practice and the possibility of holding the World Bank accountable for undertaking that funds reach their intended beneficiaries, is subject to debate.

Admittedly, this is not the first time that an era for helping Africa has been declared. Since the 1960s, when the majority of African countries were attaining political independence, it became a catchphrase in discussing relationships among and between Africa and rich countries. Regrettably, a vital link is missing in the labours by the international community to aid Africa. Donors (development partners is the new name) have not asked why the World Bank and other aid institutions have not succeeded in reducing poverty facing the continent. It is true that past factors, to a point, paved the way for Africa's existing dilemma. Colonialism and the creation of national borders distinct from traditional cultural boundaries were followed by the entrenchment of corrupt and autocratic regimes nurtured by both sides in the Cold War. During that period of rivalry between the United States and the then Soviet Union, aid flows played a major role in buying influence and obtaining strategic advantage, with little concern for how aid was used and the way it distorted societies.

For anyone familiar with the politics of aid, the findings should not be startling. A vivid example in Africa was Mobutu's iron rule in Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is estimated that the country received twenty billion dollars in foreign aid and the IMF gave Mobutu eleven bail-out loans. But everybody knew that Mobutu was corrupt. Indeed the IMF even sent a German banker named Erwin Blumenthal to the Central Bank of Zaire in 1978-1979 to document how much was being stolen! No doubt his reports were sent to the IMF and World Bank. Yet, these two institutions continued to fund Mobutu because he was a cold war protégé of the West (Easterly, 2006: 149). Even after the Cold War, ill-conceived international aid flows continued to maintain political regimes with little legitimacy in the eyes of their own people.

Can Aid Make Poverty History?

> Rejoice! The world is saved! The governments of Europe have agreed that by 2015 they will give 0.7% of their national income in foreign aid. Admittedly that's 35 years after the target date they first set for themselves, and it is still less than they extract from the poor in debt repayments. But hurray anyway…. Tony Blair can take some of the credit, for his insistence that the G8 summit in July makes poverty history. It's inspiring, until you understand the context (Monibiot, 2005).

In 1970, the United Nations General Assembly agreed to establish a target of 0.7 per cent of GDP for rich governments to spend on foreign aid. The target was based on the Pearson Commission of 1969.[3] In 1980, the Brandt Commission called on industrialized countries to reach 0.7 per cent by 1985, and 1 per cent by 2000. So far only five countries currently exceed the 0.7 per cent target: Denmark (0.96), Norway (0.89), Sweden (0.83), Netherlands (0.81) and Luxembourg (0.77).[4] Meanwhile, United Kingdom government aid reached a peak of 0.51 per cent under Callaghan's rule in 1979 and subsequently declined throughout the Thatcher, Major and Blair administrations, reaching a low of 0.24 per cent in 1999. In fact the UK Government under Tony Blair promised to attain 0.47 per cent by 2007/8.

In 2005, Tony Blair supported the G8 agreement in Gleneagles to increase aid to Africa to $25billion by 2010 and cancel debts owed to the IMF and the World Bank by 18 of the world's poorest countries. However, the real question is that, given the contemporary international climate and previous records of implementation, is it likely that even if all the aid promised is given, it will help Africa?

Writing *The White Man's Burden*: *Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good,* William Easterly has calculated that in the past sixty years the rich countries committed almost 2.3 trillion dollars for development in poor countries (Easterly, 2006). Easterly asks a number of important questions. How can it be that the labours of the rich nations to tackle poverty in the poor nations accomplished so little in attaining that goal? Why does the West think that it knows better about what the poor need? In his view poverty reduction plans haven't worked, not because Africa is stuck in a poverty trap, as argued by Jeffrey Sachs (2005), but because some very bad rulers often rule poor countries. Yet aid agencies often overlook that and deal with corrupt leaders who have blood on their hands. In his words:

> Aid won't make poverty history, which Western aid efforts cannot possibly do. Only the self-reliant efforts of the poor people and poor societies themselves can end poverty, borrowing ideas and institutions from the West when it suits them to do so…the only path to prosperity is indigenous and not from foreign assistance programmes (Easterly, 2006: 382-383).

Additionally, Easterly's critique is not confined to aid but encompasses all plans to help Africa originating from Washington, London or Paris.

On February 15, 2007, a Canadian Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade report on development aid to Africa titled "Overcoming 40 Years of Failure: A New Roadmap for Sub-Saharan Africa" was released. Its conclusion was that Ottawa's foreign aid to Africa has not been effective in alleviating poverty. It calls for "a new roadmap" to “overcome 40 years of failure.” Furthermore, the report notes that since the establishment of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in 1968, Canada has spent Canadian $12.4 billion on bilateral assistance to sub-Saharan Africa with few noteworthy or lasting results. In view of that, CIDA “has been largely ineffective and its future must be reviewed” (Senate Report, 2007). How can this failure be explained? The report contends that the organization is hampered by its structure, lack of a formal statute and consistent leadership, and 81% of its employees work in Ottawa while only 19% actually work in the field. Other reasons include the crippling subsidies and market protectionism of the international trade regime, slow, unaccountable, and poorly-designed development assistance and ineffective foreign aid institutions in Africa.

Shared unenthusiastic views on aid to Africa are increasingly attracting support from Africa. More lately, Dambisa Moyo argued that large transfers of aid were a mistake as far back as the 1960s. According to her, more than $ 1 trillion has been sent to Africa over the last 50 years. The question to ask is what has it all achieved? The simple fact is that between 1970 and 1998, when aid flows to Africa were at their peak, poverty in Africa rose from 11% to a staggering 66%! What should be done? For Moyo the solution is to cut aid to Africa because it has not merely failed to work but it has intensified Africa’s problems (Moyo, 2009).

In short, the dilemma facing international development partners working in Africa is that, because they are not acquainted with Africa’s experiences and values, their programs, do not mirror accurately the development problems on the ground, reducing their effectiveness to the detriment of Africa’s progress.

The New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD)

The New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) daringly embraces globalization while simultaneously maintaining a critical stance on the absence of fair and just rules governing global relations (Nepad, 2005). While it is true that in some parts of the world, such as China and Asia, globalization has created the prospect of lifting millions of people out of poverty, the question is why is the global imbalance most conspicuous in Africa? The words of NEPAD do not lack clarity here:

> In the absence of fair and just global rules, globalization has increased the ability of the strong to advance their interests to

> the detriment of the weak, especially in the areas of trade, finance and technology. It has limited the space for developing countries to control their own development, as the system makes no provision for compensating the weak. The conditions of those marginalized in the process have worsened in real terms (NEPAD, 2005: 11).

NEPAD emphasizes that a critical element of responsibility is the need to negotiate new relations with development partners: "We hold that it is within the capacity of the international community to create fair and just conditions in which Africa can participate effectively in the global economy and body politic. Without doubt NEPAD has been viewed as an integrated endeavour to organize Africa's relations with rich countries. It is estimated that NEPAD needs US$64 billion a year, which is currently more than four times the value of aid to Africa and seven times the flow of foreign direct investment (FDI). The plan essentially depends almost entirely for its take-off on the financial, economic and even political support of the richer nations. While every serious attempt to tackle Africa's development problems must be welcomed, it is equally important not to get carried away by pledges." As a result, it is fundamentally important to re-emphasize salient facts about NEPAD.

Although NEPAD came into being from three African prepared texts, it is viewed by critics as not homegrown but a program designed externally.[5] For example, Bond has argued that NEPAD

> [S]urfaced only after extensive consultations with the World Bank president and IMF Managing Director (November 2000 and February 2001); major transnational corporate executives and associated government leaders (Davos World Economic Forum in January 2001); G8 leaders (at Tokyo in July 2000 and Genoa in July 2001); and the European Union president and individual Northern heads of state (2000-2001) (Bond, 2003: 12).

Do we expect that the nature of politics in Africa will change simply because of NEPAD's aspirations? Isn't it the case that the plan for democracy and governance in NEPAD seems calculated more to catch the attention of development partners than to respond to the domestic African constituency? The partnership publicized by NEPAD predicates that, if Africa governs itself better, development partners will provide more aid. Is NEPAD simply designed to impress donors and creditors, open credit lines, and attract more foreign aid? Or should NEPAD be regarded as an arrangement under which African governments must be bribed by donors with more aid in order to govern better (Mistry, 2005)?

Another point that can be raised is the idea that African states have agreed to monitor each other to ensure good governance, sound economic policy, and social investment through the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). APRM is a voluntary mission in which states can either sign up or stay out and those states that choose to join can pull out without any diplomatic cost. In accepting this obligation to reform and be subject to the APRM, African leaders are seeking to demonstrate to the international community that they can govern properly and therefore merit more aid. But the bona fide question here is whether African leaders can impose standards of good governance on one another. If African governments are not answerable to their own citizens, how can we expect them to be held responsible by other African governments?

To date Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, South Africa, Algeria and Benin are the only countries that have been peer reviewed, although many others have indicated their intention to undergo the process.[6] However, the most interesting case has been South Africa. There is a commonly held view that the ideology and integrity of the APRM system was for the most part President Thabo Mbeki's idea. But the South African government's rejoinder to the review process reveals that the country tried and failed to persuade the panel of seven eminent Africans to carry the responsibility for the report. Indeed the government of South Africa dismissed all but one of the APRM's 150 recommendations and called the report contradictory and inconsistent. There are even allegations that the South African government tried to redraft parts of the report before its submission to the African Union summit (Boyle, 2007). Although the report was finally presented, there is a worry that the South African government's reaction may influence other governments to not put weight on the reviews, thus undermining the APRM process.

An additional concern, that cannot be dismissed, is the prospect of African leaders refusing to censure their peers even in cases where negative reports have been produced. The continental silence on human rights violations in a range of African countries is an authentication of African leaders' lack of moral audacity to denounce their fellow peers. For example, what was said by African leaders about Kenya after the 2007 elections? Or what was said with regard to the situation in Zimbabwe following the 2008 elections?

The Commission for Africa (CFA)
A number of initiatives in support of improving development prospects, and in particular improving the economic, social and political performance of Africa, has seemingly been never-ending. The latest effort to try and do something for Africa at the continental and international level is the Commission for Africa (CFA), which was launched by the former British Prime Minister Tony Blair in February 2004.[7] From the composition of the CFA, it appears that the aim was to achieve a balance between Africans and development partners. The only non- British European was Michel Camdessus, former Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, who had been one of the engineers of Structural Adjustment for Africa.

In one major respect, the CFA recycles plans made in past reports that the World Bank and other development partners in essence appear to have forgotten. For example, in 1989 the World Bank published *Sub-Saharan Africa: from Crisis to Sustainable Growth*, which underlined the importance of effective judicial systems and public administration for successful development in Africa (World Bank, 1989). In 2000, a new World Bank report, titled *Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?* accepted that the organization's lending for growth-oriented macroeconomic policy reforms had precisely the opposite effect: "The adjustment decades also saw a substantial deterioration in the quality of public institutions, a demoralization of public servants and a decline in the effectiveness of service delivery in many countries" (World Bank, 2000:37). The effects were declining social indicators that, the report admits, cannot be reversed speedily, coupled with a weakening of parliaments and other representative institutions. What is new with the Commission for Africa that has not been discussed previously in aid politics?[8]

The aim of the CFA was to take a new look at Africa's past and present and the international community's role in its development. The Commission took 12 months to compile the report which cost six million pounds and runs to 461 pages. The report was publicized on March 11, 2005 and produced recommendations for the G8, EU and other wealthy countries as well as for African countries. The CFA's report 'Our Common Interest' starts valiantly:

> We address ourselves to the people of Africa and the world as a whole. For it is they who must demand action... The measures we propose constitute a coherent package for Africa. They must be delivered together. 2005 is the year to take the decisions that will

> show we are serious about turning the vision of a strong and prosperous Africa into a reality (CFA 2005: 4).

Over the years there have been many high-level commissions, committees, and summit meetings devoted to African development. Indeed even G8 meetings, where the primary focus is elsewhere, have committed at least an hour or so to deliberate African issues. If that is the case why was the CFA established in 2004? The first view is that the CFA was established to act in response to constructive changes taking place on the African continent, such as the leadership shown by the African Union and the institutionalizing of NEPAD. The second view is that in 2005 the United Kingdom anticipated simultaneous presidencies of the G-8 and the European Union. In this regard, the then British Prime Minister, Tony Blair declared Africa to be one of his priorities and thus wanted to use this opportunity to influence other G8 members and EU to help Africa. Yet there is a third view suggesting that the ultimate goal might have been less noble, basically to improve Tony Blair's public image and credibility, both badly damaged by his loyal backing of former President George Bush's military intervention in Iraq. Perhaps the raison d'être why the CFA was established is not important. So what is relevant in the report?

As with most descriptive reports on Africa that come out of typical global institutions, the CFA has its own facts and figures on Africa's poverty. It authenticates the view that Africa is in dreadful state. In the light of existing knowledge of the problems facing Africa, the range of previous political declarations, the scope of existing – and still unfulfilled – promises of development partners, it is extremely unconvincing over the need for, and usefulness of, the Commission for Africa. To be sure, Africa's tribulations are acknowledged. Why, for example, is the European Union unwilling to commit to non-reciprocal trading relations with former African colonies, as opposed to the reciprocal 'Economic Partnership Agreements' (i.e., free trade areas) that the EU is using to extract liberalization out of the poorest countries? Or why is there lack of support for the proposals made by African countries to reform the World Trade Organization's undemocratic negotiating processes? Or unwillingness to accept the democratization of the Bretton Woods institutions by giving loan recipient countries a greater voice within the organization?

As far as Steve Tibbett of Action Aid is concerned, Blair failed his first Africa Commission test with the nomination of Paul Wolfowitz as president of the World Bank:

> The Africa Commission calls for an open and transparent process to decide who should lead the world's most powerful development institution, rather than back-door political horse-trading between Europe and America. If the recommendations of last week's Africa Commission report were to be taken seriously, a good place to start would have been the appointment of the World Bank president. This shoo-in nomination does not bode well for the commission's other recommendations (Tibbett, 2005).

The new philosophy is that old traditions should be abandoned and replaced with selection procedures that reflect two key principles: transparency of process and competence of prospective leadership, without regard to national origin.[9]

As expected, there have been diverse reactions to the CFA report since its publication. For example, Andrew Mwenda, a Ugandan journalist who has appeared before the British House of Commons Committee on Global Poverty to testify against aid to Africa, noted:

> I was excited when I heard that British Prime Minister Tony Blair had set up a commission to research solutions to the problems afflicting Africa - I felt it was an opportunity to breathe new ideas into the debate on Africa's backwardness. However, I was disappointed. After months of work they came up with the same old mantras: doubling aid, cancelling debt and reducing trade tariffs and subsidies. They're ignoring reality. For the last 40 years, Africa's been getting more, not less, aid - we've received more than $500bn. But we are getting poorer not richer (Mwenda, 2005).

Finally, Mwenda draws a conclusion about the CFA report:

> (The CFA) epitomizes the failed development experience of Africa – product of policies designed by the state and for the state in collusion with the so-called 'development partners' where the continent's people have very little say... Instead of listening to their own people, governments in Africa listen to donors. Foreign aid therefore

> undermines democratic culture, and it also brings a begging mentality among state politicians and bureaucrats alike so that for every fiscal shortage they look for foreign aid, not for policies that favour rapid capital accumulation (Mwenda, 2005).

In deliberating on aid to Africa, the CFA calls for a number of measures:

- An increase in aid for sub-Saharan Africa by US$25 billion per annum and for donors to commit to paying their fair share of this sum;
- Immediate start of the UK's proposed International Finance Facility;
- Further work on specific taxes to raise development finance;
- Rich countries to aim to spend 0.7 per cent of national income on aid and put in place plans to meet the target;[10]
- Aid to be untied, predictable, harmonized and linked to decision making and budget processes of recipient countries;
- Democratization of the IMF and World Bank through increased representation of African countries on the Boards of the two institutions and through transparent selection procedures for the heads of the Bank and Fund;
- One hundred percent debt cancellation as soon as possible for the poor countries in sub-Saharan Africa to enable them to meet poverty targets and a cancellation of debt stock and debt service by up to 100 per cent where this is necessary to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The CFA provides grounds as to why aid has not ended poverty in Africa. These include bad leadership, poor governance, conflicts, unfavourable terms of trade, and droughts. But these have been the same reasons given for years. So the question to ask is whether the report sheds new light on Africa's challenge to fight poverty. Arguing for a new perception that Africa's situation has changed for the better, the Commission's report draws attention to the progress that has been made in Africa in the past decade through structural adjustment, the broadening of democracy, changes in economic policies, improvements in governance supported by aid-funded technical assistance, enhanced donor management and so on. It is in this context that development partners have, more or less, fêted NEPAD for its Peer Review Mechanism as a step in the right direction.[11]

What is most noticeable in the CFA report is vagueness concerning the policy implications. For instance, on reducing the dependence of African countries on primary commodity exports, the CFA argues that the G8 and EU countries should 'help' develop the capacity to process agricultural products and improve the productivity and quality of raw materials. What does 'help' in this case mean?

Can Africa Learn from History?

Almost all rich countries got wealthy by protecting infant industries and limiting foreign investment (Chang, 2008). But these countries are now denying poor countries the opportunity to grow by forcing free-trade rules on them before they are strong enough. In this context, Ha-Joon Chang has observed that the success of South Korea:

> [L]ay in a mix of protection and open trade, of government regulation and free(ish) market, of active courting of foreign investment and draconian regulation of it, and of private enterprise and state control—with the areas of protection constantly changing as new infant industries were developed and old ones became internationally competitive. This is how almost all of today's rich countries became rich, and it is at the root of almost all recent success stories in the developing world (Chang, 2007).

Thus, if development partners are genuinely ready to help poor countries develop through trade, they need to accept asymmetric protectionism, as they used to between the 1950s and the 1970s (Chang, 2008). The global economic system should support the efforts of developing countries by allowing them to use more freely the tools of infant industry promotion—such as tariff protection, subsidies and foreign investment regulation.

Following a letter written to the President of Uganda by the Right Honourable Hilary Benn, the then British Secretary of State for Development Cooperation on March 21, 2005, which stated that Britain would suspend some aid to the country, President Yoweri Museveni replied on May 30, 2005 that the real "donors" to the Western countries are the Africans who sell their unprocessed coffee, cotton, leather, gold, and other commodities at 10 per cent of their supermarket value:

> Point out to me one single Black African country that has transitioned because of that "aid" from the West in the past 48 years since Ghana's

> independence in 1957. I have always felt that we could put the nasty history of the relationship between Europe and Africa, behind us. I have, however, told all of you repeatedly that trade, not aid will develop Africa. … I told you that, much as we may need some aid, in the short run, that support will not be productive if we do not insist on our independence in decision-making. If we continue accepting positions we know are wrong, we would be committing other people's mistakes in our names (Museveni, 2006).

The position that the President of Uganda is making is that of unfair trade and unfair returns to Africa's exports, whether these are commodities (oil, tobacco, diamonds, coffee, etc.), or manufactured products (which, normally, have very little added value) resulting in a gigantic net outflow of real value (and now, with debt payments, even monetary value) out of Africa to the developed world. In other words, it is Africa that aids the North and not the other way round.

Capacity Building

The development partner community has relied on expatriate management to provide technical assistance in implementing most development programs. According to Edward Jaycox, the World Bank's former vice president for Africa, reliance on foreign technical assistance does not solve problems, but it is "a systematic destructive force which is undermining the development capacity of Africa"(Jaycox, 1993).

Despite this fabulously candid recognition, development partners seem to have done little in the past decade to reduce their reliance on foreign technical experts. From 1995 to 2004, for example, the World Bank provided close to $10 billion, mostly in loans, to support institutional capacity building in Africa intended to improve the performance of the public sector. Yet the World Bank's own Operations Evaluation Department (OED) concluded that these programs were not based on the needs of the countries concerned and furthermore lacked rigor and standard quality controls (World Bank (c), 2005). In a way there is a certain paradox in the development partners' growing demands on African governments' managerial capacity to satisfy the development partners' officialdom and in so doing legitimating their own demands for capacity building programs.

Take the case of Tanzania, one of the much-loved destinations for development partners. Chambers (2005) observed that in the early 1990s there were 40 development partners and more than 2000 projects in Tanzania. This created such a burden for the Tanzanian bureaucracy that they were ultimately obliged to call a 'mission moratorium' for a period of three months, to allow Tanzanian administrators to carry out their usual government duties (Chambers, 2005: 40). Still, the situation did not change because by the early 2000s Tanzanian government officials on average produced 2400 quarterly reports a year for external donors, and were visited by 1000 donor missions per annum. The fact is that the volume of programmes with different development partners and their accountability requirements had led to too many reports to the degree of being a barrier to delivering services (Kelsall, 2002). The result was putting additional burdens on limited bureaucratic resources and in the process aid had become part of the problem and not the solution to development.

Undoubtedly development partners' conditionalities are overpowering democratic practice in Africa. It empowers international technocrats who are not accountable to the local electorate. Among others, the development partner-driven processes such as Paris Club, Consultative Group, or Letter of Agreement are so powerful that established instruments of national decision making, like the national budget process and national planning commission, are of limited use. Over a period of time the weakening of the state is the result. In short, development partners' conditionalities reduce African democratic space. The fact of the matter is that a government's answerability to external development partners will inescapably be mismatched with democratic answerability to the citizenry. By and large, foreign intervention is unequivocal and degrading. Notwithstanding current development partners' oratory about "local ownership" and efforts to fashion a less uneven relationship between development partners and aid receivers there is little reason to think genuine changes are in progress.

The Brain Drain

The CFA report points out that Africa loses an average of 70,000 skilled personnel a year to developed countries through the brain drain, resulting in a loss of manpower needed for development. This contributes to a falling share of Africa's share of global scientific and technological output, while in other continents it has been growing. What is even more worrying is that Africa will continue to experience a brain drain in the coming decades. The flight of highly trained manpower from developing countries to industrialized nations is not a new occurrence; however, the extent of the problem in Africa and its frightening increase presents a growing necessity for action, as the consequences of brain drain threaten to hamper the development of the continent. Statistics on the brain drain from Africa are disconcerting.

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Africa has already lost one third of its human capital and is continuing to lose its skilled personnel at an increasing rate, with an estimated 20,000 doctors, university lecturers, engineers and other professionals having left the continent annually since 1990. There are currently over 300,000 highly qualified Africans in the Diaspora, 30,000 of whom have PhDs. At the same time, Africa spends US$4 billion per year (representing 35% of total official development aid to the continent) to employ rich nations' experts to perform functions generically portrayed as technical assistance. In short, what is needed is more action to ameliorate the factors that lead to brain drain.[12]

The importance of an educated class can be recognized by the fact that, ultimately, it is Africans who must devise their own "African solutions for their African problems." However, this cannot be done in an environment of brutal repression, where criticism of government policies is not tolerated. More notably, internally generated reform is far more sustainable than that imposed from without. Africans need an intellectually free environment to deliberate and find solutions.

Conclusion

This article does not deny that well-targeted interventions by development partners have on occasion been successful. However, in general, aid has infrequently produced the desired results. Some key questions have been ignored or overlooked by the CFA. How does Africa fit into the global economy? What should its role be? The simple fact is that Africa is already heavily integrated into the global economy – though not in ways that have been advantageous to its development. Providing unprocessed raw materials (coffee, cashew nuts, cotton, and gold) for the industrialized countries has clearly not benefited African development.

There are no simple solutions to Africa's problems. But a few clear themes stand out. Africans must persist in making every effort to improve the quality of their political governance.[13] The rich countries can help with increased aid and debt relief but they cannot create the prerequisites for development. CFA initiatives imply that the solutions to Africa's internal crisis are external. It is true that the CFA refers to some domestic policy and institutional problems in Africa and suggests remedies for them. But those internal problems were treated as secondary causes of African poverty. However, most of Africa's problems are internal, not external, and concern domestic policies and institutions. Until those internal problems are addressed, no amount of Western assistance will make poverty history.

Under the surface, however, the abundance of elite-based, outside schemes to cure Africa's ills remain at the heart of the commission's concern. First, Africa plainly does not need more conferences and reports exploring its problems. There is no scarcity of praiseworthy reports on war, famine, HIV/AIDS, and Africa's corrupt leaders. In this sense the CFA is not tolerably heroic and brings nothing new to the table as far ending Africa's poverty is concerned.

In the final resort, then, whatever CFA promoters may say, the obvious conclusion is that CFA is not really about bringing about development.[14] As noted in the Canadian report, by far the biggest hindrance to achieving growth and stability in sub-Saharan Africa has been poor governance and poor leadership within Africa itself. Arguably, the development of Africa can only come from Africans themselves and thus international development aid is not the long-term answer for Africa.

End Notes

[1] According to Percy Mistry (2005), the post-2000 aid orientation of the international community has already diverted Africa's focus away from the task of development with its emphasis on poverty reduction and on to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): "In themselves, the MDGs are laudable. But portraying them as development goals stretches credulity. The MDGs are, in fact, poverty reduction goals that have surprisingly little to do with fostering development."

[2] The G8 have not concealed a sustained interest in Africa. For example, in July 2001, the G8 promised "a new intensive partnership" with Africa in the Genoa Plan for Africa in support of democracy, peace and security,

infrastructure development, economic and corporate governance, African private sector growth, and increased trade between the developed world and Africa. In 2002 in Kananaskis they presented the G8 Africa Action Plan, which promised Africa "enhanced partnerships". See Genoa Plan for Africa, July 21, 2001 (Available from http://www.g8.gc.ca/genoa/july-21-01-1-en.asp December 3, 2002). See also, the G8 Africa Action Plan (Available from: http://www.g8.gc.ca/kananaskis/afraction-en.asp).

[3] G7 (excluding Russia) countries are the worst performers when it comes to real aid. On average, the world's seven largest economies give just 0.07 per cent of national income in real aid. In other words, they would have to increase real aid tenfold to reach the UN target of 0.7 per cent (Mashele & Calliers, 2005). "

[4] The only other development partner that has ever reached 0.7 is Finland, which had 0.76 in 1991. However, since then Finnish aid has declined.

[5] The first text was the Millennium Partnership for African Recovery (MAP) developed by President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa whose aim was to address Africa's debt. It had the support of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria and President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria. The second one was the OMEGA Plan developed by President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal to address regional infrastructure. It had the broad support of French speaking African countries. The third was the Global Compact for Africa Recovery (GCAR), initiated by the Economic Commission of Africa. GCAR included the idea of peer review. In July 2001 at a Summit of the African Union in Lusaka Zambia, the three texts were merged into the New African Initiative (NAI). In October 2001, NAI was renamed NEPAD.

[6] As of the 29 June 2008, 29 member states have voluntarily acceded to APRM monitoring : Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda and Zambia.

[7] The Commission comprised 17 members, 9 from Africa: Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and Hilary Benn from the UK Government, Trevor Manuel (Finance Minister of South Africa), Meles Zenawi (Prime Minister of Ethiopia), Benjamin William Mkapa (former President of Tanzania), Bob Geldof, Nancy Kassenbaum Baker (former US Senator), Anna Tibaijuka (Executive

Director of UN-HABITAT), Michel Camdessus (former Managing Director of the IMF), K.Y.Amoako (former Executive Secretary of UN Economic Commission for Africa), Ralph Goodale (Finance Minister of Canada) and Tidjane Thiam (Aviva PLC, Cote d'Ivoire), William S Kalema (Chairman, Uganda Investment Authority), Linah K Mohohlo, (Governor, Bank of Botswana), Ji Peiding, (NPC Standing Committee Member and Vice Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, China), Fola Adeola, (Chairman of FATE Foundation, Nigeria). The Commission was serviced by a Secretariat staffed by British civil servants.

[8] The Millennium Project Report is not much different from The Commission for Africa report as it outlines the same style of proposals on aid policies, debt relief, sectoral strategies, the tasks of donors and African governments. The report also supports an increase in aid to sub-Sahara Africa to reach US$36.4 billion in 2006, but to be scaled up to reach US$83.4 billion by 2015 and, as is customary in aid politics, stresses the significance of good governance on the part of African countries.

[9] Wolfowitz resigned from the presidency of the World Bank on 30 June 2007 because of a conflict of interest linking him to an employee romantically. But the negative view of Wolfowitz goes back to the days when he was US Deputy Secretary of Defence in the administration of President George W. Bush. He was widely seen as one of the most hawkish of the so-called neo-conservatives in the Republican Party who forcefully advocated US military action and he is considered as one of the main architects of the invasion of Iraq in 2003. His resignation led to the appointment of another American national Robert Zoellick, who once served as deputy secretary of state.

[10] At the Monterrey Financing for Development Conference in 2002, world leaders pledged "to make concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7%" of their national income in international aid. In today's dollars, that would amount to almost $200 billion each year. In 2005, total aid from the 22 richest countries to the world's developing countries was $106 billion—a shortfall of $119 billion dollars from the 0.7% promised. On average, the world's richest countries provided just 0.33% of their GNP in official development assistance (ODA). The United States of America provided just 0.22%.

[11] In his speech to the 2001 Labour party conference, Tony Blair condemned Africa's plight as a "scar on the conscience of the world". This rhetorical pledge, much in evidence during his four-nation trip to West Africa in

February 2002, also made Blair the most enthusiastic external backer of NEPAD. NEPAD seeks financial assistance from the rich countries in exchange for an obligation to pursue economic liberalization and political reform by African leaders.

[12] The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) report entitled Least Developed Countries Report 2007: Knowledge, Technological Learning and Innovation for Development points out that poor countries are losing thousands of qualified personnel to Europe and North America, leaving behind a chronic shortage of skilled people. The report warns that if the current trend continues it would be impossible for many African countries to rid themselves of poverty.

[13] An estimate by Raymond Baker of the NGO Global Financial Integrity is that loot-seeking elites that control parts of Africa illicitly send capital out of the continent to the tune of $20 to $28billion per year. Capital flight of this magnitude is roughly equivalent to the entire aid inflow to Africa, so closing it would generate a similar resource transfer to doubling aid (See Collier, 2008).

[14] Upon departing from No.10 Downing Street, Tony Blair had a job offer waiting for him, namely Middle East Envoy by the Quartet powers of the United Nations, European Union, U.S.A and Russia. Additionally, Blair has become an adviser to banks and is touring the world to promote a level-headed policy on global warming and climate change and has created a foundation to help bridge the divide between different faiths. Africa is no longer a priority!

References

BBC http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/africa/4657139.stm 7 July 2005.

Bond, P., 2003, "Can NEPAD survive it Proponents, Sponsors, Clients and Peers?" Organisation for Social Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA) Newsletter 21 (3): 12-19.

Boyle, Brendan, 2007, "South Africa rejects African Peer Review Mechanism Report" ***Sunday Times***, 13 May. http://www.suntimes.co.za

Chambers, R., 2005, ***Ideas for Development*** (London: Earthscan).

Chang, Ha -Joon., 2007, "Protecting the Global Poor" ***Prospect,*** 136, July.

Chairman's Summary, 2005, "G8 Summit Statement, Gleneagles 2005," Gleneagles, Scotland, 8 July. http://www. G8.gov.uk/

Collier, Paul, 2008, "A chance to crack down on Africa's loot-seeking elites", ***Guardian***, 7 October 2008.

Easterly, W., 2006, ***The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*** (New York: Penguin Press).

Guardian, 2001, "Tony Blair's Speech to Labour Party Conference" http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2001/oct/02/labourconference.labour6

Jaycox, E., 1993, "Capacity Building: The Missing Link in African Development," Transcript of an Address to the African-American Institute Conference, "African Capacity Building: Effective and Enduring Partnerships," Reston, Virginia, 20 May.

Kelsall, T., 2002, "Shop Windows and Smoke-Filled Rooms: Governance and the Re-politicization of Tanzania", ***Journal of Modern African Studies***, 40, 4, pp. 597-619.

Mashele, Prince & Jakkie Calliers, 2005, “Aid, Gleneagles and the Run Up to the Millennium Summit,” ***African Security Review***, 14, 3.

Mistry, P S., 2005, “Reasons for sub-Saharan Africa’s Development Deficit that the Commission for Africa did not Consider,” ***African Affairs***, 104.

Monibiot, G**.,** 2005**,** “A Game of Double Bluff,” ***Guardian****, UK***,** 31st May.

Moyo, Dambisa., 2009, ***Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa*** (London: Penguin).

Museveni, Y., 2006, “Bad Governance is Donating our Wealth to the West,” ***East African***, 2-8 January.

Mwenda, A., 2005, ‘Blair Commission a Waste of Time’, ***Daily Monitor***, Kampala, 30 January.

NEPAD http://www.nepad.org/2005/files/documents.

Report of the Commission for Africa, 2005, “Our Common Interest”.

Sachs, J., 2005, ***The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for our Time*** **(**New York: Penguin Press)**.**

Senate Report 2007, Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, US Senate, “Overcoming 40 Years of Failure: A New Road Map for Sub-Saharan Africa”, www.senate-senat.ca/africa.asp

Tibbett, S., 2005, “Bank Choice Threat to Poor” http://www.actionaid.org.uk

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2626, (xxv), 24 October 1970.

World Bank, 2005 (a), “Wolfowitz Points to Urgent Development Agenda,” Washington, D.C., 1 June 2005. http://web. worldbank.org.

World Bank, 2005 (b), “Meeting the Challenge of Africa’s Development: A World Bank Group Action Plan,” Washington, D.C., 26 September.

World Bank Operations Evaluation Department, 2005 (c), “Capacity Building in Africa: An OED Evaluation of World Bank Support,” Washington, D.C.

World Bank, 2000, “Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?” Washington, D.C., 30 March 2000.

World Bank, 1989, “Sub-Saharan Africa; From Crisis to Sustainable Growth,” Washington, D.C.