

# Civil Society-Parliamentary Dialogue on Global Partnership for Africa's Development

Date: 23 - 24 January 2008

Venue: Dar Salaam, Tanzania

---

## Concept Paper

### 1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

At the United Nations (UN) Millennium Summit in September 2000, world leaders placed development at the heart of the global agenda by adopting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The leaders adopted the UN Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to stronger global efforts to reduce poverty, improve health, promote peace and human rights, and environmental sustainability. The Goals that emerged are specific with measurable targets. Together with the Goals came the commitments of both the rich and poor countries to achieve them through policy coherence, financial resources and global partnership. These commitments were further re-affirmed in the Monterrey Consensus that emerged from the March 2002 UN Financing for Development Conference, the September 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and the launch of the Doha Round on International Trade. (Millennium project, 2003:1)

The MDGs embody a broad-based view of economic and human development, one in which success includes not only a rise in per capita incomes but also a reduction in non-income dimension of poverty, including improved health, education, access to basic infrastructures providing potable water and adequate sanitation and equal opportunities for marginalized groups in society.

Upon undertaking to eradicate poverty world leaders stated for the first time that it was possible to achieve the goals using the resources, knowledge, and technologies now available to mankind. The declaration contains numerous commitments to enhance the future of humanity in the new

century. The United Nations subsequently drafted a list of eight objectives, each with a set of targets and specific indicators. The MDG 8 sets out clear areas of focus with a view of guiding the global partnership around aid, debt and trade to release necessary resources to finance the remaining seven goals. The quality and quantity of reforms on how these three sectors are managed have wide implications on Africa's ability to achieve the MDGs.

Foreign aid has played and continues to play an important role in many African economies. Most governments are donor dependent countries with around 25– 45 percent of the total national budget and 80 percent of the development budget dependent on foreign aid/finance in the form of grants, concessional loans and debt relief. African countries have development cooperation programs with over 20 donors, international financial institutions and NGOs covering hundreds of projects virtually in all sectors.

However, the massive deployment of external resources has not created even a slight dent on the war on poverty, hence the much-needed progress towards the MDGs. Instead, the continent continues to witness conditionalities, fragmented donor initiatives and poor coordination among donors. From the government side, corruption, weak public systems and structures continue to hinder progress towards making aid more effective in the continent.

Africa's economic take off has been pegged on its ability to take on the opportunities of trade liberalization and globalization, from which, however, it has not been able to derive substantive benefits. Its exports in world trade have been on the decline. Import demand has increasingly been financed through external borrowing and assistance, thereby consuming a huge amount of resources that would have otherwise been spent on the priority areas to meet the MDGs. The structure and level of effective domestic demand remains effectively weak and inadequate as a source of poverty reducing growth. As a result, the continent continues to have a huge trade deficit.

Africa's participation in the WTO, EU and other trade related bodies have been made complex with weak coordination between the regional economic co-operations. There are problems of dual membership across the regional blocks and a weak process of consensus building on trade related issues as a block, given the diversity among the regional economic blocks. Some of the bottlenecks in Africa's efforts towards trade expansion and growth include: low production

capacity; technology-related problems; inadequate physical and economic infrastructure; and the consequences of tariff and non tariff measures deployed by the rich countries.

Africa's debt stock is unsustainable even after the Highly Indebted Poor Country initiative (HIPC) and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI). The debt stock is increasingly moving towards the levels prior to the debt cancellation periods. This is largely due to increased borrowing by the government to fund the reform programs as well as the continued increase in interest arrears and the principle from both the domestic and international debt.

The causes of Africa's debt crisis are varied and complex. A lot of emphasis has been put on external factors to the detriment of internal factors. Notwithstanding the external factors, it is clear that the causes of the debt crisis in many African countries are also attributable to poor debt policy, weak institutional and legal framework and lack of accountability, transparency and inclusiveness of the involved institutions in the loan contraction process. The procurement, utilisation and management of public loans and debts are a national and international issue and, therefore, should be transparent, accountable, and inclusive. The processes of loan procurement and debt management require legitimacy and systematic planning to be sustainable.

It is against this background that AFRODAD and the Millennium Campaign are convening a meeting to provide a forum for Members of Parliament, CSOs and government officials to dialogue on how to operationalise the MDG 8 for the benefit of the African continent.

This document thus outlines a concept, rationale and strategy for convening a session on Millennium Development Goal number 8. The meeting envisaged in this concept paper will take place in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, on the 23 - 24 January, 2008. The meeting will be convened for African parliamentarians, and representatives of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). The African Forum and Network on Debt and Development, the Millennium Development Goals Campaign team and Tanzania Coalition on Debt and Development (TCDD) will jointly host the meeting.

The meeting, whose theme is “**Harnessing MDG Goal Number 8 for Africa’s Development**”, is part of a series geared towards enhancing closer collaboration between CSOs and parliamentarians.

The meeting will deal with issues related to the gaps of leadership, ownership and commitment on both African governments’ side and the industrialized nations’ side on aid, debt and trade that hinder the global partnership in achieving the MDGs. Other issues will include the role of CSOs and parliamentarians in the operationalisation of the MDG goal number 8 and the importance of partnership between CSOs and parliamentarians. The meeting will benefit from both the research findings and wealth of knowledge and expertise from the convening organizations and participants.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

The overall objective of the dialogue will be to provide a forum for deliberation on the current trends and challenges of implementing the MDG Goal 8 in view of achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

**Specifically, the dialogue will attempt to achieve the following specific objectives:**

1. To share key research findings and experiences on the implementation of MDG 8
2. Identify and discuss challenges faced in the implementation of MDG 8 across the continent.
3. Explore ways for better partnership in the operationalisation of MDG 8 among the CSOs and parliamentarians.

## **3. EXPECTATIONS OF THE MEETING**

The conveners hope that the meeting would create a basis for strengthened relationship between parliamentarians and Civil Society Organisations. The participants are expected to use the opportunity of the meeting to expose issues of more direct relevance to their respective national situations or thematic specialties.

Most importantly, the meeting will create a basis for the following:

- Use research findings from the country studies, for increased knowledge on policy issues at stake on MDG 8.
- Exploring mechanisms/structures or processes through which non-state actors can participate in various themes of MDG 8.
- Discuss how various stakeholders can play their respective roles in the process
- Propose mechanisms and processes for addressing current challenges inherent in the operationalisation of MDG 8

#### **4. AGENDA, DURATION AND LANGUAGES**

Deliberations at the dialogue will be informed by research findings as well as expert background papers setting out its context and relevance. The research findings and the background paper will be distributed well in advance before the meeting. Suitable time allocations will be made during the dialogue for discussions.

The duration of the dialogue will be two working days. The working languages will be English and French.

#### **5. PARTICIPATION**

The meeting will bring together three inter-governmental representatives; 15 parliamentarians; 28 CSOs from Africa and five international organisations. Participants to the meeting will be drawn from the relevant parliamentary portfolio committees in the national parliaments from across Africa, and relevant inter-governmental organisations including the Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Union, and UNDP. Civil Society Organisations participating will include the representatives from leading and strategic organisations in Africa and Europe working on the issues of Social and Economic Justice issues. Selected experts will be invited to address the meeting.

**For further information and details please contact:**

**Idda Romore**

Programme Officer – Lobby and Advocacy

African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD)

31 Atkinson Drive, Hillside

PO Box CY1517, Causeway

Harare, Zimbabwe

Tel: +263 4 778531/6

Fax: +263 4 747878

Email: [idda@afrodad.co.zw](mailto:idda@afrodad.co.zw)

Website: [www.afrodad.org](http://www.afrodad.org)