

The New Africa
Redrawing the Blueprint for the Canada-Africa Partnership
Conference October 2-3, 2009
Speaking notes
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Well, I would like to thank the Canadian Council for Africa for its kind invitation. I'm very pleased to be here to share in these reflections about re-drawing the blueprint for the Canada-Africa partnership.

It is an important thought at a key moment. Challenges abound, both around the world and in Africa. And it is right for us to ask ourselves: is Canada ready to weigh in and to help? Will it help reform global trade AND INVESTMENT rules? Will it help set standards for its private sector actors so that African countries benefit? And when it comes to Canada's aid package – will our donor performance show steadiness and commitment or are we leaving?

Canada is able to do quite a bit and not only as a donor. It will be the host of the G-8 in June – and co-host of a G-20 gathering. There will be a lot of discussion about the management of climate crisis and of financial systems, and of trade and food security. These will be conferences about everything that counts and Canada will be in the chair, or close to the chair, at both of them. What will we do to focus those discussions? Will Canada help to shape an agenda that includes Africa and Africa's interests?

Many people now say – and I think they are right – that there is a triple crisis stalking the world; finance, food-security and climate change. These are truly global problems which will affect everyone but they will certainly not affect everyone equally. Africa stands to pay a heavy price for the neglect and excesses that have put us all on this path to crisis.

Financial Crisis

Financial crisis in Africa has meant falling demand and falling prices for Africa's commodities. It has meant reduced capital flows... reduced remittances... reduced aid. Modest and hard won progress in social indicators in some countries has been eroded.

UNESCO estimates the poorest 390 million working people in Africa will see their incomes drop by about 20% - far more than G8 countries.

Child malnutrition is expected to cause an additional 200,000 to 400,000 infant deaths a year in Africa.

Setbacks in universal primary education are expected to affect numerous countries, including Mozambique, Ethiopia, Mali, Senegal, and Rwanda, all of which have made substantial progress in recent years.

African income as a whole is expected to fall by 13%, or US\$49 billion, between the start of the crisis and the end of this year.

Food Security

And there is a continuing food price crisis in Africa (exacerbated – of course - by climate change impacts) which now creates major risk for millions facing drought and privation in East Africa.

One out of every three people in sub Saharan Africa generally are chronically hungry.

And it is self evident, isn't it (?) – that as incomes and family assets melt away with the financial crisis (and as food prices remain out of reach and rising) those poorest citizens who spend over 60 percent of their income on food will suffer first and worst.

Aid – does it work?

At the same time that all these challenges are becoming more and more articulated and pronounced there is an emerging and increasingly robust debate about whether aid works. The cynic in me (of course asks) why is it that the effectiveness debate starts boiling every time donors are feeling the heat on aid levels generally?

But, of course – it is an important debate – and one that needs attention.

We have been hearing from Dambissa Moyo and her book *Dead Aid* about aid being the problem rather than the solution to African development.

Those who spend time here in Ottawa will remember a choleric 2007 Senate Committee Report castigating Canadian aid for its “40 years of failure” in Sub-Saharan Africa.

At CCIC we think that Njongonkulu Ndungane (the head of the African Monitor) is right. Cutting aid to Africa is not a solution to its current problems. Aid needs to be used effectively - to support African solutions to Africa's problems. But it is all part of a package that has to go along with higher economic growth, and reduced inequalities, the mobilization of domestic resources and remittances, effective measures to discourage capital flight, and an attention to ending conflict and building the basis for peace it all has to be there.

So as we think about the new Canada/Africa Partnership we should be thinking in package terms—i.e. that Canada Africa relations need re-vamping on a number of fronts for example: We need:

- Greater priority and attention to Canada's role in supporting peace processes and peace keeping on the continent. Canada's declining presence on this file in Africa – including in UN peacekeeping missions - has reduced our credibility on the continent. Canada should rebuild its role in supporting peace processes and must ensure women are included in all levels of peace making and peace keeping.
- Greater attention to the too often damaging human rights and environmental impacts of Canadian companies in Africa. We must ensure that policies and laws are in place in Canada that calls for the highest standards for corporate behaviour. There is currently a Bill before Parliament (Bill C-300) that could address some of these concerns in the extractive sector, and it needs all of our support.
- We need Canada to work harder with African governments to ensure trade rules reflect poorest countries' concerns for more stable prices for basic commodities --whether through basic tariffs or more complex international supply management arrangements--, not just market access for advanced exporters like Canada.
- And we need to support African efforts to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change

Canada a steady donor?

Having said that – we still need to pose the Aid question. How constant will Canada be? How committed?

The Government of Canada promoted the *New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)* at the Kananaskis G-8 in 2002. And it committed to regularly augment the aid budget and to double Canada's aid Contribution to the continent by 2008-09. It is one of those commitments which has proved to be durable and has survived the test of subsequent Government performance. Mr. Harper's government reaffirmed its commitment to double aid to Africa and -while no official aid statistics have been published for 2008/09 - we think that Canada will have managed to achieve that target by year end.

Other pledges, globally, are not faring so well. Bilateral ODA for sub-Saharan Africa for last year (not counting debt relief) rose by 10 per cent in real terms from the previous year. But according to the African Monitor, G8 countries are off their 2010 target by 27% on average. So it is challenging.

And it continues to be challenging in terms of renewed Canada-Africa partnership when one thinks about what comes next for Canadian policy in Africa.

Among 20 priority countries for Canadian bilateral aid African countries now number only 7. Previously 14 African countries were on the list. Burkina Faso, Rwanda, Niger, Benin, Malawi, Zambia, Cameroon, and Kenya are no longer there – on the Canada list. And most of those countries stand out because of their high poverty levels and low human development indices.

I think it is not yet clear what all this means concretely in terms of Canada's donor performance relative to Africa.

CCIC has been saying that Canada should

- renew its commitment to address growing poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa with
- increased resources at least equal each year to the growth of the budget's international assistance envelope, and with
- total resources for Sub-Saharan Africa equal to at least 50% of CIDA's bilateral and multilateral disbursements.

We are looking for a 10 year strategic plan for Canadian aid resources to reach the UN target of 0.7% of gross national income by 2019 (today we are just over 0.32%) so as to create the necessary space for Canada to play an effective role as a responsible donor state.

It is true that there is pressure on donor commitments with the financial crisis but many donors ---such as the UK-- are holding fast to the global target.

Canada rightly says it is weathering the financial storm better than many others in the international community. What goes along with that? We can do better than others in our obligations to share a very small proportion of our wealth with the poorest countries and people.

At CCIC we think that continued commitment to Africa's development --from the point of view of Canada's aid performance-- and a commitment to robust performance as a donor state fits together well with a new Act of Parliament, the *Official Development Assistance Accountability Act*.

The Act references all Canadian ODA but it should be an essential consideration when we are thinking about the foundations for a renewed Canada-Africa partnership.

The Act clearly prescribes that all ministers responsible for aid allocations must be assured that these

disbursements will:

- contribute to poverty reduction,
- take account of the perspectives of the poor, and
- be consistent with international human rights standards.

The new law calls for improved accountability through timely reporting to Parliament and Canadians, and also sets out a statutory responsibility for consultations with civil society and developing country partners when it comes to key choices and the implementation of programs.

This legislation sets up a human rights approach for international cooperation. Ownership and participation by those who are likely to be affected by aid programming are now built into the Canadian aid story as is the central target of poverty reduction.

Consultation with affected countries is a binding duty for Ministers who make future aid decisions and those are consultations that must be transparent and inclusive. They must be, in short, consistent with Partnership and the mutual accountability that (in our view) partnership implies.

I can tell you that this is stirring up some interest. Earlier this week CCIC co-organized a two days conference with colleagues from academia, the human rights community, government officials and media, where we explored the implication of the legislation for the future of Canadian ODA. I think most of us have come away persuaded that those implications are far reaching and extremely positive.

Any new partnership with Africa needs to be shaped by considerations of social, economic and cultural rights of poor and marginalized populations.

To conclude, an effective partnership with Africa requires a recalibration of Canada's priorities with Africa in a coherent way across a range of policies aid, trade, investment, peace and security, if we are serious about contributing to Africa's development for the benefit of all, we need a picture of development and partnership that takes all into account.

That's why it's so good that there are so many gathered here today. Those who "get" the complex politics and culture of a great Continent, and who also "get" it's great diversity and the range of its resources.

There are people here today from academia and from the private sector. There are NGOs and advocates from civil society. There are parliamentarians and important members of the diplomatic community. There is something for us all to do, and "partnership" is a good way to frame it.

Thank you very much.