



Commission for Africa
On-line discussion for
African research and
non-state organisations



Guidance Notes

www.odi.org.uk/africaconsultation/

Introduction

The on-line discussion will focus on two questions that are of central concern to the Commission for Africa:

- Is the focus right in the proposed programme for action? Does it reflect the key priorities for Africa? Are there important elements missing? The Commission wants to hear directly from African research and non-state organisations.
- What *practical* actions could make the biggest difference to ordinary African's lives in the different programme areas, both immediately and over the longer term? The Commission is gathering evidence about practical steps that have the potential to make a real difference, and wants to make this a focus of its final report.

The discussion will broadly follow the dates indicated below, but contributions outside these dates can be accepted and will be circulated.

Participants are welcome to contribute to all discussion themes, or a selection. Each is listed in more detail below.

Overview: Commission for Africa proposed programme for action

The Commission for Africa is working to accelerate progress towards a strong and prosperous Africa. It will report in spring 2005, including recommendations to the G8, EU and other wealthy countries. For more on the Commission for Africa, see [Annex 1](#) below.

Since an initial consultation with Africa research and non-state organisations in July 2004 (see [Annex 2](#) below), the Commission for Africa has produced a draft possible programme for action, which seeks to reflect African aspirations for what the rest of the international community can do to support successful African development. It is the first such programme that emphasises the *scale* of response needed: big enough to meet the challenge of meeting the MDGs in Africa. Without a sustained big push, inside and outside Africa, and starting very soon, the chances of getting anywhere near meeting the MDGs for 2015 are remote.

The programme attempts to outline an integrated push for accelerated development in Africa, which recognises the interwoven set of vicious circles and barriers to development, rather than a single solution to Africa's development problems. The Commission framework is based on three inter-related ideas:

- That an acceleration of sustainable economic growth is fundamental to the achievement of Africa's goals (and the MDGs) and that generating this acceleration depends on a strong improvement in the investment climate.
- That empowering and investing in poor people so that they participate strongly and are included in this growth (in particular through improvements in their skills, education and health) is basic not only to the overcoming of income poverty but also to the wider objectives of raising the standard of living and human development.
- That the strengthening of governance, institutions and capacity are crucial both to the investment climate and to the ability of the government to deliver the basic public services crucial to the participation of poor people in growth.

Based on this framework for analysis, the programme for action falls into five broad areas:

- **Improving governance and building effective states**, as a basis for delivery of results from both public and private action and for growth and inclusion.
- Creating **opportunities for growth** both on the supply side and the demand side (in particular market access). Expanding market access is crucial for growth but the response will be limited without strong improvement and investment in the supply side.
- **Human development, inclusion and culture** are goals in themselves and key elements in accelerating and sustaining growth. The role of women is central here. Service delivery, reducing vulnerability and local accountability will be at the core of the associated set of actions.
- Without **peace and security**, everything else is derailed. The emphasis must be on prevention, recognising the importance of addressing the structural causes, particularly in natural resource rents, strengthened African conflict management capacity and a more responsive international system.
- **Financing for development**: there are many aspects of the above programme that require resources and costs must be quantified. But there is also great scope for making aid much more productive if aid quality and institutional arrangements are improved.

The proposed programme for action does not discuss constraints and opportunities for implementation, so it will be important that the on-line discussion provides as many practical examples as possible about what might work in the African context. There will be a discussion theme around this issue, and the opportunity to contribute specific examples under each of the five theme areas above.

The proposed programme for action places special emphasis on the challenges of strengthening governance, institutions and capacity in order to build a climate for accelerated growth and advances in human development so that poor people can participate in growth processes.

The following sections outline the different elements of the Commission's programme for action and suggest some key questions for debate during the on-line discussion.

Peace and security – on-line discussion (16 – 18 August)

CfA possible programme elements: peace and security

- The Commission will send a strong positive message about the progress in recent years, and give support to the work of the AU, NEPAD and sub-regional organisations on peace and security.
- External actors should support action to tackle the structural causes of conflict and strengthen preventative responses.
- The international community must take action to counter external interests that fuel and prolong conflict – such as the trade in arms and conflict goods.
- The Commission will examine the circumstances under which external actors should support and should be prepared to intervene – including with military force.
- Donors should help ensure that peace processes become fully embedded by supporting effective post-conflict reconstruction.

Source: Commission for Africa

In the initial consultation, African research and non-state organisations gave peace and security top priority as a theme for the Commission for Africa.

Q1 Are the proposed programme elements relating to peace and security the key priorities for the international community to reinforce Africa's progress towards reducing the risk of conflict? If not, what is missing?

Q2 What practical actions could be taken to implement this programme element in ways which make a real difference to ordinary Africans' lives – both immediate actions (say, by the end of 2005) and over the longer term (say, by 2010)? For example, is strengthening the Kimberley Process sufficient, or are new initiatives needed to fill identified gaps?

Improving governance – on-line discussion (19 – 23 August)

CfA possible programme elements: improving governance

- Donors and IFIs should allocate their aid with the aim of supporting good governance and the building of effective states.
- The international community should find ways of supporting the building of effective states where they are too weak to absorb large-scale increases in aid.
- The international community should support innovative approaches to improving civil service capacity.
- The international community should support efforts to strengthen local government and improve service delivery for poor people.
- The international community should support increased effectiveness, accountability and transparency in budget processes.
- Call for expansion and deepening of schemes to promote transparency of revenues.
- The international community should work with companies to improve the development and environmental impact of their activities.
- All governments should do more to tackle money laundering and repatriate stolen assets.

Source: Commission for Africa

In the initial consultation, African research and non-state organisations highlighted the need for exploring ways of achieving more equitable responsibilities and incentives in Africa to be a defining feature of the Commission's work.

Q1 Are the proposed programme elements relating to improving governance the key priorities for the international community to contribute to Africa's efforts to strengthen governance? If not, what is missing?

Q2 What practical actions could be taken to implement this programme element in ways which make a real difference to ordinary African's lives – both immediate actions (say, by the end of 2005) and over the longer term (say, by 2010)? For example, would it be useful to recommend making resources available to support implementation of NEPAD's African Peer Review Mechanism, to incentivise more countries to participate?

Opportunities for growth – on-line discussion (24 – 26 August)

CfA possible programme elements: opportunities for growth

- End trade barriers: EU/G8 to eliminate barriers to trade – particularly in agricultural policies, processing of agricultural products and labour-intensive manufactures.
- Implement mechanisms to support the adjustments implied by trade policy reforms for both poor and rich countries.
- EU and US should offer enhanced preferential access for Africa, within a context of gradual dismantling of barriers.
- The rich countries should re-examine their policies on trade in services taking into account the returns from labour mobility, migration, and remittances for Africa.
- The international community should take steps to tackle investors' negative perceptions and help mitigate risk in Africa.
- Donors should take action to fund infrastructure to integrate Africa into the global system, and to integrate local and regional markets within Africa.
- The international community should support programmes that encourage business linkages between investors and small and medium enterprises.
- The international community should do more to support agriculture as a source of growth and poverty reduction, taking careful account of the environment.
- The international community should encourage and support country-led strategies to generate employment, with a particular emphasis on youth employment.
- Donors should seek to improve environmental management both globally, in particular climate change, and locally.

Source: Commission for Africa

In the initial consultation, African research and non-state organisations also gave this theme considerable priority, in particular highlighting the need to address the impact of rich nations' policies, the need for more effective management of natural resources and for more attention to facilitating public-private partnerships.

Q1 Are the proposed programme elements relating to opportunities for growth the key priorities for the international community to contribute to Africa's efforts to accelerate and sustain growth? If not, what is missing?

Q2 What practical actions could be taken to implement this programme element in ways which make a real difference to ordinary Africans' lives - both immediate actions (say, by the end of 2005) and over the longer term (say, by 2010)? For example, the need to improve transport links within Africa is well known, but dogged with problems - are there proven practical examples of how this has been done successfully?

Human development – on-line discussion (27 – 31 August)

CfA possible programme elements: human development

- The international community should support national strategies for strengthening delivery systems for health and education
- Donors should help governments provide free and good quality basic public health care and primary education
- Donors should support national strategies for social protection, encouraging building on the strengths in African traditions.
- The international community should help governments undertake analysis of the implications for public finance of policies such as the provision of free health, education and social protection.
- Donors should promote integration of the response to HIV and AIDS into health systems, and balance between prevention, care and treatment of key diseases.
- The international community should examine how to rebalance incentives for the development of drugs and vaccines for Africa and to lower their costs.
- Donors should contribute strongly to the development of clean water and improved sanitation.
- Donors should support African initiatives to increase capabilities, transferable skills, innovation and leadership, including through the university system.
- The international community should work with countries to make the most of culture as an asset and to enhance its contribution to well-being

Source: Commission for Africa

In the initial consultation, African research and non-state organisations weighted this theme nearly as highly as opportunities for growth, and within it prioritised above all else the need to expand access to good quality education.

Q1 Are the proposed programme elements relating to human development the key priorities for the international community to contribute to Africa's efforts to push human development? If not, what is missing?

Q2 What practical actions could be taken to implement this programme element in ways which make a real difference to ordinary Africans' lives – both immediate actions (say, by the end of 2005) and over the longer term (say, by 2010)? For example, are there practical examples of where education and other services have been successfully delivered in difficult environments?

Financing for development – on-line discussion (1 – 3 September)

CfA possible programme elements: financing for development

- Donors should see their engagement with African countries as a sustained commitment that provides long-term, timely and predictable funds, harmonised with other actors and aligned behind national strategies. This might best be realised in the form of a new concord between donors and partner governments involving mutual obligations.
- OECD governments should demonstrate substantial and sustained progress towards reaching the 0.7% ODA/GNI commitment, with more of increases being allocated to Africa.
- Donors should intensify efforts to frontload additional aid, through mechanisms such as the International Finance Facility (IFF).
- Rich countries should make a big push for a substantial increase in debt relief for Africa.
- In order to ease problems of unsustainable debt and avoid the accumulation of debt burdens in the future, bilateral and multilateral donors should increase the grant element in aid.
- The G8 should support calls for a global aid architecture that increases the efficiency and effectiveness of multilateral assistance to Africa.

Source: Commission for Africa

In the initial consultation, African research and non-state organisations minced no words in calling for the Commission to deliver a cold hard look at aid performance, together with other aspects of rich nations' role in Africa.

Q1 Are the proposed programme elements relating to financing for development the key priorities for the ways donors will provide aid to the 'big push' programme proposed by the Commission? If not, what is missing?

Q2 What practical actions could be taken to implement this programme element in ways which make a real difference to ordinary Africans' lives – both immediate actions (say, by the end of 2005) and over the longer term (say, by 2010)? For example, what might be the key elements of a new concord between donors and partner governments to ensure more timely and predictable funds?

Making a real difference – on-line discussion (6 – 10 September)

A number of participants in the initial consultation with African research and non-state organisations commented that the Commission for Africa has not yet publicised concrete proposals for ensuring effective implementation of the proposed programme for action. Where are the specifics on working with NEPAD; on delivering implementation of international commitments; and on listening to Africans?

So it is important for this on-line discussion to debate what else the Commission for Africa and its Commissioners can do to ensure that the needs and aspirations of ordinary Africans are addressed by African governments and by the rest of the international community.

In this context, there are a number of questions, the decisions made about which will make the difference between a chance of success for the Commission and failure:

- Q1 Adding value to NEPAD – what’s best? For example, is long-term embedded technical support to NEPAD or strengthening sub-regional systems (ECOWAS, SADC, IGAD, etc) that should be the priority? Working with a stable of committed governments or helping non-lead countries? Pilot projects or known solutions?
- Q2 How can implementation of international commitments best be delivered? For example, is it through promoting bargaining between Africa and rich nations or through promoting African commitment to NEPAD? New proposals for the EU presidency (eg on measures to improve civil society participation in EU aid) or links to existing G8 action plans?
- Q3 How can the Commission for Africa best listen to Africans? For example, through consulting with ordinary people or working with apex organisations? Focussing on the excluded (women, youth, disabled, poor) or involving experts? Using ICTs or local institutions? How can the Commission promote consultation and participation after 2005?

Next steps

The conclusions from this on-line discussion for African research and non-state organisations will be reported to the Commission for Africa in time for the second meeting of Commissioners and will be publicised on the website. French and Portuguese translations of the final conclusions will also be available.

Further opportunities for participating in the Commission for Africa’s consultation process are described at http://213.225.140.43/getting_involved/GettingInvolved.htm.

If you experience any technical difficulties with participating in this on-line discussion, contact f.drysdale@odi.org.uk.

Annex 1: Commission for Africa: background

The Commission for Africa is working to accelerate progress towards a strong and prosperous Africa. It will report in spring 2005, including recommendations to the G8, EU and other wealthy countries. The focus of the Commission is on achieving change through mobilising political effort internationally and in Africa, to implement policies that will make a real difference.

The Commission for Africa has five specific objectives:

- i. To generate new ideas and action for a strong and prosperous Africa, using the 2005 British presidencies of the G8 and the European Union as a platform;
- ii. To support the best of existing work on Africa, in particular the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and the African Union, and help ensure this work achieves its goals;
- iii. To help deliver implementation of existing international commitments towards Africa;
- iv. To offer a fresh and positive perspective for Africa and its diverse culture in the 21st century, which challenges unfair perceptions and helps deliver changes; and
- v. To understand and help fulfil African aspirations for the future by listening to Africans.

This last objective is important to the Commission: it wants to listen to African voices from all corners of the continent and parts of society about how change can be delivered.

For more on the Commission, see <http://www.commissionforafrica.org>

Annex 2: Initial consultation – July 2004

A short initial consultation for African research and non-state organisations about the work of the Africa Commission was organised in July 2004 as a pre-cursor to the more extensive on-line discussion which is running during August and September 2004, and a series of public meetings and other events in Africa and the G8 countries which will run later in 2004 (for more on the Commission's consultation process go to http://213.225.140.43/getting_involved/GettingInvolved.htm).

The initial consultation asked African research and non-state organisations two questions:

1. What do you think of the objectives of the Commission for Africa?
2. What do you think of the Commission's July 2004 policy work programme? Are they the right topics? What would it be useful to change or add?

In summary (for a full report of the initial consultation, see <http://www.odi.org.uk/africaconsultation/>), participants concluded the Commission should focus not on new ideas but on adding value to NEPAD's existing efforts to end poverty in Africa. How? By putting together a 'road map' for rich nations to contribute to Africa's own efforts, implementable through the G8 Action Plans. Participants suggested this must include a commitment by rich nations to tackle difficult issues – specifically, aid performance, cultural imperialism, debt, intellectual property protection, Northern subsidies and trade.

Participants asked that the Commission should not be just another talking shop: it must have a sustainable legacy beyond 2005:

- Let the many existing initiatives and networks within Africa and the diaspora that have relevant contributions to make to the Commission's work be fully involved;
- Pay attention to 'process' issues: working relationships with NEPAD; listening to Africans; and – very importantly - practical targets to track implementation by rich nations and by NEPAD after 2005;
- Collect practical examples of what's already in place, personal success stories, and positive cultural experiences – the news from Africa is not all bad;
- "Changing minds" is needed as much as "money changing hands", but don't let the Commission duck issues of how it can contribute to resource mobilisation on behalf of Africa.

Clear priorities emerged between and within the Commission's theme areas:

- Governance and institutions: peace and security; incentives and responsibilities;
- Growth and resources: North-South relations; management of natural resources; public-private partnerships;
- Empowerment and culture: education.