



CIVIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA (C-CfA)

“Voices of African Civil Society” towards 2008

1. INTRODUCTION

African Civil Society Communiqué to Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Japanese Civil Society, Government of Japan and the G8, *Done at Silver Springs Hotel, Nairobi Kenya, September 17 and 18, 2007*

We the undersigned organisations from all regions of Africa appreciate the Africa–Asia NGO network workshop which aims to;

- Support the creation of an African–Asian NGO network
- Strengthen advocacy efforts of African Civil Society towards TICAD IV and promote TICAD IV
- Build and strengthen an African NGO–JICA network for future formulation of partnership projects in the African region

Given the diversity of our group and constituencies we serve, there is a consensus that the current situation in state and pace of development is undesirable and to that end, we are presenting suggestions to our governments, TICAD, the Government of Japan and the G8. This paper outlines our collective views, perspectives and recommendations aimed at enhancing African development.

2. BACKGROUND

The World Social Forum (WSF) held in Nairobi Kenya in January 2007 under the theme, “ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE”, was a watershed for both Africa and the world. It provided a platform for discussions on everything imaginable from agriculture; environment; education; HIV/AIDS; human and people's rights; politics; water and sanitation; women, children and vulnerable rights; corporate responsibility; unfair labour practices, north–south and south–south relationships; and to International Financial Institutions (IFIs) especially the World Bank Group of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Development Agency (IDA) etc., and Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs);.

In addition it provided an opportunity for meeting and sharing of cultures, the birth of new ideas, concretization of old ones and above all it provided an opportunity for networking and reconnection. It was at the WSF that the Japanese delegation of the TICAD Civil Society Forum (TCSF), held a session on the Tokyo (Japan) International Conference on African Development

(TICAD) to be held in May 2008, and conceived the concept of establishing “A Civic Commission for Africa (C-CfA)” towards 2008.

The concept of establishing C-CfA was enthusiastically welcomed, and its outline and mechanism for establishment was agreed. As an outcome, TCSF circulated information on the concept of "CVIVIC COMMISSION for AFRICA (C-CfA)" and requested countries in Africa to apply to become member organizations. As the idea unfolded in a generic pan-African organization, it became clear that the need for and the idea to have an organization in Africa to engage with the G8, African Diaspora and the world in general became imperative. Twenty-two countries responded to the clarion call of the TCSF for candidates to the C-CfA out of which an online election was conducted and five (5) of the 17 (seventeen) **Country based Organizations (CbOs)** were chosen from among themselves together with four (4) **Actor-based Organizations (AbOs)** – nine (9) in all – to become the decision making executive body of the C-CfA to be known as the "**Steering Committee (SC)**".

On April 1st 2007, it was announced that the Civic Commission for Africa was established of the twenty (20) countries responded and therefore became Country Based Organizations as follows:– Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Madagascar, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe

3. RATIONALE

Africa finds itself at crossroads more than ever before. In spite of its natural resources, the continent suffers from abject poverty, worsened by poor pricing of primary products lack of capacity to add value to products and services etc. In trying to promote good governance in African countries, donors, and especially those from Japan as well as international organisations can borrow from the African civil society experience. Refined strategic visions and policies can be useful in helping achieve efforts and reduce risks by leading and guiding the programme's initiatives.

The general perception is that African Governments do not actively engage all national stakeholders, particularly civil society organizations, in the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of national development policies. The governments are perceived to show much insensitivity to the needs of the poor by “blindly” accepting and implementing externally imposed policies e.g. in the area of international trade the looming threat from the European Union and the World Trade Organization(WTO) to sign the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) at the end of December this year. It is of course well known that this scenario will bring Africa further on its knees subjecting the continent to abject poverty. Also, it is perceived that several African governments attend donor meetings and similar conferences without adequate preparations.

International development assistance is strongly skewed towards relations with African governments and not the people through their various non-governmental platforms. The bi- and multi lateral approaches with national governments leave very little room for active engagement with civil society organisations and, donors do not make it a condition of aid for the recipient governments to engage effectively with civil society.

In the area of NGO/CSO funding applications to international development institutions, missions, etc., the key challenge has been what civil society sees as generally “inflexible” funding requirements.

Admittedly, the lack of several NGOs/CSOs' capacity, transparency and accountability has also contributed in a large measure to the difficult relations with donors and partners.

To address these issues, civil society calls for more transparency and accountability from donors in the disbursement of aid and African governments and national civil society platforms in the utilization. Rather than the cosmetic approach to civil society participation in national development policies, it is about high time that governments give due recognition and acceptance of civil society as real complementary partners in development. For example, governments must make conscious efforts to include civil society in international trade talks.

4. PERSPECTIVES FROM CIVIL SOCIETY

1) Global investment and economic growth: Promoting Pro-poor Growth

Promoting pro-poor growth -- enabling a pace and pattern of growth that enhances the ability of poor women and men to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth -- will be critical in achieving a sustainable trajectory out of poverty and meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

Why is pro-poor growth important and what can donors do to promote it? Poverty has multiple and interlinked causes and dimensions: economic, human, political, socio-cultural, protective/security.

In the present voices it is important to put priority to addressing strategies and policies in areas that have been neglected but are now recognised for their contribution to pro-poor economic growth - private sector development, agriculture and infrastructure. The C-CfA has built consensus on the key underpinnings of pro-poor growth and explored recent thinking on a dramatic change in economic performance of some African countries, especially the fruit of oil rich countries and how this richness is not shared with majority of the poor, and explored also risk and vulnerability and ex ante poverty impact assessment.

Key Policy Messages to donors on how to make their support to pro-poor growth more effective:

- o Rapid and sustained poverty reduction requires pro-poor growth, i.e. a pace and pattern of growth that enhances the ability of poor women and men to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth
- o Policies to tackle the multiple dimensions of poverty, including the cross-cutting dimensions of gender and environment, are mutually reinforcing and should go hand-in-hand
- o Empowering the poor is essential for bringing about the policies and investments needed to promote pro-poor growth and address the multiple dimensions of poverty.

We believe that there should be a global fund to which all developed countries could make contributions to while developing countries could draw from in order to facilitate development activities. Also, it is realized that the per capita income of African countries is not the same with some wealthy, others not so wealthy but at the same time, the resources of these well to do African countries are misused by the politicians and the elite for their selfish end. In this regard, efforts must be made to by the donors and CSOs to isolate these selfish leaders.

2) Environmental conservation and climatic changes: Environmental justice and pro-poor sustainable development

It is well known that carbon dioxide emissions mainly come from developed countries but its effects – like desertification, rise in sea levels and extreme climatic conditions – usually strike developing countries. On the other hand adaptation measures should take place. For example, water resources, infrastructure, institutions (institutional, technological and cultural factors) and the community (like the level of public participation in decisions concerning water and environmental management and the investment of the richest communities in environmental conservation) be looked into with the view to compensating the developing countries for suffering for the actions of the developed countries.

3) Human security Approaching Security from Rights

During the recent decades, globalization has increased the probability of cross border threats, infectious diseases, environmental destruction, organised trans-national crime, human crises like abrupt and serious economic collapse and civil wars. Faced with these threats and crises, it is important to consider not only global, regional and national perspectives but also consider the “human security” perspective which is based on people. “Human security” means concentrating on different people and societies’ development in which each person is expected to lead a dignified life on one hand, and protect and empower people and communities that are exposed to real or potential threats on the other. Disability is a human rights, cross cutting and human security issue.

Besides, HIV/AIDS is an issue that concerns human security. There are two major dimensions to HIV/AIDS and to human security. One is the threat to socio-economic development and the other is to human survival. There is overwhelming evidence to show that HIV/AIDS has destabilised all areas and sectors of society – right from home to work, to health systems, to agriculture and other operations, transport, etc.

Therefore the fight against poverty and HIV/AIDS, promotion of development in Africa and peace keeping in the world are issues that we should pay attention to and focus on in terms of cooperation, partnership and networking.

4) Structural accompaniment of development policies in Africa

It is necessary that Japan demands oversees structural reforms in different departments of African administrations that are involved in the development process so that professional ethics, transparency, accountability and human security could be promoted. In fact, corruption is the major phenomenon that leads to the malfunction of administrative structures and lack of seriousness on the part of administrators.

Reviewing the Japanese intervention policy in Africa, especially in the area of trade and new information technology is important because they are still not accessible to the poorest.

But all in all, it would be good if the donors gave African country governments and CSOs technical support so that they become autonomous and self reliant instead of looking at them as people who need perpetual assistance.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS TO AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS

- Include CSOs/NGOs in country development as partners; governance of NGOs and citizens' participation must be added values to government policy for the development of African countries. The involvement of non political actors like CBOs, NGOs, CSOs, trade unions, women's, youth, physically challenged and PLWA associations must be included in the development, implementation and the follow up evaluation of projects and programs financed by the donors.
- Governments' should carefully develop national policies and analyse all development policies, including trade, and should strengthen their capacity in these endeavours by consulting with genuine national CSOs and possibly including them in delegations. NGO's and CSOs should re-position themselves through capacity development in meaningful engagement with stakeholders, policy formulation and analysis, monitoring, evaluation and staff development. Regional Economic Blocs should be strengthened to create more space for active engagement with NGOs and CSOs. The G8 must renew the community method using an approach that is generally based on the African people's aspirations and not based on those of their summit.
- African people must be governed in a consensual manner in coordination with non state actors and social groups
- Cancel all of Africa's debts and reject all forms of conditionality on Aid.
- Secure broad-based ownership of development programmes through self determination of priorities
- Democratise sub-regional economic blocs and strengthen engagement of and with NGOs/CSOs
- Give greater support for capability-building programmes for NGOs/CSOs to achieve higher degree of professionalism, legitimacy, accountability, transparency and autonomy instead of setting up parallel institutions leaving genuine national CSOs poor and dry.
- Establish a global fund for the development priorities of African societies and peoples especially indigenous people

6. RECOMMENDATIONS TO DONORS AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

We, on behalf of our poor marginalized African people demand from donors to do the following if we are to have human security, meet the MDGs, prevent HIV/AIDS:-

- Cancel the debt of all African countries especially odious debt that was incurred during the cold war by dictatorial regimes with special consideration for sub-Saharan countries
- Increase quality and quantity aid to Africa
- Work towards a strategic action plan for the integration of Africa into the global capital market
- Shy away from environmentally damaging projects especially those dealing with deforestation, logging where poor people's livelihoods are affected, dams and mining where whole populations are relocated adversely affecting their Environmental, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR)
- Democratize the voting system and the appointments procedure within the World Bank Group
- Cancel all bilateral debt owed by Africa especially that incurred during the cold war most of which is odious because the donor countries know that it was not used for the intended purpose; it's a known fact that most of the resources were used to suppress their own people
- Scale up to meet their 0.7% ODA obligation to the third world
- Do their utmost genuinely towards the stability of Africa

- Get their NGOs to work through genuine local CBOs, NGOs, CSOs coalitions in African countries instead of setting up parallel structures at national level thereby excluding genuine national CSOs from the development equation given leverage to African governments to ignore and antagonize genuine CSOs in their own countries
- Invest genuinely in pro-poor, private sector led activities that will bring Economic Growth including in the informal sector
- Better and quality aid must not be limited to service delivery but it must form the basis for subsidy especially to small scale farmers in Africa.
- Support environmental CBOs, NGOs, CSOs, etc.
- The church in the G-8 to liaise with and support the African church which is going through hard times due to the loss of membership through HIV/AIDS, short life expectancy, preventable diseases etc.
- Open Japanese institutions to Africans including but not limited to research institutes, universities, technical vocational institutes for the assimilation of knowledge that made Japan an industrial giant in merely 60 years: we want to replicate that knowledge in Africa
- Provide short internships, training programmes and cultural exchanges and joint projects
- Support the C-CfA by setting up of an operational African head office as soon as possible.
- Scrap the EPAs to give Africa chance to grow

7. RECOMMENDATIONS TO TICAD IV and JAPANESE CIVIL SOCIETY

TICAD IV, as an event, process and platform we demand that between it and TICAD V in 2013 the following be done:-

- Establish a strong link between the TICAD process and Japanese Civil Society on the one hand and the C-CfA and the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) on the other
- Strengthen the efforts of African Civil Society to consolidate their voices such as the ones of the C-CfA
- Promote the linkages between Japanese CBOs, NGOs, CSO, trade unions and their equivalents in Africa through a peer linkage programme
- Initiate the idea of worker exchanges on internship basis including cultural exchanges
- Replicate a counterpart to TICAD in Africa which we may call "African Conference on Development and Peace (ACOD) since we believe that the C-CfA is the counterpart of the Japanese Civil Society coalition in Africa.
- TICAD should become a tool for Japan to put Africa on the top of the agenda of G8
- International partners, including the Japanese government should increase their partnership with CSOs and NGOs
- Strengthening of the cooperation between the networks of African and Japanese people
- To consolidate the African civil society and strengthen mechanisms that contributes to the emergence of democracy.
- To develop a specific program line that is accessible to international organisations and African civil societies, by improving the dissemination of the Democracy and Human Rights programs.
- To increase the financing of programs for poverty reduction by a big margin.
- To increase the G8's commitments to fill the foreseeable deficits. Part of the assistance that is currently allocated to other sub sectors of education and environment must be redistributed.
- To give the donors' and international organisations' collaboration with African civil society organisations the importance that it deserves, given their capacity to adjust, innovate, maintain direct relations with the poor, their capacity to encourage participation and

express locals' views. In addition, they are efficient, accountable at the local level and also evaluate problems independently.

- Japan international Corporation Agency, Japanese Civil Society; the C-CfA and GCAP must lead in urging the responsible structures to deliver according to their promises and commitment. Initiating meetings to evaluate the progress. Planning for the next G8 and ensuring the involvement of Africans including PLWHA.
- Engage in policy decision-making to influence the abolition of user fees for health services (IMF policies fail the poor.)
- The Africa-Asia Network workshop I, Nairobi and Tokyo and indeed the TICAD IV and G8 must recognise that (a) Disability is a human rights issue that must be addressed as part of the development agenda (b) disability is a cross cutting issue that should involve all aspects of the human condition and development (c) disability issues must be mainstreamed in all development programmes and activities, i.e., bilateral and multilateral agencies should incorporate disability components into their existing and future programmes and activities.
- WHO, in partnership with UNAIDS, must review the treatment, scale-up **targets** and plans, ensure that they are both ambitious and realistic, and declare a single, unified global target for universal access to treatment by 2010.
- That TICAD, Japanese Civil Society and JICA support the attendance of African CSOs/NGOs at the TICAD Regional meetings in Tunisia, Zambia and Gabon in the months of October and November 2007 respectively.

Civil Society must put pressure through advocacy.

- Engage global companies in **further advocacy** efforts to encourage good governance globally.
- Practice good corporate governance.
- African citizens must assert themselves, questioning, empowering each other and demanding their rights including environmental, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR)
- Engage global companies to **commit** a percentage of profit to increased taxation for public health and HIV/AIDS.
- Urge the G8 to fund the **global fund** and support national plans of countries by engaging the international structures and local voices.
- Urge donors to be flexible on their policies to benefit developing countries.
- Building partnership with Japanese NGOs
- Sharing experiences between Africa and Japanese NGOs
- Strengthen network between Africa and Asia partnership
- ODA is meant to improve economy; addresses service delivery and therefore it should directly empower communities without the current restrictions on it
- Quality of aid should go beyond service delivery and incorporate asset building for farmers and adequate space for civil society should also be allowed
- Advocate long term and quality development aid for poverty eradication
- Advocate for the enhancement of fair trade and elimination of trade barriers
- Advocate for genuine and enhanced involvement
- Aid must address historical injustices
- Align aid to MDGs and other protocols