

POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

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Introduction

In the year 2000, the UN set the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were to be realized by 2015, which is less than two years from now. It is understood that only 3 out of the 8 lofty goals will have been achieved so far worldwide by 2015. With conflicts raging in Africa in places such as Congo DR, Sudan, Nigeria, Central African Republic, the attainment of the MDGs looks like a mirage and a wish for Utopia. Need we not consider the constraints which made their attainment difficult? Elsewhere, we have Ukraine, Afghanistan and Syria in political instability. Hunger stares thousands of people daily in war-torn areas where there are many internally-displaced people. Egypt and Libya are yet to achieve stability after the tsunami of the Arab Spring which struck a few years ago. All these examples show that the world is not yet a safe place, despite the vaunted claims of the benefits of the internet, globalization, and advances in technology, growth of MNCs and TNCs, among others. The MDGs seem unrealizable in the face of greater moves towards regional integration and creation of trading blocs. This essay has identified 10 thematic areas to focus on, namely:-

1. Agriculture
2. Education
3. Water
4. Energy
5. Climate change
6. Technology
7. Governance
8. Health
9. Wealth Creation and Distribution
10. Africa's role in the world

Findings and Analysis

Being a short essay, references will be kept out of the essay to engender originality and allow for less distraction and argumentation.

Agriculture:

The world cannot ignore the huge contribution of Agriculture to livelihoods, yet it is one sector which is often neglected by governments and treated to Cinderella looks. Agriculture sustains all humans and creates boundless avenues for employment, industry, wealth creation and other related activities. Growth of the sector therefore has multiplier effects on GDP growth. In Africa, as man distances himself from agriculture, so does he increase his poverty and the decay of the rural areas where he originally lived before he moved to the city. If the cultivation of the land is neglected or abandoned, it leads to inflation, food scarcity, over-reliance on GMOs and non-organic foods, among other ills. Dependence on GMOs and other artificial agricultural interventions has created ethical issues such as biologically engineered foods being branded as carcinogenic. Cloning of animals and humans through stem-cell research has been condemned in some circles as being unethical. Governments of the world should devote at least 8% of their GDP to agriculture in terms of research, technology, farm input support, extension services, irrigation, training and marketing of agricultural produce, irrigation, preservation of food, fighting pests, among others. Much farm output is lost to pests and wastage due to lack of good roads, proper methods of preservation and storage, lack of ready markets, among others. MNCs and TNCs should follow the shining examples of Unilever and Cadbury-Schweppes, which have embarked on fair trade and lofty ideals of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility and adding more value to their value and supply chains through the establishment of tight integration in their networks and establishment of long-term relationships through CRM and CVM, Customer Value Management).

For example, Cadbury-Schweppes is empowering cocoa farmers in West Africa by paying fair prices, while Unilever is doing the same to oil palm farmers in Malaysia, Indonesia and others in South East Asia. Unilever's Sustainable Living Programme (USLP) model should be made a standard bearer for all MNCs and TNCs throughout the world. Our governments must be made to sign pacts and protocols in the Post -2015 era to commit themselves to pay more attention to farmers than has hitherto been the case, and they should establish welfare schemes for them. The model of the CAP (Common Agriculture Policy) in the EU should be resurrected in Africa, Asia and South America. This is because before the Industrial Revolution started in Europe in 1750, it was preceded by great

revolutionary changes in Agriculture in terms of invention of farm machinery, consolidation of laws governing land ownership and tenancy, among others.

There is great need for land ownership reforms in various parts of the world to encourage both commercial and small-holder farming. Governments should be made to commit to support their farmers through generous and liberal agricultural subsidies as it is done in the USA for wheat and cotton farmers. The WTO should relax the rules and allow the developing countries to catch up with the developed world through such actions. After all, if the inequities in world trade between the more prosperous north and the dangerously poor south persist, the whole world is worse off for that. Agriculture has potential to create millions of jobs if it is made labour-intensive. The role of IFAD in rolling out many small scale loans to youth farmers in projects and programmes in Liberia, Nigeria, Benin, Gambia, Cameroon, and others is commendable and cannot go unnoticed. IFAD recognizes that 70% of the youth in Africa live in the rural areas. If the youth is empowered, then we can have a bright future.

Education:

The standards of education are falling fast in many countries where the increasing levels of poverty is increasingly and paradoxically creating isolated islands of opulence among the elite ruling classes. Some countries such as Ghana have adopted overloaded curricula since 1986. This curriculum in Ghana does not encourage critical thinking among pupils and students as exams are set to ask for stock answers, and the subjects are many and heavily-loaded, unsuitable for the target group of kids.

Those from disadvantaged homes are in the majority in the urban and rural areas. They are found in the public schools where the teachers are lazy, irresponsible and uncaring. It is the few in the private schools who through extra classes and congenial learning environments make it to the tertiary institutions. Instruction materials are lacking, some school buildings are dilapidated and teachers earn such meagre wages that they are not motivated to teach properly.

We should go back to basics and emphasize proficiency in the basic 3Rs of reading, writing and arithmetic in the basic primary schools to encourage the imparting of numeracy, logic, aesthetics, literature and general scholarship. There should be emphasis on practical subjects and learning of local lore through STEMS – Science,

technology, English (or any official/local language), Mathematics and Social Studies. Also life survival skills should be encouraged to be taught in schools. These include outdoor camping, swimming, acting, music, crafts, and home economics, among others. The World Bank and other cooperating partners have assisted a lot in lifting levels of education in developing countries, and they should continue to do even more in the years to come, to help train more teachers and build more schools. The future belongs to the knowledge community of learners, educators, knowledge workers and knowledge users.

We pay tribute to religious organisations which in the past pioneered and partnered with governments in education and health provision. They should be given free hand in contributing towards the upliftment of education in developing countries. To reduce the cost of instructional materials, we could have e-book readers, Kindle and e-boards. The one laptop a child policy of the UN is yet to be realized in the world.

These and e-book readers could be pre-loaded with all relevant books to serve as self-instructional materials for many kids in outlandish communities. This will also lead to decongestion in the hostels and lecture halls. More could be done to decongest schools by using the hot-desking and hoteling concept of tele-schooling.. Also, those tertiary institutions which are over-producing graduates in the liberal arts, business and humanities, could be asked to have more of such students enrolling as distance learners, with some residential components staggered from time to time. This will create room to have more science, technical and vocational students to be enrolled for residential programmes.

Some of our graduates from the mushrooming universities are half-baked because some of the lecturers and professors are themselves not much up to scratch. The undergraduates need hands-on training and quality scholarship. University accreditation and benchmarking should be tackled vigorously through increased networking and partnerships to help deliver best practice. The practical training component of university education through internships should be increased and vigorously pursued. Attention should be paid going forward, to admission policies which encourage attainment of gender parity in enrolments, as well as recruitment of teaching staff. We should aim at 50-50 parity status by 2050 for male and female students and workers.

Religion or culture should not be used to discriminate against girl-child education. More space should be created for parents and sponsors to choose from multiple avenues of educating their children and wards. The existence of the dichotomy of parallel educational systems of schools for the haves and have-nots, though inevitable, is discriminatory. Standards across both private and public school systems should be unified to bridge the seemingly yawning gap. Governments should be convinced to access universal educational standards such as the Cambridge International Examinations and the International Baccalaureate, towards a global equilibrium and unification of standards.

Water:

In Africa, water management is very poor despite abundance of it in many places. Ecosystems should be studied and water farming be practised by taking steps to protect and secure water sources and bodies of water such as rivers, lakes and ponds. Water is linked to vegetation cover as both depend on each other in the hydrological cycle. Vegetation needs good conservation so as to support the water bodies. River sources are being threatened and polluted through illegal and informal mining methods such as the wasteful local mining methods for gold in Ghana and Guinea. In Ghana for example, rivers such as Birim, Offin, Ayensu, Densu, Prah and others in the South forested areas are being threatened by illegal mining activities. As a result, they are losing water in their catchment areas.

Gallery forest along the water corridors are being depleted at an alarming rate because of expanding populations and greater need for farming space, charcoal burning, among others. The carrying capacity of the land has been exceeded by the threshold population, leading to the land becoming bad land with incidents of leaching, soil erosion, carapaces, rill and sheet erosion, gully erosion, among others. Rivers and lakes are silting fast because the gallery forests which shield them from run-offs are fast receding, thus exposing river banks to heavy run-offs and silting activities. Rural populations are defying local norms and cutting bamboos from their groves along the rivers for local crafts and building construction. There should be a balance between human needs and regeneration of the gallery forests.

Water treatment plants are not being properly tended, and as such, some are pumping half-treated water through the pipes to households. Also, the capacities of some of the water treatment plants have been outstripped by high demand. Their

machines are old and their storage capacities are low. There is serious need to have artificial underground drainage storage tanks throughout the country to collect and store run-offs during heavy rains. Farmers should be taught drip irrigation to reduce on water use. Tied to the issue of water supply is the issue of sewerage and sanitation. In some places, poor sewer systems lead to contamination of the water supply systems, causing the outbreak of many water-borne diseases.

People should therefore be educated to boil their water from the taps before drinking. People should also be taught recycling water as part of water conservation and management. Villagers should form water-watch clubs to sensitize their members and others on water issues. More underground water sources should be explored and exploited by drilling wells. There should be comprehensive mapping of the aquifers and limestone formations to gauge underground water reservoirs. Laws on water use should be stiffened. Attempts to privatise water supply should be condemned because it is said that 'water is life'. In Africa, water-borne diseases are increasing because of escalating levels of poverty, worsening governance, breakdown of local government systems, corruption and poor leadership at all levels. Diseases include bilharzias, river blindness or onchocerciasis, malaria, typhoid, cholera, dysentery, diarrhoea, guinea worm, among others.

Climate change:

Schools and colleges should have issues of water conservation, agriculture, climate change, food security and population explosion embedded deeply in their curricula. These thematic issues are inexorably interlinked and intertwined and they should be made examinable in the sciences, social studies and general studies. They should be made overarching across the school curricula. The issue of climate change and its impact should be taught in all schools through integrated studies, using community leaders, opinion leaders, and experts to narrate changes in the local landscape and ecology.

The import of the deleterious effects of climate change on national economies should be pointed out. Elkingham's 3Ps of people, planet and profit should be taught in schools, as well as Carroll's pyramid model of corporate social responsibility of philanthropy, ethics, and environmental concerns, economy, legal

and social (PEEELS) connections of carrying out CRS. Milton Friedman's thesis of the business of business being business may fly in the face of critics like Mintzberg and Stenberg who harp on the incalculable carbon footprint of business in terms of negative externalities.

People should be taught to embrace the 3Rs of reduce, re-use, recycle. Conservation clubs in schools and colleges should be revived. They should hold debates, competitions and plenary sessions like the Model UN. Carbon tax should be enforced worldwide by all on airline travellers, vehicle owners and big business houses such as the MNCs and TNCs. Households should also pay carbon tax for having their garbage incinerated.

Manufacturing companies should be made to pay the world goodwill tax or climate change tax, along the lines of polluter pays. They should be made to produce annual Social Audit Reports, Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, Social Charter Reports and CSR Reports. These should be mandatory as it is in the EU. All countries should be peer- pressured to accede to the Kyoto Protocol, and to imbibe the tenets of the Helsinki and Rio de Janeiro Accords. The giant oil producing companies should be made to pay extra climate tax.

Large oil tankers, trawlers and whaling fleets should be brought in line by asking them to commit to community improvement projects. The foreign fishing trawlers should be banned from trespassing into the territorial waters of developing countries, where local fishermen earn their living. As reading e-books is a strain on the eye, perhaps we need to improve technology and also allow hardcopies by turning to making paper from grasses, papyrus reeds and bulrushes. More scientific research of producing paper from grasses needs to be done, to encourage grass farming. This will save the soft woods.

Technology:

The future lies with the mobile phone because of its cheapness, flexibility, ease of use and mobility. The cell phone is going to be of extreme importance for agriculture, education, governance, paying utility bills, doing banking, among other uses. It may be given out freely in future to empower global citizens. It will bridge the great divide between the north and south, rural and urban areas, and cascade a new array of networking and relationships. It will help alleviate poverty and bring TV, newspapers and entertainment to the doorsteps of many hitherto poor

communities. Every global citizen will be phone-literate or phone-lit. Cell phones are ubiquitous and they have great potential for extending the frontiers of education, business, health care and empowerment.

Mobile cash or m-cash or M2M business is going to gain ground and disintermediate the banking sector, just as email has made post offices irrelevant. The cell phone providers have to increase their coverage nationwide. They need to be subsidized to do this through soft loans from IFC or IDA. Cell phones should be provided free of charge to peasant farmers to direct them to markets for their farm produce, and to help them have access to many services. In rural areas where there is no electricity, they should be helped to come up with improvised batteries for charging phones such as the innovation in Kenya where riding bicycles helps to charge cell phones. The use of car batteries is an alternative.

Governance:

Poor leadership in Africa is a big problem. This is increasing the power distance between the governors and the governed on the one hand, and between the rich and poor on the other hand. I suggest that post-2015, four leadership post-graduate universities for excellence in African leadership should be built in Ghana, Tanzania, Botswana and Tunisia to exclusively train future African leaders. Oxford and Harvard can be convinced to buy into this innovative programme. The UNDP and World Bank should also fund studies into existing African Constitutions in order to advise and recommend changes because most of the problems in Africa stem from weak institutions such as weak constitutions which confer too much power on the executive arm of government. Another area of weakness is local government whereby these are emasculated and enfeebled because of executive capture at the central government level. Besides, we need to increase political participation space via increase in voice, capture and exit.

Weak constitutions and excessive powers to the Executive is the cause of massive corruption in Africa. As President Obama said when he visited Accra in 2010, 'Africa needs strong institutions, not strong men.'

Also our top-down or highly centralized system of government is stifling rural and regional development. We need proper decentralization and devolution of powers. Our collapsed and enfeebled local governments should be energized to deliver services closer to the point of need as per the theory of subsidiarity. We need to

embrace change and adopt the systems of prefecture in Japan, Counties and Boroughs in the UK, Cantons in Switzerland, Burghers in Germany, among others. These are excellent loose-tight models to emulate as they allow bottom-up development and full participation of the local people in affairs affecting their immediate welfare.

Health and Wealth:

The pace of globalization is fast. Apart from the HIV- AIDS syndrome and scourge, we also have surging health problems in Africa of diseases of the rich, such as cancer, hypertension, and stress-related ailments, among others. To reduce some of these diseases, the wicked trend of delabourisation of work places and casualization of labour must be reversed. People should be given job security through fairly long contracts between two to three years. Most banks and institutions nowadays abuse young graduates by setting them very high targets but giving them six months contracts and then they discard them. This is tantamount to some kind of slavery and exploitation.

More people should be employed in institutions instead of the current paradigm where less than 1% of executives take away more than 80% of the payroll, and the remaining majority who bear the heavy load walk away with subsistence and salvation wages. The fat-cat syndrome is unethical. Wealth should be redistributed fairly at work places to reduce stress. The casualization of labour and its exploitation by awarding 6 month contracts should cease.

Post-2015 African governments and the private sector should be made to sign protocols on labour to improve conditions of service for all formal employees, to pay them world-class wages and provide globally competitive conditions of service, health insurance, among other benefits. This will reduce the increasing phenomenon of the brain-drain and the menace of the boat people of economic and political refugees fleeing from poverty in Africa, the Middle East, and Far East, seeking asylum in the EU countries.

The economic topological landscape of the world has to change to give more economic space to the developing countries to gain a fair share of global wealth, and not to be forced to sign EPAs which will trigger a fifth wave of enslavement and poverty escalation. Those EPAs must be done in good faith for the greater good of all humanity.

Energy

As the world has vast gas deposits, and as gas is the neatest of the fossil fuels, more people should be convinced to switch to gas for cooking, and as fuel for cars, among others. This will reduce the dependence on petroleum, whose exploitation causes a lot of environmental degradation. Here, we recall the BP Gulf of Mexico Oil spill in April 2010, the 1989 Exxon Mobil Valdez disaster off the coast of Alaska, among others. We should strive hard through research and innovation to discover cheaper, neater, sustainable, safe and non-renewable and alternate energy sources, post-2015.

African Paradigm shift as the next frontier

After China, Africa and South America will be the next global centres of growth, as the growth pole axis will shift at maturity and saturation to Africa and South America. Therefore, more attention should be paid to the development of roads, rail, air and water transport networks in Africa. That will need a Marshall Plan type of investment.

Already, China is looking in that direction in Africa, and may gain first-mover advantage if the USA and the EU become stingy with their loans and FDI. We will need world class manufacturing plants in Africa where the raw materials are. We will need Michael Porter's Diamond model to see ahead how Africa will be by 2050. Africa will start booming as a centre of excellence in tertiary education, as major tourist attraction centre, and as a major market with a critical mass to attract the McDonalds, Wall Marts, Tesco's, Sainsburys and other super chains into Africa.

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