

# Government Communication

## 1997/98:122

Africa on the Move. Revitalising Swedish Policy  
towards Africa for the 21st Century

Communication  
1997/98:122

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The Government submits this communication to Parliament.

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### Main content of the communication

In this communication, the Government proposes a policy aimed at developing closer co-operation, on more equal terms — partnership — between Sweden and Africa. In view of the process of change that the continent is undergoing, an overall presentation of the Government's policy in Africa is provided here, for the first time. This communication includes a description of the political and economic situation in Africa and of Sweden's current contacts with the continent. The Government proposes a policy with aims that include the following:

- ◇ supporting African-led processes of change towards consolidated democracy and sustainable development, focusing particularly on the situation of the poor;
- ◇ developing partnerships between Africa and the surrounding world;
- ◇ strengthening the long-term exchange between Sweden and Africa.

The Government herewith also submits the following communications (in Swedish) relevant to Africa policy: *Democracy and Human Rights in Sweden's International Development Co-operation* (1997/98:76) and *Human Rights in Swedish Foreign Policy* (1997/98:89). Last year, the Government submitted another communication of relevance in the context, *The Rights of the Poor — Our Common Responsibility* (1996/97:169).

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# 1 New points of departure

## 1.1 Africa

A new Africa is beginning to take shape. Societies are becoming more open and democratisation is gaining momentum. Economic reforms, deregulation measures and trade liberalisation have been initiated. After prolonged decline, a marked economic recovery is discernible. For many poor people, living standards are starting to rise. The new era has brought rapid changes, intractable adjustment problems, violent confrontations when unresolved conflicts come to the surface — but also hope of progress in Africa. After the misdirected development in the 1970s and '80s, the current advances under way — democratic, economic and social — are real to many people. For the millennium, there is reason to hope for an “African Renaissance”.

African societies are well aware of the challenges facing them, and there is a will to tackle these challenges in a farsighted way. In several countries, new leaders have come to power who rank economic growth and material improvements for the popular majority highest on the political agenda. A new generation is also evident in the private sector and the academic world. Women's voices have begun to be raised. Impatience is beginning to make itself felt, and the response must be decisive reforms and a political mustering of strength to confirm and consolidate the progress attained, through democratic breakthroughs and laborious structural adjustment.

Nonetheless, immense problems persist. Armed conflict affects the population in several countries, and instability is severe in certain regions. Demographic growth is still rapid and the number of poor people is rising. Environmental degradation and the spread of AIDS are growing problems. Corruption is widespread, and resource conservation must be improved. The challenges for those wishing to lead Africa into a period of greater prosperity are great, but the desire to advance is very much in evidence.

Thus, Africa is in an era of transition. In this situation, support from the surrounding world is crucially important. Without continued democratic, economic and social reforms and progress, Africa will come to lag behind permanently, with long-term global consequences. With joint efforts, on the other hand, Africa's marginalisation can give way to mutually advantageous exchange.

In Sweden, too, there has been a great deal of change with a bearing on this country's policy towards Africa. For us Swedes, too, new communications, technology and exchange in numerous different sectors are bringing the world — with its challenges, opportunities and problems — closer. Our trade with Africa is still on a small scale, but it is increasing. As a member of the European Union (EU), Sweden has obtained another interface with Africa. The tradition of political involvement and extensive development co-operation that gives Sweden and its Nordic neighbours a special role in the African context, in bilateral as well as multilateral forums, is a major asset in this new era.

Between Sweden and African countries, a multiplicity of contacts have evolved at various levels in society. In many (but not all) cases, these have emerged from traditional aid activities. Today, a large number of Swedes are directly affected by their relations with Africa, in their working lives, leisure or private concerns. In our country, too, are a substantial number of immigrants or refugees from various African nations, and many of them are anxious to maintain and develop contacts with their countries of origin. Some 35,000 people born in sub-Saharan Africa now live in Sweden.

### 1.3 The global environment

The modern world is characterised by mutual dependence. Global security is indivisible, and instability spreads across borders in such forms as refugee flows or terrorism. Economic and social development, peace and democracy are interconnected. Global ecological interdependence calls for joint measures to protect natural resources and the environment.

Simultaneously, the dynamic of global development features two apparently contradictory tendencies: on the one hand an endeavour to achieve greater regional integration, with elements of supranationalism, and on the other a stronger emphasis on local, ethnic or otherwise specific identity at the expense of national identity. The nation-state is still the dominant player, but global as well as local forces are subjecting it to severe tests. In Europe, the map has been redrawn in the 1990s to an extent and at a pace that are unparalleled since the end of the First World War. In Africa, the nation-state has in many cases encountered difficulty in obtaining a real foothold in people's everyday lives.

Another global phenomenon of great importance to Africa is the growing gap between rich and poor, within as well as between countries and continents. The most rapid increase in the proportion of poor people is taking place in sub-Saharan Africa — a trend coinciding with

the departure from this group of more than a billion people in Asia over the past decade. With the disappearance of spheres of interest that characterised a world of two rival superpowers, marginalisation of the countries of least economic and strategic interest to the industrialised world has been accentuated.

At the same time, integration of the world economy is proceeding ever more rapidly, with swelling cross-border flows of goods and services, investments and capital. The aggregate flow of credits and aid to developing countries in 1990 was around USD 100 billion. By 1996, this flow had grown to nearly USD 300bn. Over the same period, aid remained relatively constant, at around USD 50 billion, which meant that the aid share of the capital flow decreased from half to one-sixth. However, the African countries have derived only limited benefit from the increase in private capital flows: they remain dependent on aid, especially for the sustainability of their continued economic reform programmes.

It is no coincidence that, besides Sweden, a range of countries and organisations have recently taken the initiative for renewed support of Africa and are, with diverse variations, developing the notion of partnership for their relations with the continent. This applies to the World Bank, several UN bodies, the EU and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), for example. It also applies to the UK, the USA — which has launched a new Africa policy with such aims as stimulating trade and investments — and Japan, which is planning a second international conference on African development. Co-ordinating these initiatives is now an important task for all those who wish to develop co-operation with Africa further. These initiatives, and also their co-ordination — and this is the lesson learnt from previous attempts — must, however, always be based on African-led processes of change.

#### 1.4 Partnership

Government policy has been to take as its starting point the major changes under way in Africa, to break away from the stereotypes and to open the way for broader exchange between Sweden and Africa. Sweden's foreign policy and development co-operation has, in many ways, given us a close relationship with the African societies. The scope for renewal was the focus of a discussion on Sweden's Africa policy that began with a seminar under the aegis of the Nordic Africa Institute in 1995. An account of this debate is given in the book *Domination or Dialogue*. Its positive reception in African debate encouraged further efforts. On 31 October 1996 a working group was appointed to draw up proposals for a new Swedish Africa policy, and on 31 July 1997 the group submitted its report, *Partnership with Africa — Proposals for a New Swedish Policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa*.

The working group arranged two conferences with mainly African participation, the first in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in January (reported on in the book *A New Partnership for African Development*) and the second in Saltsjöbaden, on the Baltic coast east of Stockholm, in June 1997. Linked to the group's investigation were, first, a steering group representing the various specialist areas of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and, secondly, a broader reference group of Swedish stakeholders with an interest in Africa. Consultations were also held in all the African countries where Sweden is represented, and with such people as African immigrants in Sweden, groups from Swedish and African business and industry, and spokesmen from Swedish societies and associations.

The present communication is based on the working group's investigation, and gives an account of the Government's guidelines for a new and revitalised policy towards sub-Saharan Africa. As in the aforesaid investigation, this geographical limitation is prompted mainly by practical considerations.

Sweden, for its part, wishes to support the process of change now under way in many African countries in the direction of enduring and universal improvements in living standards while, at the same time, the countries open up towards the surrounding world and democratic influence is strengthened. Simultaneously, we seek to strengthen the long-term contacts between Sweden and Africa and, at various levels, support Africa's efforts to realise its economic and political potential. We also seek, more than previously, to bring West Africa into our co-operation.

To attain these objectives we need partially new instruments. The ideas of a modified approach that have emerged in the international discussion in recent years may be summarised in the notion of partnership. This notion primarily involves not donors and recipients, but two parties collaborating to attain jointly formulated aims. Obviously, the inequality that is inherent in the aid relationship cannot be eliminated all at once. But it can be tackled in various ways while, at the same time, contacts are extended into areas where mutual interest results in self-funding exchange.

One change relates to clarity regarding the means to this end. It should be clear from the start what the objectives of co-operation are and what means should be used to attain them. The parties must agree on premises and conditions. The basis of shared values that is manifested primarily in respect for human rights is crucial to the development of the partnership. If the conditions are not fulfilled by one or other party, modifying or discontinuing the co-operation must be feasible.

Another change relates to attitudes, especially that of the stronger party. Gone are the times when the prescriptions for African success could be

written in western capitals. First, these prescriptions have often proved deficient, for the very reason that they are poorly based on African reality; secondly, the new African leaders insist on their right to formulate and impose conditions for programmes focusing on development processes in their own countries.

The idea of partnership is not confined to relations between governments and state bodies. One important element in the new Africa policy is to promote trade and investments between Sweden and Africa. Swedish business and industry have much to gain from utilising — through increased exports and imports and heavier investments — the potential that exists on many African markets. Cultural exchange with Africa is already substantial, but there should be room for expansion. The same applies to contacts between churches and popular movements, trade unions and voluntary organisations. Tourism is a growing industry. This aspiration reflects the focus on more reciprocal relationships that is a crucial element in partnership. Otherwise, broadened interfaces are also important to breathe life into the intensified Africa policy that is presented in this communication.

## 2 Change in Africa

### 2.1 Introduction

For Africa, as for the other continents, people and their resources make up a major potential. Making good use of these resources and developing them further is important, and this can be done only if people themselves feel that they are integral to development. African democracy must have African roots and a face of its own that is recognisable to the African population. Democratisation needs democrats, schooled in an active civil society — often in fierce combat with the enemies of democracy.

Stability and economic development are crucial factors in political development as well. If poverty as such generates conflicts, material improvements for the popular majority are, conversely, an important way for them to lever themselves out of conflicts and an effective factor in every effort at conciliation. After the lost decade of the 1980s, with an annual per capita decrease of more than 2 per cent in real incomes, the 1990s have brought an incipient recovery for Africa in a continental perspective. Laborious structural adjustment and economic reform policy have begun to bear fruit in a range of countries. Growth in 1996 and 1997 averaged around 5%, and significantly higher in several countries.

The aid dependence ensuing from the economic crisis persists. Incapacity — on the part of both the countries affected and the international community — to tackle the debt crisis in time exacerbated the crisis. The international view of the debt problem has admittedly, since the 1980s, gradually softened. This has meant that more and better instruments have been successively devised to tackle the situation of the most heavily debt-burdened countries, with a view to eliminating the debt problem. But additional vigorous efforts are required to ensure that this strategy is also applied without delays.

Of the currently projected increase of 100 million a year in the world's population — until the downturn predicted to take place in some 30 years' time — 95% is expected to take place in the developing countries, and the fastest relative growth rate will be in Africa. The very highest rate will be among the poorest groups in the poorest countries — people who often inhabit an environment where the basic ecological preconditions are already very precarious and the rapidly growing demographic pressure constitutes a threat to the very basis of survival. Safeguarding this basis and bringing about steady rehabilitation of areas already laid waste is a long-term task that will necessitate painful priority choices in a situation of very pronounced short-term needs.

Conflicts, ecological problems and population pressure have also made Africa the continent where refugees are relatively most numerous: some 40% of the world total. The focus of this problem has successively shifted from the south and north-east (the Horn) of the continent to West and Central Africa. The nature of refugee flows has also successively changed, in that typical refugees are now destitute women and children — a fact that obviously makes refugee groups in general more vulnerable.

In a continental perspective, African development during the 1990s has been very rapid and highly diverse. The conventional sombre picture of a continent in crisis is undeniably valid in several specific situations, but it is hardly comprehensive. Instead, it testifies to the mass media's tendency to focus on disaster and tragedy — on momentary images, rather than analysis and context. Below, we attempt to balance this picture by sketching the development background in the various sub-Saharan regions.

## 2.2 Southern Africa

The collapse of South Africa's apartheid regime was the culmination of a struggle that was formalised as early as in 1912, when the African National Congress (ANC) was formed. Nonetheless, the dissolution came with startling speed once political and economic realities had become clear, in the early 1990s, to those in political and economic

power. The fact that the democratisation process, despite several spectacular setbacks, could be implemented in a controlled and constructive manner is a major victory above all for the South African people, but also for those in the rest of the world who had joined forces in exerting pressure on behalf of respect for the foundations of democracy. South Africa provides significant and specific evidence that international solidarity yields results.

With the resumption of business as usual, in political terms, South Africa faces the popular majority's expectations of rapid progress. At the same time, widespread social deprivation prevails, with high unemployment and crime rates, and pervasive violence, notably against women. These problems are not unlike those of the neighbouring countries, but basic conditions are in several respects better, since the country enjoys such advantages as abundant natural resources, a relatively high educational level and keen political awareness, well-developed civil society, active women's movements that have resulted in relatively high female representation in decision-making bodies, and a high rate of economic activity.

Whether these factors suffice to make the country the economic powerhouse of the region, as many wish, remains to be seen. In foreign policy, however, the South African government has — after some initial hesitation — assumed an ever more active role in the region's trouble spots. President Mandela's personal credibility and charisma are helping to make this a natural development, in a setting where elder statesmen enjoy great respect and are often entrusted with delicate mediation roles. However, it is not entirely straightforward for South Africa to play the role of peacemaker and promoter of democracy in the region. A certain ambivalence in other countries towards their large neighbour has apparently superseded the animosity directed against it during the apartheid period. In addition, there are bilateral antagonisms in, for example, the sphere of trade.

The fact nevertheless remains that what was traditionally the primary source of regional destabilisation and destruction in Southern Africa has, in a relatively brief period, become a positive force in regional development instead. This is also facilitated by the stable democracy and sound economic growth that characterise two of South Africa's neighbours, Botswana and Namibia.

In Angola, on the other hand, the war of liberation against the Portuguese was followed by destabilisation and an even more destructive civil war that gained a new impetus after the 1992 election. Time and time again, the peace process of several years' standing has run into obstacles and setbacks and it will, apparently, be some time before the country's potentially strong economy can start developing in earnest. Supplies of oil and diamonds have nevertheless already brought about widespread corruption. Mozambique, after similarly being torn by

destabilisation and civil war, has developed further towards political and economic stability — a trend that now looks as if it may be sustainable. There, economic interests are less strong, and this is probably a significant factor. Malawi is currently liberating itself from the legacy of the wilful autocrat Hastings Kamuzu Banda's protracted rule. The country has been democratised and is being increasingly incorporated into regional co-operation.

In Zambia, on the other hand, development appears to be going in the wrong direction. The first democratic election in 1991 resulted in a shift of power that inspired great hopes of a new start for this debt-burdened and stagnant country. However, the new government has not succeeded in bringing about any radical shake-up, and its re-election in 1996 was implemented without satisfactory adherence to democratic procedure. A state of emergency was proclaimed after an alleged coup attempt at the end of 1997 — in a climate of growing political polarisation.

Since independence, Zimbabwe has been characterised by relatively good social and economic development, in which the strong and autonomous judicial system has played an important part. Inequality, discontent with the absence of agricultural reform and other grievances have nevertheless combined to prompt disruption of the long-standing stability by demonstrations and riots. Increasingly active groups in civil society, including trade unions, and a larger element of free media have contributed to intensified public debate. The irreconcilable conflict in Matabeleland is another source of unrest. Zimbabwe's manner of tackling this transition period and developing its democracy will have major repercussions at regional as well as national level.

## 2.3 Eastern Africa

Shortly after liberation from colonialism, the East African Community — comprising Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda — was set up. However, in the 1970s it foundered in the wake of political antagonisms and Idi Amin's rule of terror in Uganda. Attempts are now being made to restore the community, with the important difference that co-operation is being gradually built up from below instead of being initiated with the immediate creation of large-scale institutions. The approach is functional, and realities on the spot have dictated political decisions, rather than vice versa. Simultaneously, strong political support for co-operation has emerged.

Political development in these three countries differs in a way that well reflects variations in the African continent as a whole. In Tanzania democratic elections have been held, but the favourable overall impression is disturbed by the election in Zanzibar, which was manipulated by those in power there. The island of Zanzibar is part of

the United Republic of Tanzania, but its political and cultural traditions differ from that of the mainland (formerly Tanganyika). In Kenya, President Moi has recently been re-elected after an election campaign whose conduct has been questioned. At the same time, however, the opposition has had difficulty in acting effectively and in concert. Ethnic factors still appear to mobilise voters more than the content of the various political manifestos, but the preconditions for a reinforced democratic process — including a free press and viable civil society as important players — exist. Uganda is characterised by transparency and growth, although continued instability affects parts of the country, especially the areas close to the Sudanese border. President Museveni has opted for a political model aimed at circumventing ethnic factors, but foresees no multi-party elections.

Economic trends appear largely to be following political ones. Although the poor initial situation has contributed to the upward trend, Uganda — with average annual growth of around 7% in the 1990s — exhibits one of the most dynamic economies in Africa. In recent years Tanzania, too, has reversed the trend of economic decline that the country long showed: during the 1990s, average growth has exceeded 4% a year. In Kenya, on the other hand, one of the continent's strongest economies is being undermined by such factors as widespread corruption and a distribution of income that is among the most unequal in the world. After a downturn in the growth trend in 1997, it is estimated at only 2%, i.e. negative in per capita terms.

Throughout the region, population growth is very high (close to 3%), which naturally makes favourable economic development harder to achieve. Uganda is the country in the region that has progressed furthest in terms of active gender-equality policy, which in the long term should result in a falling birth rate.

## 2.4 Central Africa

One complicating factor for the East African countries, especially Uganda and Tanzania, is their proximity to the Great Lakes region and interaction with the crisis-ridden countries there, above all Rwanda and Burundi.

The change of government in Kinshasa in the spring of 1997 was a turning point in this protracted crisis which, owing to the Congo's sheer size and economic potential, has repercussions throughout the continent. New opportunities have been generated by the emergence of the Democratic Republic of Congo from the crisis and shift of power. President Mobutu's fall and Kabila's assumption of power have also brought into focus the shift of emphasis from Francophone to Anglophone Africa that appears to be under way. Kabila has close contacts to the east and south — with, for example, Vice President

How the issues of transparency and power distribution are dealt with in the long term is decisive for development. Favourable development could, by changing the preconditions, help to promote long-term solution of problems in Rwanda and Burundi, as elsewhere. The Hutu majority in both these minority-ruled countries fear permanent marginalisation. After the conduct of the UN and the international community, and especially the lack of response to the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, faith in and respect for the surrounding world are low among the Tutsi leaders concerned. Accordingly, this reduces their response to outside pressure to respect human rights and humanitarian law, for example.

Population growth, combined with shrinking financial resources, has been an important underlying cause of the recurrent crises in Rwanda and Burundi. The fact that these conflicts have become so intense and brutal may, on the other hand, be largely ascribed to the ethnic manipulations to which the population has been subjected by the colonial powers and political leaders acting in their own interests. If the new regional community of interests that is now emerging succeeds in reducing the importance of national borders and expanding the space available to the hard-pressed populations, this may mark an important inception of a political solution that is tenable in the long term.

Nevertheless, border problems in Africa — part of the colonial legacy that, in several senses, weighs heavily to this day — are a singularly sensitive matter. Under the five-point plan drawn up by the UN Security Council to remedy the crisis in the Great Lakes region, an international conference is to analyse the problems and propose solutions. It is in this context, perhaps, that the principal issues relating to socioeconomic factors influencing, for example, population growth, access to land, and national borders may come up for discussion. The conference could mark the inception of a necessary long-term process aimed at sustainable stabilisation of the entire region.

Another factor contributing to the unstable situation in Central Africa is the devastating conflict that hit Congo-Brazzaville in 1997 — a coup was carried out with military aid from the neighbouring country of Angola — and also the precarious situation in the Central African Republic.

## 2.5 West Africa

Development in West Africa has been singularly heterogeneous, with both political and economic successes in such countries as Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, and renewed

outbreaks of conflict in, for example, Sierra Leone. Another factor contributing heavily to regional instability is the situation in Nigeria, where a military junta is obstructing the democratisation of the country and the gap between rulers and ruled is growing, while the once substantial middle class is being wiped out as economic misrule takes its toll. This adverse trend in Africa's demographically largest country is affecting the whole continent.

Apart from a few of the countries in the drought-stricken Sahel, the West African region contains considerable natural resources. However, oil and diamonds have not been solely beneficial, any more than they have in Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo: they have also invited corruption and contributed to prolonging the conflicts that beset the populations in several parts of the region. These conflicts seem unusually pointless and destructive, and appear to be mainly about power and money. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, warfare has penetrated deep into the fibres of society and become a way of life for the soldiers. A whole generation — one that has never experienced peaceful conditions — has been brutalised. Whole populations are held hostage or compelled to flee. Since the election in Liberia in July 1997, however, there has been hope that the trend there may be reversed.

The same region contains countries like Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, which have undergone rapid economic development and held reasonably democratic elections. The relatively strong position of women, especially in economic terms, appears to have assisted the favourable trends in many West African countries.

Regarding the Francophone parts of the region, the strong ties with the former colonial power now appear to be undergoing re-examination. A process of this kind has, however, been under way since the end of the Cold War, and it remains to be seen how this will affect development, regionally as well as in individual countries.

One serious problem, which is connected with the difficulties in solving and handling conflicts in the region, in Sierra Leone, Liberia and elsewhere, is the uncontrolled flow of light firearms. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is now assisting the countries of this region in drawing up a moratorium on the export, import and manufacture of light firearms that, it is hoped, may eventually cover the whole of Africa.

In terms of political democratisation, West Africa as a region — with populous Nigeria as the foremost exception — is well ahead. Out of the sometimes chaotic national conferences that preceded party formation and elections in these countries, more specialised political parties have now begun to take shape in several places.

Owing to the country's distinctive status, both demographic and economic, the continued Nigerian crisis generates unrest throughout the region. Since its accession to power in 1993, the governing military junta has made itself known as ruthless, in both its domestic and its foreign policy. All leading opposition politicians and human-rights spokesmen have now been imprisoned or driven into exile, and the previously so outspoken press is subjected to regular harassment. Through its control of the country's rich oil deposits, the military can buy substantial support and influence, both within and outside the country — something the junta has also cleverly grasped how to use for sowing dissension among its critics. At the same time, Nigeria has periodically played a decisive role in solving conflicts and restoring democratic conditions in the region (in Liberia and now, most recently, in Sierra Leone). In this way, Nigeria seeks to justify its claims to represent not only West Africa but the whole continent in the international arena.

## 2.6 The Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa — Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia — has also long been characterised by problems connected with its national borders. A 30-year war fought between Ethiopians and Eritreans was settled in conjunction with the changes of government in Addis Ababa and Asmara in the spring of 1991. With Eritrea's independence, de facto in 1991 and de jure in 1993, a new state came into being by breaking away from an independent African nation for the first time since the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was formed. The decision was facilitated by Eritrea's historical background as an Italian colony and also (unlike Ethiopia) a British protectorate, but it nonetheless constituted a breach with the prevalent tendency in post-colonial African history.

After waging their long war of liberation without much support from abroad, the Eritrean leaders today are strongly characterised by self-reliance. With certain variations, this also applies to the new Ethiopian leaders, who also fought a long and isolated liberation struggle — in their case against the Mengistu regime. Although the need for external support is great in both countries, especially because of the long war, there is no doubt as to who is to define the conditions for provision of this support. Aid in the traditional sense is less interesting to these governments than trade and investments.

Immediately after the change of government in 1991, in an attempt to tackle the complex political and ethnic problems that have long constituted a source of conflicts in Ethiopia, the government embarked on a sweeping transformation of basic political, economic and administrative structures. This political project consisted in using regionalisation and decentralisation of power to convert the centrally

controlled state into a federation of ethnically more homogeneous regions. Within the latter framework, and with at least a theoretical option of seceding from the federation, each ethnic group is intended to be given an opportunity for self-government.

The results of this policy, which represented a highly controversial break with a modern African tradition of centralised rule, have included administrative disorder, reduced economic mobility and problems of uneven development in different parts of the country. To date, however, the basic commitment of creating a new basis for ethnic coexistence has been fulfilled and, at the same time, the policy has succeeded in safeguarding stability and economic growth. Violations of human rights have occurred, and the turbulence has been particularly marked on the country's periphery.

Eventually, it is conceivable that this Ethiopian model may have repercussions on conflict-solving in neighbouring Sudan and Somalia. Both these conflicts — which, incidentally, differ considerably — characteristically consist in clashes between ethnic groups or clans, and are partly a matter of contradictions between centralised rule and autonomy in various forms. The same problems may be found as latent sources of conflict in the intermediate mini-state of Djibouti. For the ethnic group or “nation” that has embarked on self-government within a country, it is not unnatural to see the possibility of joint self-government with kinsfolk on the other side of the inter-state border as the next step.

Although the clan feuds of Somalia exert a strong effect on the situation in neighbouring countries, it is nonetheless the Sudan conflict that currently poses the most formidable threat to peace and security in the region. The relationship between the regime in Khartoum and the neighbouring countries of Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda is very tense. The country is already, on the map, the venue for several geopolitical encounters, each of which bears the seeds of potential conflicts:

- ◆ the encounter between the northern, Arab part and the southern part of the continent, i.e. also that between Muslims and Christians;
- ◆ the strategic Red Sea location and link, via the Nile, with countries to the north, south and east;
- ◆ periodically unstable neighbours that have made Sudan, despite its own great poverty, one of the world's largest recipients of refugees in history.

Not only for Sudan, but also for Ethiopia, shared dependence on Nile water is a direct link with the north, i.e. Egypt. The strife that now prevails in the region makes it difficult at present to utilise the river's potential as a unifying link, although attempts are made at regular intervals to regulate water use by agreement and initiate co-operation in joint projects. The tension between Christians and Muslims further complicates the situation.

In general, this tension has not been particularly strong in sub-Saharan Africa. Instead, it makes itself felt above all in the regions where the religions meet (the Sudanese civil war being the clearest expression). Unlike parts of the Arab world, Islam in Africa has primarily spread not through wars of conquest but by means of trade. In Mauritania and Somalia, Islam is the state religion and almost 100% of the population are Muslims. Mauritania also belongs to the Arab Maghreb Union of North Africa, and Somalia to the Arab League. In West Africa, the Muslims are in a large majority in countries like Senegal, Guinea, Mali and Niger, while in Nigeria they make up roughly half and in Ethiopia and Tanzania slightly under half of the population. Large or small minority groups of Muslims may be found in every country in Central and Southern Africa.

Almost everywhere, Sufism is the dominant form of Islam and the message of the North African Islamists is normally regarded as a manifestation alien to the Arab mentality. In recent years, with the increasingly active Islamism in North Africa, fundamentalist currents have nevertheless grown stronger south of the Sahara as well.

Where political and economic co-operation is concerned, the North African countries have had their sights mainly on the countries around the Mediterranean, in the Middle East and the rest of Europe. African identity has its due significance in North Africa, as elsewhere. The actual development of ties with the South is nonetheless limited. In practice, the Sahara — once crucial for its transport routes between North and West Africa — constitutes an evident obstacle to economic integration. Like other pan-African organisations the OAU, however, provides a forum for all African countries (except Morocco, which withdrew from the OAU after the latter's decision to accept Western Sahara as a member).

#### 3.1 A new phase

The notion of democracy, even the version generally embraced by the West, does not lack roots in Africa. The ideal of freedom was no alien concept in the various traditional societies of the developing world, and the notion of democracy was central in the struggle for liberation that resulted in the independent nation-states of the present day. However, the focus was then on “power to the people”, rather than the individual’s freedom and democratic rights. It was a matter of liberation from the colonial power, development for the people, rather than of the individual's freedom and rights. In the light of the current situation at the time, this focus was entirely natural.

What Africans are undergoing today is a new phase of democratisation: a pursuit of liberation on the internal front through continued struggle for individual democratic freedoms and rights. With the exception of South Africa, which combined late liberation with early democratisation, this may be regarded as greatly delayed. During the post-liberation period, the process went into prolonged abeyance and sometimes fell back several steps, while many new states stagnated in one-party rule and the gaps between rulers and ruled widened once more. Leaders and administrators were replaced, but in practice the difference was perhaps smaller than had been hoped. To a large extent, hopes of material progress after liberation were also thwarted.

Since the stagnation of the 1970s, followed by what was largely a lost decade in the 1980s, democratisation has been propelled not only by pressure from aid donors but, even more, by domestic discontent with the state of affairs. And it is proceeding apace. In the years 1987-97, 22 African countries organised national elections with some kind of competition for the first time. Accordingly, a total of 38 — more than three-quarters — of the 48 sub-Saharan nations have now held such elections at national level and may be regarded as, in some sense, democratic.

The rapid pace of a process that in many cases exposes and intensifies antagonisms that have previously been more or less effectively swept under the carpet has not been entirely beneficial. In some countries the process has gone adrift, with disastrous consequences. The elections in Angola in 1992 and Burundi in 1993, for example, were followed by civil wars and large-scale massacres, since the losers could not bring themselves to accept the outcome. The democratic foundation proved shaky and the countries regressed, politically and economically, instead of making progress. In other countries, democratisation has become

mainly a façade behind which authoritarian regimes continue to act in more or less their accustomed manner.

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African debate on the nature of democracy has long been intense. In the EU too, for example, attempts are currently under way to define basic principles in the sphere of democracy that can serve as joint minimum requirements. These include the right to elect and replace political leaders; a clear division of powers between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary; guarantees for human and civil rights; and representation and protection for minority interests. It is a matter of designing systems for pluralism, with checks and balances, and adapting the structure of democracy to conditions in each country. In some cases, notably in countries with marginalised ethnic minorities and deep ethnic antagonisms, functioning multi-party cultures may be a distant prospect. The steps that need taking first relate to such factors as active conciliation policy, increased transparency, free mass media and more independent civil society.

### 3.2 More open societies

Although it is appropriate, in analysis as well as practical action, to separate issues of democratisation from respect for human rights, there is simultaneously a close and obvious connection between them in real-life development. Respect for human rights has increased in Africa over the past decade as more democratic forms of government have secured a foothold. For millions of Africans, this has entailed increased political freedom and scope for new forms of social engagement.

The boundaries of political life have thus been extended. The new freedom is manifested in a growing number of newspapers and other news media, which are opening the way for a lively discussion of political issues. A plethora of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) of widely differing kinds are making their contribution to building up the culture of democracy. Nor, in the various countries' trade unions, has there been any delay in using the new, successively expanding freedom of action to vitalise their work and strengthen their position.

In many countries, especially in West Africa, national conferences were convened in the early 1990s to prepare general elections. These also involved an overview of the countries' legislation, which resulted in reinforced legal protection for human rights. Many prisoners of conscience were released, as were others who had been imprisoned on political grounds. States of emergency were annulled and special courts abolished.

However, concessions were not infrequently followed by a repeated increase in repression. The use of short-term imprisonment of political opponents during an election campaign, often without prosecution or

trial, has been typical. In cases where prosecution has been initiated, the evidence has often proved insufficient for conviction. In several countries, the judicial system has developed substantial independence, although its capacity remains small.

With more open societies, an increasing number of public manifestations, such as strikes and demonstrations, have sometimes ensued. Here, too, progress followed by setbacks in the form of acts of cruelty and reprisals from the security forces, sometimes resulting in a high death toll, may be noted. In some cases, democratic processes have been interrupted by military coups that have brought severe and lasting setbacks in respect for human rights. When democratic processes have thus degenerated into armed conflicts, atrocities on a massive scale have taken place.

However, these cases make up a few exceptions to a general trend, which is towards greater openness and broader scope for the mass media and civil society. A favourable trend of this kind characterises most countries in Southern and Eastern Africa.

Another positive result of the political reform process has been increased accession to the international conventions on human rights. Today, 38 African nations have ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; at the beginning of 1990, only 23 had done so. The majority of African countries have also now signed the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the conventions on the elimination of racial discrimination and of all forms of discrimination against women; and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Eighteen African nations have submitted reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

At regional level, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights is an important normative document, ratified by a large number of African countries. Compliance is monitored by the African Commission on Human Rights, which is linked to the OAU. Far-reaching preparations have also been made to set up a court to try violations of the Charter.

Since 1969, the African nations have also been observing a more generous definition of the concept of refugee than that contained in the 1951 Refugee Convention. Over the years, the will to receive and give shelter to refugees, even in very poor African countries, has been self-evident in a manner quite different from that in the industrialised world. Only in recent years have counter-reactions begun to manifest themselves.

The fact that legal protection nonetheless remains so inadequate in many African nations is not only a political issue, but also a matter of the judicial system's limited capacity. Long periods in arrest, custody or prison, without sentence or trial, have resulted from this shortage of

capacity. In many countries, it is the task of prisoners' relatives to provide them with the bare necessities of life. All too often, prison conditions directly endanger the inmates' lives.

In addition, cruel or degrading treatment is very common. One particularly serious problem is the incidence of torture, which is reported from numerous countries. The African governments' desire to eliminate this practice has proved limited, and there is less support for the convention against torture than for the other human-rights conventions.

The great majority of African countries also retain capital punishment. South Africa has been one of the exceptions since the new constitutional court declared the death penalty irreconcilable with the country's constitution. In many countries, however, courts continue to pronounce death sentences, although a decline in the number of executions has been discernible in recent years.

### 3.3 Peace processes and conflicts

Shortcomings in terms of respect for human rights are closely connected with the incidence of armed conflicts. Since it has been possible to turn several conflicts into peace processes during the 1990s, respect for human worth has increased to a corresponding degree. Development in Uganda, for example, amply illustrates the link between peaceful conditions and scope for upholding protection of human rights. Two major milestones have been Namibian independence in 1990 and the dissolution of apartheid in South Africa, which ended systematic, legal discrimination on the grounds of skin colour.

Nonetheless, new conflicts have broken out and given rise to new acts of terrorism and disregard of humanitarian law. Three of the continent's largest and most populous countries — Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan — are currently characterised by a human-rights situation that is precarious to a varying degree. Although successive stabilisation of Congo may possibly be discernible, this hardly relates to the other two countries.

One particular problem in Central Africa, after the region's experience of the UN during the past few years' human tragedies and major upheavals, is deficient respect for and an unwillingness to co-operate with this world organisation, especially in the sphere of human rights. These problems spill over into other important spheres in which the UN is active, such as measures to promote dialogue and prevent conflict, and also humanitarian activity and development co-operation. Diplomatic efforts to regain confidence, combined with material support for reconstruction of shattered societies, will be required to

reverse this trend and prevent the growing isolation of some key African countries from the surrounding world. Skr. 1997/98:122

These and various other African countries are in a phase of coming to terms with a traumatic or odious past. The methods adopted to tackle this phase vary widely. In South Africa, the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is a purposeful and interesting attempt to shed light on wrongs committed and, at the same time, make peace with the past. Identifying the truth is intended to bring about reconciliation, in a kind of cathartic process. For many victims of apartheid or their relatives, however — those awaiting redress and wishing to see the guilty sentenced in court — the method is by no means problem-free.

In Ethiopia, another approach has been chosen. There, the focus is on justice and punishment, and more than 1,000 people have been jailed for crimes against human rights under the Mengistu regime. However, the inadequate judicial system lacks the capacity to deal effectively with these mass trials, and most of those charged have therefore been in prison for years without their cases being tried.

In Rwanda, the number of people imprisoned in inhuman circumstances following the genocide of 1994 is close to 130,000, while an international court is slowly embarking on the prosecution of those responsible. The people of Mozambique, on the other hand, appear ready to welcome the end of the war without demanding trials, punishments or special conciliation measures. Their top priorities are reconstruction and a return to peaceful development after a long and trying war.

### 3.4 Tradition versus modernism

The historical legacy and African traditions have a distinct importance for both the opportunities and the difficulties in the democratisation process. Hierarchies and hierarchic thinking still prevail in many places. Clans and other forms of collective often have a very strong position. The influence of the tribal-chief system has not disappeared. Nonetheless, there are positive starting points for modern, democratic thinking in, for example, traditionally strong principles of power-sharing and decision-making with consensus. In summary, throughout Africa there is tension between the modern and the traditional that finds multifaceted expression and exerts influence at several different levels, in ways that are not always evident to the external observer. Conflicts of interest of the kind that drive political parties in western democracies seldom exist, other than among a very limited portion of the electorate.

Thus, indigenous democrats are needed to democratise Africa — often products of politically and economically liberated civil society that is still very weak in many places. New democratic statutes also assume

greater vital force if they are drawn up in a democratic process, rather than pushed through as an adoption of existing models, often from former colonial powers. For example, taking over the manner in which the British electoral system favours the biggest party (“winner takes all”, or “first past the post”, as it is often characterised) has contributed to restriction of the opposition’s chances — something that may have explosive consequences in an ethnically polarised setting. The tendency to perceive electoral campaigns as meaningless may thereby have been reinforced. The African tradition of consensus and difficulties in financing political activities are additional factors that make it problematical for the opposition to find its own role. When this role is eroded, however, the balance between executive, legislature and judiciary is also disturbed in favour of the executive, at the expense of genuine democracy.

In a pluralist structure, and where the emergence of democracy is concerned, civil society plays a central role. It is now growing rapidly in many African countries. Interest groups organise themselves, political and social issues are discussed in a new and more open way, newspapers are started and printed matter is distributed. Nevertheless, the picture is not free from problems: organised interests of an undemocratic nature also appear in it. Non-governmental organisations are not infrequently formed to attract foreign aid. Generally, however, increased pluralism and pressure from below are important factors in strengthening democratic forces, both in society at large and in the government.

One particular problem of democratic legitimacy lies in certain African countries’ heavy dependence on the surrounding world, owing to their debt burden and the flow of aid. Their governments secure the economic basis for their exercise of power not primarily through electors and elected representatives approving public taxation but rather, in practice, through agreements with international players such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Paris Club for renegotiation of public loans, and bilateral donors. Nonetheless, their agreements stipulate conditions that, to be fulfilled, require important political decisions for which it is seldom easy to secure popular backing.

In many cases, however, even with a more smoothly functioning state, central control of ethnically multifaceted African states that originated without reference to geopolitical realities appears highly problematical. History provides several examples of how attempts to establish at any cost a central power widely perceived as artificial has resulted in enormous human suffering in protracted and brutal civil wars. Attempts are now under way, in Ethiopia and elsewhere, to decentralise power to the regional level within the country. If these attempts are successful, they may lead to new supranational forms of organisation that transcend national borders and create new, more appropriate political and economic communities.

Conflicts in Africa that are fought according to ethnic dividing lines have been given a high profile in the mass media, and this tends to obscure the fact that, in the majority of countries, various peoples — sometimes with widely disparate languages and traditions — have found forms of coexistence and co-operation. The power-sharing system introduced in South Africa is, to western observers, one striking example; but it is by no means unique in the continent. In the quest for models of how ethnic and cultural diversity can be managed, Africa offers good examples as well. And this perspective, too, should be included in a broadened view of democratic issues in Africa.

### 3.5 Gender equality

Equality between women and men — that is, their enjoyment of equal rights, obligations and opportunities — is fundamental to a democratic social system and equitable, effective development. Just as in Sweden, African governments have made international commitments, at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 and elsewhere, as well as in their national plans and strategies, to work for men and women to be able to participate on equal terms in the work of building a democratic society.

The equality perspective is intended to permeate all efforts to analyse and make proposals concerning, for example, what a living democracy entails. The discussion must not avoid central issues relating to women's power. A workable democracy rests on institutions in which both women and men are involved and active. Accordingly, the equality perspective is relevant to assessments of electoral systems, election candidacy and political parties' activity, as well as to analyses of the structure of a state subject to the rule of law.

South Africa is well ahead in terms of placing women's interests on the political agenda. The Government has initiated a gender-equality analysis of the country's constitution as well as the public-sector budget. The analysis shows, for example, the need for political action to tackle the problem of women's limited rights of land ownership and inheritance, and their concomitantly reduced scope for obtaining credit and investing in agriculture. This problem — common to most sub-Saharan nations — indicates the importance of bringing more women into decision-making bodies, as a way of ensuring that women's rights and interests affect the political agenda and are taken into consideration on the same terms as men's.

Another positive example comes from Uganda, where the government has resolved to deal with the structural causes of the feminisation of poverty. Strategies of poverty alleviation have also been reviewed in terms of both women's and men's needs regarding, for example,

statutory rights, land ownership and control, access to credit and education, technology and mechanisation.

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Women's organised involvement is crucially important to the future of equality in Africa — and, accordingly, to democratic development and poverty alleviation. The increasingly active organisational work that is now in progress at national as well as local level, in various development projects, is one of the most promising phenomena in contemporary African politics and development.

### 3.6 Good governance

In recent years, the notion of good governance has assumed a central position in discussions of Africa's democratisation. It encompasses both the political will to create more open and democratic societies (the direction of travel) and criteria for how power is actually to be exercised in defined circumstances (the point of departure). Good governance is characterised by institutions and processes based on the principles of the rule of law, respect for human rights, democracy and broad social participation, and permeated by responsibility, openness, integrity and effectiveness. With good governance, democratic culture is promoted with broad popular participation in political life, which is decisive for the consolidation and further development of democracy. Democratisation is propelled from both below and above, in an interplay between civil society and the state.

Transparency and public control are central features of good governance, and bring into focus such matters as freedom of expression and the press. Broad participation in community activities is another fundamental factor, one implication of which is the importance of women's participation in governing functions. Good governance also includes an effort to reduce gaps between urban and rural areas. If conditions in the countryside are not permitted to lag behind, and if farmers are not exploited as an underpaid source of the urban political and economic class's means of subsistence, the uncontrolled proliferation of shanty towns that has taken place around many large African cities is simultaneously discouraged.

Another obstacle to good governance has been the very far-reaching role that the state assumed after independence, without possessing the corresponding capacity. In recent years this role has shrunk considerably, but the gap between commitments and resources is tending to persist. Gradually building up the competence and legitimacy of the state within its enduring key functions (law and order, basic social functions, regulatory roles) is a crucial task for the future of democracy. Without effective rule of law, a viable civil society can hardly emerge.

A non-functioning state has difficulty in establishing its legitimacy among the population, which may result in people preferring to collaborate with alternative power structures. An uncontrolled state — with no public control, no obstacles to the abuse of power and no transparency — also, like an uncontrolled market, easily falls victim to strong vested interests. Populism, short-sightedness and vested interests may undeniably be found in democratic forms of government, but democracy, the rule of law and free trade are means of counteracting interest groups' take-over of the state.

One way of bringing about increased participation at local level is decentralisation. To become efficient, decentralisation requires satisfactory functioning of administration at central and local level alike, and also for local bodies to have adequate resources. In addition, the division of responsibility between the central and local level must be clear and the local bodies must also have genuine authority to take decisions of their own.

### 3.7 Corruption: the scourge of democracy

Corruption and nepotism have played a destructive role in the central government of many an African country. Deficient state legitimacy, authoritarian forms of government and the existence of parallel power structures (for example, in the state-supporting party) are a few of the factors that have caused widespread corruption. The high level of corruption in several African societies is an obstacle on the road to liberalisation. At the same time, corruption may also increase in the wake of economic liberalisation, for example in the struggle for power over enterprises that are privatised.

The nature of African economies, the weakness of public institutions and the social relations in traditional, as well as modern, society contribute to an environment that is vulnerable to corruption. In the transition phase to the market economy, moreover, the risk of corruption may also increase. Here, a policy that is both socially responsible and directly aimed at corruption is required.

The erosion of the value of earnings that has ensued from both crises and reform programmes have exacerbated corruption. So, too, has the fact that responsibility for the welfare of the extended family or kinsmen is, in many traditional societies, a very strong moral obligation. In the work of strengthening public administration, one element should thus be to find forms of organisation and pay structures that counteract these forces. Public control of banking systems and clearer and more efficient transfer and tax systems exemplify means of achieving a favourable impact.

Corruption is not an inevitable consequence of poverty and resource scarcity. Rather, it is a result of political and economic cultures in which unethical incentives and greed are given great scope. Although corruption is by no means a specifically African problem, its harmful effects are extensive in weak economies and structures. Large-scale corruption associated with internal or international economic transactions may, for example, have particularly serious consequences. Every risk of a connection between aid and corruption must be precluded.

One important measure for preventing corruption is to make it punishable for companies to pay bribes. Sweden has been a driving force in international co-operation to criminalize bribery and require businesses to commit themselves to staying clean — a code of conduct. One major success in this work was achieved in December 1997, when 34 countries (in and outside the OECD) signed an OECD convention of which one provision was to make bribing foreign officials and employees punishable. The agreement is to enter into force on 31 December 1998.

Counteracting corruption effectively requires, at the same time, powerful leaders in the recipient country that is suffering from corruption — leaders capable of going from words to action when it comes to bringing to justice corrupt people in power. Greater openness, freer debate and more independent and active mass media are important factors in this context.

## 4 Growth, poor people's productivity and social justice

### 4.1 Doubling the growth rate

Over the past few years, economic growth in Africa has averaged 4-5%. This represents great progress compared with the trend in the 1970s and '80s, but is insufficient to reduce poverty. A growth rate of 5-8% is the estimated precondition for a reduction in the number of poor people. These are average figures, covering years of poor harvests and other unexpected disturbances. Doubling the growth rate is therefore a crucial ambition if living standards among the poor are to be raised on a lasting basis.

Faster growth is necessary but not sufficient to alleviate poverty. Governments must also deliberately promote social development and actively support groups and regions that are not directly and naturally favoured by the economic growth that is taking place.

## **Recovery**

Clearly, economic trends in Africa since 1994 have been better than at any time in the past few decades. Although differences between countries naturally exist, it is important to note that the upturn appears to be a general phenomenon. While there was economic decline in the early 1990s in 15 of the 47 sub-Saharan countries, the number with production decreases in 1996 had fallen to four, and according to preliminary figures only one country had negative growth in 1997. Average growth in 1994-97 was 3.8%, which corresponds to a roughly 1% increase per capita. Countries in the West African monetary union (CFA or “franc zone”) showed a particularly buoyant trend after their sharp devaluation in 1994.

Accordingly, it appears that economic reforms are now beginning to have an effect and that the prospects for a period of sustainable growth are relatively good. In most countries, too, there is an understanding of what is economically feasible and a definite will to work within existing constraints.

At the same time, it must be emphasised that the African countries are highly vulnerable — to climatic factors, fluctuations in world-market prices and other changes in the global environment, as well as to internal conflicts. To bring about a lasting reduction in poverty, a substantially higher growth rate than that of the past few years is also needed in most countries, as well as a pattern of growth and an income-distribution policy which guarantee that economic progress will genuinely benefit the poor and not exclude large segments of the population from the growth process.

Increased private investments and a heavier inflow of long-term private capital from abroad are also necessary in order for the new opportunities to be utilised. Many African countries still have a long way to go in facilitating domestic and foreign investment and phasing out residual trade barriers. Regional integration can play an important role in attracting foreign capital and creating a basis for stable economies — provided that it is aimed at boosting capacity and at managing and utilising the current globalisation process, and not at protectionism and isolationism.

## **Continued reform policy**

Overall and in a global perspective, the post-colonial trend in sub-Saharan Africa has been one of these countries lagging ever further behind economically. In the roughly 30 years of independence to date, no mean increase in per capita production has taken place. In real terms,

the average economic level is the same as in the mid-1960s. This statistical mean includes major variations, however — upturns in many countries in the 1960s and '70s, followed by general recession in the 1980s. All in all, this performance is greatly inferior to trends in other parts of the world. One consistent difficulty in the assessment of African economic trends is, however, the inadequacy of the figures. Regarding aggregate assessments of continental development, there is also the problem that variations between, as well as within, countries are very marked. The distribution of resources and incomes is more uneven here than anywhere else in the world with the exception of Latin America — an inequality that appears to have become even more pronounced over the past decade.

A closer look at the picture also reveals that the countries diverge very widely between themselves. In a number of countries, such as Seychelles, Mauritius, Lesotho and Botswana, growth has been very high: some 150% in the period 1965-94. Other nations, such as Malawi, Tanzania and Nigeria, remain at roughly the same level as 30 years ago, while still others — including Zaire/Congo and Zambia — show a decline of roughly 50% during the same period.

There were both external and internal causes of Africa's economic crisis. Many countries were hit hard by the oil-price increases of the 1970s, but perhaps even more by the ample supply of commercial credit. Towards the end of the 1970s, they were confronted by raised interest rates, a stronger dollar, reduced demand and falling prices for their export products. Lenders refused to advance new loans to these countries, which suddenly found themselves in the throes of the debt crisis.

But it was the internal factors that paved the way for the crisis, slowed down production trends and made these countries more vulnerable to external factors. In most, the governments persisted in expanding state investments in industry and the physical and social infrastructure without taking into account either efficiency or future scope for operating and maintaining this capacity. Another contributory factor was that the regulatory function of the price mechanism was eliminated by extensive trade barriers, subsidies and other state intervention. In certain countries, this went so far that the very foundation of the market economy and private ownership were entirely undermined, when these preconditions had in fact always been weak and needed consolidating instead. Smallholders, who made up the majority of the population, were subjected to political experiments while resources were devoted to large-scale projects in industry and agriculture that eventually failed.

The turning point for this misdirected policy came in the mid-1980s. Many of the political leaders whose roots were in the struggle for liberation from colonial rule long tried to disregard the warning signals. What decisively brought the issue home was pressure from outside,

through the debt crisis and ensuing programmes of structural adjustment, combined with growing domestic discontent that the expectations of material improvements associated with independence were never fulfilled.

The structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) have come to play a crucial role in most African countries. Although the programmes are as yet incomplete and have been marred, especially at first, by severe shortcomings, it is clear that they brought about a dramatic improvement in the preconditions for development and poverty alleviation. This took place after great difficulties in the initial phase: GDP per capita decreased by 1.1% annually in the period 1980-85, 0.4% in 1985-90 and 1.2% in 1990-93. The number of poor people is estimated to have risen by 40 million between 1987 and 1993, i.e. the years in which the SAPs were being most assiduously implemented in Africa.

Only in the past few years, 1993-96, has an upturn been achieved and GDP per capita begun to rise, for the first time since 1970, albeit only by some 1% a year on average. After massive criticism during the worst years, which indeed resulted in modifications of the SAPs, there are not many people today who question the necessity of the structural reforms. It is now mainly changes in design and application that are discussed. The issues are how and when, not whether, the programmes should be implemented. This does not mean that it will be plain sailing from now on. On the contrary, many countries have now entered into a considerably more difficult phase of structural adjustment — or, perhaps, structural transformation. This must be implemented on the basis of each country's particular capacity. But even within a country, preconditions vary. To succeed with the reforms and achieve a sustainable rise in production, institutional and sociocultural factors at micro level must be taken into account — notably the disparate circumstances of women and men. Knowledge of what is called for at this level to attain high economic growth is still very limited, and even where this knowledge exists it is not always allowed to affect the nature of the reform process. It is clear that many mistakes in the design of previous SAPs — and also discontent among the countries' populations — could have been avoided if the programmes had, to a higher degree, been the outcome of domestically governed processes and decisions enjoying broad popular support.

In many African nations, the foundations have now been laid for far better development than in the past few decades. The "first-generation reforms" are often said to have been carried out. This phrase refers to a policy aimed at low inflation, realistic exchange rates, functioning domestic markets and promotion of exports and private investments. Preconditions for a market economy have been created. The big challenge now is to continue the reform process and create dynamic

market economies capable of bringing about economic and social development that is sustainable in the long term.

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Success in this endeavour requires, above all:

- ◆ a domestically and democratically controlled process of change, with the aim and capacity of implementing a sound, stable and long-term economic policy involving in-depth structural reforms that generate confidence among domestic and foreign investors;
- ◆ vigorously and consistently giving priority to social development and poverty reduction;
- ◆ an education system capable of delivering the relevant skills at various levels;
- ◆ reinforced domestic administrative capacity and strong, effective institutions;
- ◆ “social capital”, i.e. a smoothly functioning social structure, solidarity, confidence and transparency.

### **Utilising domestic resources**

In the 1970s, with self-reliance and self-sufficiency as their guiding stars, many African countries built up a massive industrial sector, oriented towards domestic markets whose strength was grossly overestimated. This entailed a waste of state capital as well as aid resources, while private investments were pushed aside, to the detriment of growth as well as income distribution. Through the SAPs, protection of and subsidies for this sector have been successively reduced, resulting in large-scale business closures. No new, efficient and export-oriented industrial sector has yet superseded the old. What, on the other hand, may be observed in many countries is a continuing rapid expansion of the informal sector.

Private investments to date have been relatively limited. The cutbacks in state investments that have taken place within the framework of the SAPs have not resulted in a corresponding increase in private investments, despite the improved preconditions generated. At the same time, the decreased state investments, in the infrastructure for example, have as such had an adverse impact on the private sector.

Domestic saving is low in Africa — 14% of GDP on average, but lower and even negative in many countries and showing a declining tendency in the 1980s. In many countries, such as Tanzania and Zambia, saving has plummeted while aid has soared to a corresponding degree. One factor

is reduced state saving, owing both to the sharply increasing debt burden and to deficient control over the budget, with deficits as a result.

Regarding private saving, however, the figures are misleading: part of private saving is also channelled via the informal sector and never reflected in any statistics. A development of the financial sector, so that it is extended to small savers and rural borrowers as well could mobilise substantial resources.

The informal sector is, by definition, unregistered and therefore difficult to appraise. Nevertheless, it is clear that its expansion makes the picture of Africa's economy provided by official national accounts an exaggeratedly negative one. The dynamism of the informal sector, which has been very marked in the 1980s and '90s, is seldom reflected in the statistics. In some cases, the figures probably need revising upwards by as much as 50%. In many cases, this sector encompasses the initiative and entrepreneurship that is lacking in the national African economies.

Simultaneously, the informal sector should not be glossed over.

Although — owing to its small-scale, labour-intensive and dynamic nature — it helps to generate employment, it not infrequently amounts to barely masked destitution. The lack of alternative subsistence options is a central driving force. Since it is frequently illegal, the informal sector makes no contribution to tax collection. The challenge consists in formalising this activity without its economic dynamism being lost.

## **Agriculture**

The most important sector in almost all African countries is agriculture, and Africa's crisis is largely one of African farming. Stagnation set in back in the 1970s, since when production has increased slightly more slowly than the population. This is serious not only from the viewpoint of growth and in relation to the food supply, but also even more from a poverty perspective, since agriculture is the sector that most directly affects the situation of the poorest people.

Reforms within the SAPs have been designed to favour the farming sector in general, through raised producer prices and liberalisation of distribution and marketing. Despite a real increase in the price level, the effects on the supply side have nonetheless been limited to date. This may, in part, suggest that the price rise has primarily benefited state marketing bodies and private grain dealers.

However, the programmes have disregarded a range of aspects, including how the reforms affect the situation of women. Although women account for a very large share of African farm production, the SAPs have not been adapted to women's circumstances in terms of power, resources, working hours and economic preferences. Women

seldom possess title to the land, which means that they seldom obtain credits and make few investments in agriculture.

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The key to development in Africa is smallholders, of whom the majority are women. But neither centrally controlled development programmes or liberalisation and price incentives alone suffice to start the process. First and foremost, African politicians as well as donors must realise that disparities in Africa — between different countries and within a particular country — are very large. There are sharp differences in soil quality and climate, as well as in institutional and sociocultural conditions. Development programmes and reforms must be based on local conditions and allow the women and men concerned to take part in drawing them up. This also, of course, includes taking environmental sustainability into account.

The African population's livelihood often depends on a large number of sources, such as home-grown produce, cattle, handicrafts, petty trading and contributions from relatives. A family's broader social network has far greater importance for the individual's subsistence than it does in the West. If the network is disrupted without being replaced by anything else, people's situation deteriorates, and their insecurity and vulnerability increase. Sustainable poverty alleviation must be based on these conditions and enhance the prospects of individuals and networks being capable of making a better living.

## 4.2 Utilising global resources

### **Underutilised trading capacity**

While world trade expanded by 111% and the developing countries' foreign trade by 129% between 1980 and 1994, Africa's trade decreased by 7%. At the beginning of the 1980s Africa's share of world trade was 2.5%, while today it is below 1%. As a proportion of GDP, too, Africa's foreign trade — unlike that of all the other continents — has shrunk ever since the 1960s.

Africa's diminishing share of world trade is due primarily to internal factors that prevent effective utilisation of the potential available. These factors coincide with the ones that explain slow economic growth, and are a matter of fiscal and trade policy, infrastructure, human and social capital, institutions and legal regulations. The impact of the policy conducted immediately after independence often amounted to direct discrimination against foreign trade — exports and imports alike — and much of this impact persists. At the same time, most countries have shown rigid export structures and an absence of product processing. Although liberalisation and enhanced transparency are a self-evident part of the current reform process, there is disagreement as to how rapidly

this should be implemented. Africa maintains a higher degree of protectionism than the rest of the world — protectionism due more to administrative prohibitions, regulations and bottlenecks than to high customs duties. A phase-out of duties, for example, is impeded by the fact that — in the absence of generally efficient tax collection — they also serve as an important source of income for the state.

Africans, for their part, often emphasise trade barriers on industrialised nations' markets. For certain agricultural products, market regulations and high duties are, admittedly, genuine obstacles to developing countries' exports. Developing countries as a whole would gain a great deal from deregulation of the European agricultural market. Nevertheless, this provides no comprehensive explanation for Africa's weaknesses in the trade sector. Although the Lomé Convention gave African exporters exemption from duty on all industrial goods imported by the EU, their share of the EU market has fallen.

With its economic potential Africa is widely considered, in a global perspective, to be an underutilised market for both trade and investments. Increased financial inputs from countries like France and the USA add to this picture. Growing interest in regional co-operative efforts in the economic sphere, for example in SADC and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), will also increase the interchange of goods and investments at regional level in the long term, thereby helping to speed up economic development in the countries concerned.

### **Foreign investments**

Ever since the debt crisis, the flow of international capital to Africa has been entirely dominated by aid. Here too, however, an upturn has been noted over the past few years. From having received only a negligible share of private international capital flows, which have increased sharply during the 1990s, Africa now receives just over 4%, i.e. a considerably larger share than that of global trade. However, the flow of private capital still makes up only 25% of the total flow of net resources, while the remainder consists of donation aid and public-sector loans. It should also be emphasised that direct investments are concentrated in just a few countries. True, the traditional investments in raw-material extraction predominate; but vigorous expansion has also taken place in both the service sector and goods-producing industry. In the past few years, Asian investors have shown keener interest in Africa.

Another reason for the increased inflow of private capital is the privatisation of formerly state-owned enterprises that were implemented within the framework of the SAPs. The crucial determinant of whether this will have positive effects in the long term is the African nations' policy henceforward. Strength and credibility are

required, both to attract an enduring capital flow and to utilise it for broad economic development. Another precondition is, of course, that African nation-states can acquire the capacity they need to manage international capital movements.

One encouraging aspect of the flow of capital to Africa is that it appears to be a consequence of the course of events in the continent, rather than of external factors. The primary cause is improved macroeconomic stability in certain countries. The flow is, moreover, dominated by direct investments, while private loans and portfolio investments (except in South Africa) play a less prominent role. Much of the money probably consists of returning flight capital. Provided the reform policy is upheld, this bodes well for flow stability.

Boosting Africa's growth rate to higher levels requires a high saving rate and heavier investments. It is in every country's interest to achieve this. It is important for there to be consistency between different policy areas. Co-ordinated conduct in various international organisations should help to ensure that favourable economic development in Africa is bolstered by large and lasting capital flows.

### **The unsustainable debt burden**

One factor that has both hindered the implementation of the reform programmes and worked against the sustainability of reforms carried out is the growing burden of debt. Altogether, Africa's debt burden has risen from some 30% of GDP in the 1970s to around 140% in the 1990s. The debt overhang is now, on average, larger than for all other continents and, in contrast to Asia and Latin America, the increase has continued in the 1990s as well. Actual debt servicing in relation to exports (the "debt-service ratio"), on the other hand, has decreased from roughly 25% in the mid-1980s to about 15% today, which is considerably lower than the average for South Asia or Latin America.

Focusing solely on the poorest and most debt-burdened countries, however, reveals the opposite trend: the debt-service ratio has risen in the 1990s as well. Despite debt renegotiations within the framework of the Paris Club, these countries devote some 20% of their export income to this purpose. In relation to state revenues, the debt burden looks even more serious: in numerous African countries, more than 50% of state revenues go to debt servicing (both externally and internally). In this situation, the balanced economic policy required to turn the situation around is made more difficult to achieve. These countries have fallen into the "debt trap".

The problem of debt has resulted in successively more extensive measures to alleviate the situation of the worst-affected countries. These efforts must continue and be intensified. Most recently, the

World Bank and IMF have devised the HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) Initiative to bring about a sustainable debt situation for the poorest countries. The basic idea of this programme is for all these countries, after analysis of their specific current and future situation and after a number of years' implementation of economic reform programmes, to be granted relief of their overall debt so that they can thereafter manage their debt situation with funds of their own. The first country to be covered is Uganda, which will be granted debt relief under the initiative during 1998.

It is essential to emphasise that HIPC is just a platform — albeit an important one since, in principle, it enjoys the support of all the world's countries — and that additional measures must be implemented on this basis. The poorest countries' debt situation must be carefully monitored for many years to come, and rich countries must be prepared to take special measures to prevent countries that have embarked on the HIPC process from relapsing into the debt trap. Getting out of the trap is possible. With exceptional efforts on the part of the debt-burdened countries, the international organisations and the donors we shall be able, by the year 2000, to see more and more countries leaving this bleak chapter in Africa's history behind them.

### **The importance of aid**

The prospects of African countries being able to mobilise their domestic resources better, and also receive foreign private capital on a larger scale, have improved. Nonetheless, it must also be emphasised that aid has far from played out its role in Africa. On the contrary, over the decades ahead aid will play a more important role than before. But for aid to make a positive contribution to Africa's development, lessons need to be drawn from the extensive experience of both successful and unsuccessful aid to date.

The relative importance of aid in Africa increased sharply in the 1980s. The aid-financed share of Africa's imports doubled from around 20% in the 1970s to some 40% in the early 1990s. The disparities between countries are great. In some, more than half of public spending is funded by aid. This is, of course, neither desirable nor tenable in the long term. However, the basic problem is not the extent of aid but the distorting effects it may have on resource distribution, social structure and behaviour patterns in the recipient country. This is what mainly constitutes negative aid dependency, which may be observed in several African countries.

Ever since development co-operation was initiated, the point of departure has been that poor countries suffer from resource scarcity. A resource increment boosts productivity and contributes to an increase in

growth. This was the rationale of Marshall Aid. In the poorest countries, naturally enough, it is the most urgent social needs that have been observed: the lack of schools, health-care services, clean water and so forth. Satisfying these needs was regarded as the function of aid. At worst, this created a situation in which governments became accustomed to regarding basic social investments as the donors' responsibility.

Aid evidently has a beneficial impact on growth and poverty reduction in countries that conduct a sound macroeconomic policy, but no effect or an adverse impact where such a policy is lacking. Aid should, of course, have the aforesaid beneficial impact as its purpose, and not be influenced by other donor-oriented interests. Several studies, including a major research project to study the effectiveness of aid in a number of African countries, and also a still unfinished project under way in the World Bank's research unit, have demonstrated this connection. This applies not only to macroeconomic support (such as balance-of-payments support), but just as much to project support. Another, hardly surprising conclusion is that the prospects of aid having a beneficial impact are best in countries with a good capacity to administer resources.

Aid still consists largely of individual projects, and the co-ordination between donors is inadequate. A partnership based on shared values, clear conditions and co-ordination under the management of the recipient country is therefore necessary. The partnership approach must concentrate on countries that provide the basic macroeconomic preconditions for efficient aid. The forms of aid must be adapted to the country's administrative capacity. Where this is satisfactory, aid should mainly take the form of support for items or programmes in the country's government budget. Where capacity is weak, aid should be supplemented by direct support for building of domestic capacity.

To implement this, the most crucial requirement is aid co-ordination. Genuine co-ordination means that all donors must question and change their own methods. But co-ordination, openness and readiness to subordinate oneself to the recipient country's plans and procedures are still not high on the agenda in several aid bodies. On the contrary, the donor organisation and its procedures are often given precedence. Problems of co-ordination are thus a challenge to donors, and must result in major changes in their organisation and thinking.

It must be emphasised that it is particularly important for countries undergoing transformation to receive, during a transition phase, large-scale and diverse aid. The scarcity of domestic resources, heavy indebtedness (often as a result of previous regimes' policies) and the necessity of having results to show the population prompt particular efforts on the part of the international community in such a phase. After years of evaluations, it is clear that aid is an effective instrument in

supporting poverty reduction. For the poorest countries, aid is often an important source of the capital and know-how required to push these countries onto a development path based on resources of their own, economic integration and a modern version of self-reliance.

### 4.3 Liberation from poverty

As mentioned, the countries of sub-Saharan Africa have been able to note raised real incomes over the past four years. However, owing to the structure of growth and the increasing population, this favourable trend has not yet entailed any palpable decrease in financial poverty. On the basis of traditional economic criteria, the World Bank estimates that roughly half the population of sub-Saharan Africa today are below the poverty line; and UNDP defines some 40% of the population as “income-poor”. Nevertheless, major variations are masked in these figures. Although different surveys of poverty have yielded disparate results, depending on definition and measuring methods, the poor may be said generally to have improved their lot in a number of African countries (including Botswana, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Cape Verde, Tanzania and Uganda). Income gaps in many countries, however, remain wide, despite this growth increase. In general, poverty is still concentrated in the countryside, although it is increasing in urban areas.

In global terms, population growth has slowly begun to slacken, but this does not yet apply to sub-Saharan Africa. Improved living conditions and preventive health care have brought about longer life expectancy, while the high birth rate has persisted to date. The latest report from the UN population division, however, registers a decline in fertility in certain countries — in Kenya, for example, from 7.5 to 5.4 children per woman over the past ten-year period.

In 1995 the population of sub-Saharan Africa was around 560 million, and the mean rate of increase was an estimated 2.9% p.a. Population growth is lowest in Southern Africa and highest in Central Africa. The fact that this trend appears to be heading for reversal is thought to indicate that Africa will henceforth follow the same pattern as the rest of the world, i.e. that general improvements in living standards and better education are crucial checks on the population increase. Only if a balance between population growth and resource expansion can be attained can lasting economic development take place.

Economic growth is a prerequisite for a reduction in poverty. There are no examples of countries that have been able to reduce poverty over a long period without strong economic growth. Social development, too, is a precondition for long-term growth.

## Education and health

Considerable improvements have taken place in the education and health-care sectors over the past 30 years, despite the slowdown that was widely imposed by the economic crisis of the 1980s. According to current household surveys, it is simultaneously evident that women's and girls' access to social services is still substantially inferior to that of men and boys.

The role of education in a society's development can hardly be overestimated. The African education system developed well after the independence wave of the 1960s and '70s, with increased investments in primary education in particular. Higher education maintained an acceptable standard. But the recession of the 1980s prompted many governments to cut their education budgets, and standards were lowered. The consequences nevertheless widely appear to have been less serious than might have been expected. Trends of literacy and other basic skills have been upward in Africa over the past 30 years; in 1970, an estimated 30% of Africa's population were literate, and by 1993 the corresponding figure was 57%. However, the geographical disparities are considerable. The same applies to differences between the sexes: the educational level attained by girls is substantially below the boys' level. Admission at elementary-school level varies from 20% to 80%, and the rate is consistently lower for girls.

Since increased education for women is expected to result in lower fertility, better nutritional standards for children, improved health and raised productivity in small-scale farming, women are the key to African societies' capacity to achieve sustainable development.

Problems in African countries' education systems vary, but the overriding issue is quality versus quantity. The principal focus is still on increased basic education. One credible assessment is that boosting Africa's capacity to control its own processes of change and improve welfare for the majority of the people requires a combination of factors: that a higher proportion of public spending should go to education that is cost-effective and reaches broad groups in the population, with enhanced quality and relevance in the actual teaching.

In most African countries, financial skills — in terms of economic policy as well as business — are in short supply, as are engineers and people with technical training. In most places, higher education is still strongly characterised by the education systems of the former colonial powers, and adapted neither to local needs nor to the prevailing characteristics of global competition.

The health situation is closely connected with such factors as food and water supply, sanitary conditions and educational level, which in turn — like population trends — depend on a society's general welfare, production capacity and income distribution. Many of the most

important health indicators point to an improvement in the situation in Africa over the past few decades. Mean life expectancy rose from 40 to 51 years between 1960 and 1993, while mortality among children under a year old fell from 167 to 97 per 1,000 births. Between 1980 and 1995, for example, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Senegal and Zimbabwe were able to reduce their infant mortality sharply although incomes decreased during the same period. Another important factor is the water supply: in the period 1975-80, only 25% of Africans had access to clean water, but by 1990-95 this proportion had risen to 43%.

However, like social parameters generally, public health shows sharp variations between and within countries and is, by international standards, poor. The fact that the institutional side, such as the crucial primary-care sector, is still underdimensioned — only some 50% of the population has access to health services — is another cause for concern, although substantial improvements have been made in many places.

One very serious problem in the health sector is the spread of HIV/AIDS. Of the world's just over 30 million carriers of HIV, as many as an estimated 20 million are in sub-Saharan Africa. Southern Africa is the area where the HIV/AIDS epidemic is growing most rapidly. In countries like Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe, more than 20% of the adult population may be infected. These figures, which were presented recently by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), show Africa to be by far the most severely affected continent. In Asia, for example, the number of HIV carriers is estimated at some 6 million. What threatens severe socioeconomic consequences is the fact that the illness primarily affects people of working and reproductive age. Moreover, HIV/AIDS is the most rapidly growing cause of death among children in Africa.

Underdeveloped health information, a high proportion of the population carrying sexually transmitted diseases, and the often very weak position of women in society are exacerbating the epidemic and contributing to its rapid spread. Today, HIV/AIDS must be regarded as a serious development problem. But there are also some positive signs to be discerned. More and more countries are grasping the gravity of the situation and drawing up a HIV/AIDS policy; various issues that were previously taboo are now discussed openly; the role of women is increasingly emphasised; and changes in patterns of social intercourse are taking place. Official development co-operation and the work of NGOs have brought these problems to the fore. Nevertheless, a continued commitment is necessary to reverse the trend.

### **The situation of women**

African women bear a heavier burden than women in many other parts of the world. According to UNDP estimates, some 80% of Africa's food producers are women. At the same time, by tradition, African women have very limited rights to the land they work, and also restricted access to technical advice. Since few women in Africa own land — and women seldom even inherit it after their husbands' death — few women obtain credits. Together with inadequate education, this means that women seldom invest in agriculture, which in turn results in low productivity and a poor nutritional standard in the family and, at regional and national level, in stagnation and inefficiency in an important staple livelihood in the economy.

Women also often have a weak voice in decision-making forums, in their home villages, in big cities and at national level. One basic reason for this is the division of labour between women and men — women are responsible for time-consuming work relating to the home and children — but it is also explained by the fact that in many societies, by tradition, women do not take part in decision-making in formal political forums. Just as in many other countries, hierarchic structures and procedures in political parties and public administration also often constitute an obstacle to women's active participation in political work.

In several parts of Africa, many women have opted not to organise themselves in political parties but, instead, to establish strong NGOs. In Southern Africa, for example, female lawyers and social workers are trying to improve conditions for women subjected to sexual or other violence in the urban slums. In Tanzania BAWATA, an organisation set up in 1994 that has received financial support from Sweden and other countries, has been a forum for women to act in unison and arouse opinion on practical political issues, such as improved water supply, education and child care. The fact that women are placing themselves outside parties and that their organisations often come into conflict with the established order raises, of course, theoretical questions about the representativeness of the parties and those in power.

In an international perspective, it is interesting to see that women in Africa, especially Southern Africa since the end of apartheid, have played a highly active and effective role in the UN, in the work of improving women's economic conditions, securing their admission to democratic forums, and combatting violence against women. The SADC-countries, for example, have set the tone in demands for equal rights of inheritance for women and men, as well as in demands for acknowledgement of women's sexual and reproductive rights. The countries are still playing an active role in these matters, in the aftermath of the UN women's conference in Peking. One objective on which an active partnership in international development work should focus is collaboration with these African women. Women's organisations and media can then become important players. It is also imperative to develop forms for bringing these players, as partners, into

### **The situation of children**

The positive trend now gathering momentum in large parts of Africa, owing to economic growth and democratic development, is bringing improved living conditions for children. Nevertheless, large-scale socioeconomic problems remain, and contribute to the fact that children continue to be a very disadvantaged group. For example, since poverty mainly affects large families, children make up the largest group of poor people in Africa. Africa also has the world's fastest accelerating urbanisation and, as a result, there are now millions of street children.

Although many African countries have made clear progress towards the objectives laid down at the UN World Summit for Children (Children's Summit) in 1990, for example in terms of vaccinations and dietary supplements, the pace of change remains slow. This is particularly clear regarding child and maternal mortality, malnutrition and the lack of health care and basic education, especially for girls. The severe impact on children of the HIV/AIDS epidemic is a growing problem. Too few economic and social improvements reach Africa's needy children.

The number of children in need of protection is thus growing. They include children who are affected directly or indirectly by HIV/AIDS, armed conflicts, harmful or exploitative work, cruelty or sexual exploitation. They also include children with functional disabilities, street children and others who lack a family or other safety net. Some facts:

- ◆ Mortality among children below the age of five in sub-Saharan Africa has fallen to 174 per 1,000 live births, but is still twice as high as the global average of 85 per 1,000.
- ◆ More than 30% of young children in Africa are underweight — roughly the same proportion as in the 1970s.
- ◆ HIV/AIDS is the most rapidly growing cause of death for African children. Barring improvements, child mortality is expected to rise by 75-100% between now and the year 2010 owing to AIDS.
- ◆ The number of orphans is also rising, since the incidence of AIDS among people of reproductive age is high. By the year 2000, five to ten million children worldwide will have been orphaned because of AIDS, and of these 90% will be in sub-Saharan Africa. "Child-headed" and "orphan-headed" families have arisen.

- ◆ Less than half of the children in sub-Saharan Africa complete five years' schooling.
- ◆ Child labour is an outstandingly widespread and growing problem in Africa. More than 40% of children under 14 work, against 21% in Asia and 17% in Latin America. If the present trend continues, there will be 100 million child workers in Africa by the year 2015, compared with previous estimates of 80 million.
- ◆ There are more and more children with functional disabilities in Africa, as a result of armed conflicts and the use of landmines. Another cause of functional disabilities is malnutrition, which results in blindness, impaired learning capacity, brain damage, etc.
- ◆ Children in Africa are hit hard by armed conflicts. They become refugees in their own country, suffer from starvation, are subjected to violence and sexual assault, and are recruited as soldiers.

Achieving a lasting improvement in the conditions African children grow up in and the rights they enjoy requires a combination of long-term socioeconomic inputs and more focused measures for particularly deprived children. The International Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by 47 of the 48 countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Somalia being the exception). Children's rights must now more deliberately be made the starting point for the inputs — national as well as international — that are required to realise the intentions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as well.

One interesting example — and a concrete expression of the idea of partnership — may be found in South Africa, where a programme for the disabled with a structural approach is being implemented from 1998, with Swedish support through Sida and Solidarity, Humanity, International Aid (SHIA, the international aid association of the Swedish organisations for the disabled), to improve the situation and living conditions of people with functional disabilities.

#### 4.4 Natural resources and the environment

That long-term sustainability must characterise development strategies is perhaps particularly evident for work in poor countries, where the margins are so small. Poor people in these poor countries commonly suffer most from environmental degradation, since they usually lack alternative sources of income other than fishing and farming. The African economy is often based on the utilisation of natural resources. If this utilisation does not take place in a sustainable way, the result is diminished productivity. Extreme weather conditions and other environmental threats make the poor even more vulnerable. To generate

sustainable development, basic investments in such areas as land use and water supply are therefore needed. Skr. 1997/98:122

## **Land**

The world's largest arid zones are in Africa, where they comprise some 65% of the land area. In the two-thirds of these arid zones that are habitable, there are around 400 million people. Drought is a recurrent phenomenon in the continent: 36 countries are affected by drought to some extent, with the most severe problems experienced in the Sahel and Southern Africa. Estimates indicate that at least a third of Africa's arable and grazing land is exhausted or severely damaged. The reasons include overgrazing, deforestation and unsuitable farming methods, which have resulted in soil leaching, erosion and salination. On average, land in Africa is deemed to have lost around 20% of its productivity over the past decade. At the same time, there is production potential that, properly utilised, may bring about an improvement in food security.

The distribution of land and its ownership can also affect soil quality, but it is hard to draw any general conclusions. The family smallholding is often farmed efficiently but intended to support only a small number of people, while larger farms aim at commercial markets linked with urban areas. Landless rural inhabitants are thus, in many places, a hard-pressed group. The issue of land ownership is controversial in many African countries. Ownership is a self-evident cornerstone of the western market economy, for example as a basis for the granting of credit; but the traditional system of tilling rights that is widespread in Africa cannot be transformed rapidly without severe social and productivity problems. A long-term adaptation of the system, in legal and other terms, is being devised in several countries.

Sweden has long been engaged in several bilateral aid programmes in agriculture and land conservation, focusing particularly on smallholders' needs. These aid programmes have been supplemented by research inputs and methodological development. Swedish experience, which has created a stir in the donor community and been emulated by other countries, shows that severe problems relating to food security can be remedied by means of participation and co-operation, knowledge and commitment on both sides, and also through long-term funding arrangements.

## **Forests**

Tropical and subtropical forests are disappearing at a very rapid rate. According to an estimate of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN, forest clearance is taking place at roughly 0.7% a year. Of the tropical regions, Africa is also the one that has lost most of

its original rain forests: only an estimated 30% of the original stock remains. The main reason for the deforestation is that forest land is cleared for cultivation, or that timber is used as fuel. In sub-Saharan Africa, about 90% of households' energy comes from firewood. The consequences are exacerbated soil erosion, energy and water scarcity, desiccation of the land and, in the long term, climatic changes as well.

Awareness of the problems of forest clearance have long existed, especially in the international debate on the environment and development. At the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 (Earth Summit) the "forest principles" were adopted: these constitute an appeal to the international community to take measures to achieve sustainable forestry. The debate continues, but has now entered a more constructive phase that will, it is hoped, culminate in practical measures at country level. For Sweden's part, bilateral development co-operation concentrates increasingly on capacity-building and on measures aimed at initiating and strengthening democratic processes. Through multilateral organisations and otherwise, Sweden supports the development of alternative and renewable energy sources.

## **Water**

Access to water is intimately connected with the question of soil quality and, accordingly, the scope for agriculture in Africa. Water resources vary widely in the continent. In measurements made during this century, a decrease in annual precipitation has been noted ever since the end of the 1960s. The groundwater, which is the main source of water for three-quarters of the population, is not being replenished at a rate sufficient to maintain its level. Because of the decreasing water supply, as well as joint dependence on the major rivers, water may in the future become one of the foremost reasons for conflicts between nations — but it could also, alternatively, become a motive force in emergent regional co-operation.

One characteristic of the climate of arid zones is that seasonal precipitation varies greatly, in terms of both quantity and timing. This results in an unreliable food supply and, accordingly, pressure to enlarge the area under irrigation, which in Africa is very small. However, this may result in conflict between different user sectors, since the demand for water is growing as a result of population growth, urbanisation, industrialisation and improvements in living standards while, at the same time, water quality is deteriorating owing to the lack of wastewater treatment. To attain sustainable utilisation of fresh-water resources, integrated water management is called for, with demand-reducing and water-saving measures in every sector of society.

One encouraging sign regarding the possibility of finding solutions to water problems is the increased international attention paid to water issues in recent years. Sweden was among the countries that supported the 1996 formation of the Global Water Partnership, a network for recipient countries, donors, NGOs and researchers, of which Sida runs the secretariat. The international community is moving towards a united approach, which will be manifested by this year's meeting of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development which, in 1998, has water as its special sector theme. The ambition is to draw up a global action plan for management of water issues. The EU is an important driving force in this work, and has demonstrated its strong support for co-ordination of efforts to achieve sustainable water use with the recipient countries in a form of partnership.

Large stretches of Africa's coast have copious stocks of fish. Parts of the West African coast are among the richest fishing grounds in the world. Nonetheless, the situation for most of Africa's marine and coast areas is problematical. The emergence of the modern fishing industry and its environmental impact have been detrimental. However, in most cases poverty is the biggest problem. The ecosystems around the mangrove forests and coral reefs, which are important to fisheries, are threatened. Fishing is often carried out with dynamite, which damages the reefs for a very long time to come. Fishing with poisons, such as cyanide, is also common. Another problem is that untreated wastewater is often discharged. There are, for example, no large cities along the African coast that have wastewater treatment. The result is that fish catches are decreasing, and the poorest people are the worst affected.

For the coastal areas, too, it is vital to apply integrated water-resource management. This involves using an integrated and interdisciplinary approach to draw up plans for sustainable fishing and shellfish farming, and also working for a healthy environment that is protected against environmental disturbances from the land and discharges from, for example, ships and oil rigs. However, in many cases this management has not worked well owing to capacity shortages, incomplete legislation, and difficulties in disseminating information and involving local people in decision-making and implementation.

The importance of integrated management is now being emphasised by more and more donors and recipients, and this paves the way for mitigation of the problems of damaged coastal areas. The main emphasis should be on, first, taking immediate measures to bring about a rapid improvement in conditions and, secondly, working in the long term for the purpose of enhancing the developing countries' own capacity for solving these problems.

## **Biodiversity**

Biodiversity is important to maintain the ecosystems that are, in the long run, essential for humankind. It helps to stabilise water discharge and climate, and the restoration of nutrients to cultivated land. Diversity may also relate to production of food, medicines and biological pesticides, and is an indicator of the state of the environment. Genetic variation in animals and plants is another important element. Accordingly, the issue of biodiversity is one of subsistence and survival for all human beings. Although Africa contains some of the most richly diverse ecosystems in the world, they are now threatened by the development described above.

With the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the international community has not only become more aware of the problems, but entered into binding commitments to take measures. For the industrialised countries, it is essential to support developing countries in their efforts to disseminate information on the Convention and establish competence relating to these commitments. Sweden is contributing actively to these efforts.

## **Urbanisation**

More than a billion people in the developing countries are expected to migrate from the countryside to large towns between 1990 and 2010. Although there are few metropolises in sub-Saharan Africa, rapid urbanisation is a problem for many African countries.

Large-scale environmental and natural-resource problems arise as a result of urbanisation. When cities in the developing world attain a million or so inhabitants and grow at a rate of several per cent a year, planning problems relating to such matters as wastewater management, energy and water supply and transport capacity often become formidable.

Following up the Second UN Conference on Human Settlements ("Habitat II") is an important element in the international gathering of forces to help solve the problems associated with urbanisation. Sweden is working to ensure that the world's governments safeguard their citizens' right to employment, housing, health, education, social care services, security and a good environment. Through co-operation at local level between agencies, NGOs, businesses and individuals, democratic and local influence can be promoted.

## **4.5 Objectives for 2015**

In their report *Shaping the 21st Century*, the members of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) define three objectives for the year 2015, to attain what is expressly described as the overriding

global objective for the century ahead: achieving a better quality of life for all humankind by generating sustainable development. One fundamental prerequisite for the concept of a “better quality of life” is for all human beings to be capable of influencing their own future.

The three objectives, which are based on those adopted at the major UN conferences in the 1990s, are:

- (1) To halve the number of people who live in abject poverty (on USD 1 a day or less) by the year 2015.
- (2) To attain substantial progress in the areas of primary education, equality between the sexes, primary health care and family planning, as follows:
  - (a) Universal access to primary education in every country by 2015.
  - (b) Elimination of the disparity between girls’ and boys’ participation in primary and secondary education by 2005.
  - (c) A two-thirds reduction in mortality among children aged up to five, and a three-quarters decrease in the number of mothers who die in conjunction with childbirth, by 2015 (in relation to the rate in 1990).
  - (d) Universal access for people of the relevant age to primary care in the area of reproductive health, including family counselling, by 2015.
- (3) Drawing-up of national strategies for sustainable development in every country by 2005, for the purpose of reversing the kind of development that results in overutilisation of environmental resources.

A comparison of socioeconomic trends in Africa with the above objectives shows that — as one might perhaps expect — development is neither easy to interpret nor consistent. Although the *proportion* of poor people in sub-Saharan Africa has remained constant at some 40% (1987-93), this represents a massive increase in their *number*. As mentioned previously, however, regional differences are considerable, and one positive sign is that real incomes have risen in recent years.

Achieving sustainable development and long-term utilisation of natural resources may be regarded as a synthesis of the objectives listed above, and also as the overall challenge for the decades ahead. Environmental problems such as exhausted soils, drought and growing water scarcity threaten many African countries, and are intimately linked with such factors as the demographic situation, subsistence options and health indicators. The challenges in the environmental sphere are immense, but one positive and decisive factor is that international environmental efforts, in such forms as the adoption of conventions and regional forms of co-operation, have made substantial progress. One example that may

be mentioned is the International Convention to Combat Desertification, which is crucial to Africa and contains regulations concerning monitoring, follow-up and financing of the measures it prescribes. This is an instance of co-operation taking ever more practical and goal-oriented forms.

Another important example of improvement in the international structures to combat poverty and generate sustainable development is that, today, the SAPs focus clearly on poverty and take their own social aspects and effects into account.

An enhanced consensus in the international community as to *what* must be done to attain the OECD objectives, *how* it is to be done and *what resources* are required is a precondition for their fulfilment. But it is even more important for poor countries and their populations to be in control of their own development. A trend towards improved management of society by governments based on popular mandates indicates that the scope for attaining this objective has changed for the better in the 1990s.

## 5 Increased regional co-operation

Regional co-operative efforts are now gaining a new impetus in Africa. The earlier failures must be seen in the light of the economic policy conducted at the time. Today, the African countries' ambitions to develop market economies and participate in expanding trade exchange inspire hopes that regional economic collaboration will bring about lasting results.

In the aftermath of democratisation, alongside the economic gains, there are also political gains to be made by means of communities of various kinds that cut across the randomly drawn African borders. A gradual increase in co-operation on an economic basis may also come to include political aspects that may have a major bearing on stability in the region concerned. Within the regional organisations, there is growing pressure on leaders who are regarded as falling outside the framework. At the same time, the new leaders often stand for explicit regional thinking.

Within the OAU, which is more politically oriented, attempts are being made to intensify economic co-operation while efforts to prevent and solve conflicts nonetheless remain in focus. As for the two continental organisations of economic co-operation — the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) — they are both currently undergoing reform processes aimed at enhancing effectiveness.

The Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa (PTA), which was aimed at the creation of a free-trade area in these parts of Africa, was transformed into the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) in 1994. This organisation has more far-reaching ambitions than the PTA: its objective is to attain completely free trade by the year 2000, followed by a customs union in 2004. The COMESA treaty has been signed by 20 countries, but ratified by only just over half. The customs-duty reductions effected have brought stronger growth in trade within the region than with other countries. Besides belonging to COMESA, most of these countries also belong to other regional groupings, such as SADC and East African Cooperation (EAC).

Among the subregional organisations of economic co-operation, SADC currently appears to be in the best initial position. When South Africa became democratic, the preconditions for regional co-operation changed radically. Instead of having as its main task that of enhancing neighbouring countries' independence from South Africa under apartheid, SADC now, since South Africa joined, works for an integration of this dominant country that is as balanced as possible.

The surge in activity since South Africa's entry has resulted in the presentation of a number of protocols, including one on trade with the aim of establishing a free-trade area by the year 2005, in accordance with the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) agreements. However, to date the ratification process has been slow. On the trade side in particular, national vested interests and bilateral conflicts of interest are in evidence. It is also necessary to decide how existing regional agreements are to be harmonised with new ones. Thus, co-ordination with both the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and COMESA must be arranged in a rational manner. In particular, the secretariats of SADC and COMESA have long found it difficult to co-operate.

South Africa is also included in a negotiation with the EU on a free-trade agreement — something that has aroused apprehensions in neighbouring countries, where there is a fear of being treated unfairly in the agreements reached. The EU is therefore working for South Africa to give the same market access to the SADC countries as it is to give the Union. A dialogue between the EU and SADC has been commenced, one purpose being to back up regional economic integration in SADC, and another to promote trade and economic co-operation between the EU and SADC.

Despite the lack of rapid progress in these reform efforts, developments in SADC inspire some hope. The organisation has potential for co-operation in such diverse areas as water issues, migration and efforts to combat drug and weapon smuggling. Through the special conflict-resolving mechanism created under Zimbabwe's leadership, SADC has gained a new political dimension in its work. In

the longer term, the prospects of expanded economic co-operation as well appear relatively bright. The summit meeting in Blantyre, Malawi, in September 1997 decided to adopt the Democratic Republic of Congo and Seychelles as new members, and in the long run these newcomers may give a powerful boost to the organisation's economic strength.

In the political sphere, what is sometimes called the "Mandela doctrine" is counted among the successes. This term was first used in conjunction with the intervention of certain SADC leaders to compel reversal of an ongoing military coup in Lesotho. The leaders in neighbouring countries, headed by South Africa, are said to have made it clear to the coup perpetrators that they did not intend to accept military coups against democratically elected governments. Since being elected chairman of SADC in 1997, Mandela has also expressed criticism of leaders who cling on to antiquated, authoritarian political systems — a comment thought to have been only a lightly camouflaged reference to Swaziland.

In Eastern Africa the old East African Community that broke down in 1977 was regenerated by a decision by Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda in 1996 to set up the new EAC. This is aimed at promoting economic development and regional trade by such means as facilitating cross-border movement of services and capital, and also investments in regional infrastructure. Environmental co-operation is also on the agenda, as are efforts to promote peace and safety and women's role in development work. Multifaceted co-operation around Lake Victoria has begun that may become concrete evidence of what can be achieved by joint regional efforts.

Rwanda has applied for membership of EAC, and will probably join. Depending on its political development, Burundi too may come in question in the longer term. EAC's potential is also closely connected with political development in the region as a whole. Political leaders working in closer harmony are needed to make full use of this potential. In the long run, economic prospects are deemed relatively good.

Kenya and Uganda also belong to the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which is the organisation of co-operation for the countries in the Horn of Africa. IGAD was formed in 1986, mainly for the purpose of jointly combatting drought and crop failures. Today, its co-operative efforts have been broadened and political co-operation for conflict prevention and resolution has begun. Sharp antagonisms between, in particular, Sudan on the one hand and Eritrea, Uganda and Ethiopia on the other make it difficult — but perhaps all the more imperative — to bring about genuine collaboration. Both for Sudan and for Somalia, which has disintegrated as a result of its internal conflicts, there are mediation committees or assignments within the framework of IGAD.

In March 1996 a decision was taken to revitalise the organisation, and three new departments were then created for food security and environmental issues, political and humanitarian issues, and economic co-operation respectively. There is also an aspiration to devise joint development strategies and harmonise provisions relating to transport services, communications, customs duties and trade. Although political antagonisms are currently curbing development, there are nonetheless strong driving forces working to make IGAD an effective instrument. The region's problems are many and great, and its leaders know from experience that other countries can hardly provide any solutions.

In West Africa there are several co-operative organisations, of which ECOWAS with its 16 member nations is the largest. Its objective is to create a joint market within the framework of a customs union. However, the work has proceeded at a sluggish pace. Conflicts plague the region, and the organisation is suffering from considerable economic difficulties. Nigeria's dominance hampers both economic and political co-operation. The latter has nonetheless been active, and its manifestations have included the formation of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which has intervened militarily and with some success in the armed conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. In the present situation, ECOMOG appears to be playing a more central role in the region than its parent organisation.

More purely economic co-operation, with roots in the French colonial era, is pursued in two customs unions, the *Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine* (UEMOA), and the *Union douanière et économique de l'Afrique centrale* (UDEAC). Back in 1945 a common currency, the CFA franc, convertible only into the French franc, was introduced. Today, 14 countries in West and Central Africa belong to the "franc zone". Economic co-operation in these two regions was commenced as early as in the 1960s, and its achievements have included trade liberalisation aimed at the creation of a customs union. One result of this economic integration is that the share of intraregional trade in total exports rose from around 2% in 1960 to some 11% 30 years later. After protracted economic stagnation, the CFA franc was devalued in 1994. The results have been both boosted economic growth and increased regional trade, although parts of the countries' economies have also incurred severe adjustment problems.

Sweden has long provided substantial support for regional co-operation in Africa. The most extensive support has been for regional co-operation in Southern Africa. Between 1980, when SADC's forerunner the Southern African Development Cooperation Conference (SADCC) was formed, and 1990 more than SEK 1.5 billion was disbursed for infrastructural and energy projects in the region, in particular. Part of this support was co-ordinated within the framework of a special Nordic programme that has now been transformed into a political dialogue. The Government has also charged Sida with drawing up documentation for a

special strategy for Sweden's support for regional co-operation in Africa. Altogether SEK 165 million has been allocated in this year's budget for these purposes.

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The EU, too, has traditionally provided very strong support for regional co-operative efforts in Africa. Within the framework of the Lomé Convention, the EU provides special financial support to promote the ACP countries' co-operation and integration efforts. This aid has been channelled both into building up production for regional markets and into direct support for the secretariats of the various co-operative bodies. Euro-African co-operation will be in focus over the next few years, owing not only to the renegotiation of the Lomé Convention by the year 2000, but also to the summit meeting between European and African leaders that is planned for the same year.

Summing up, it may be said of this plethora of regional co-operative organisations that most of them are as yet in a faltering and difficult initial phase. The opening-up towards the surrounding world that is taking place in the African countries has nevertheless decisively boosted the potential of economic co-operation. This is being supplemented to a growing degree by political co-operation, especially regarding conflicts. One factor underlying this trend is increasing awareness that the African countries themselves must take greater responsibility for the continent's crises. This trend does not mean that support from the surrounding world should be reduced — rather, the improvement in conditions provides grounds for increasing this support.

## 6 Societies in contact

### 6.1 The multiplicity of Swedish-African contacts

In the past few decades, a range of contacts at various levels have emerged between Swedish and African societies. The diversity of these contacts is striking. They reflect not only a sense of solidarity but also cultural and sports exchange, and research and environmental co-operation. The channels for these contacts are numerous: societies and associations, trade unions, Africans domiciled in Sweden, tourism, party-political collaboration and trade have broadened the interfaces between Swedes and Africans.

These extensive Swedish-African contacts have constituted the basis on which development co-operation has been established. The popular movements and religious denominations formed the core of this involvement, which nevertheless enjoyed broad popular support outside these organisations as well. The humanitarian motive — solidarity with

the world's poor people — was naturally central, and was also the guideline for government aid, which became the international dimension of Sweden's domestic policy to promote equality.

At political level, too, close relations have arisen between Sweden and several African countries. Despite the geographical and cultural distance, the community of interests has often proved substantial, and a shared view of certain important global issues has facilitated the political dialogue. The official exchange of visits with Africa shows a concentration of contacts with countries in Eastern and Southern Africa, especially with South Africa since the fall of the apartheid regime.

Sweden also has a history in Africa that anticipated development co-operation. For a brief period in the mid-17th century, the "Africa Company", a Swedish trading company, had a trading station on the Gold Coast, in present-day Ghana. In the Horn of Africa, in Ethiopia and Eritrea, it was the presence of Swedish churches and denominations since the end of the 19th century that paved the way for Swedish involvement. As one of Africa's few independent nations, and one that suffered an aggressive Italian invasion under Mussolini, Ethiopia inspired great sympathy in the mid-1930s and this later benefited Emperor Haile Selassie during his state visit to Sweden.

The African liberation struggle in the 1950s and '60s was followed with sympathy and active interest in this country. Sweden's membership of the UN, the organisation's military efforts in the disintegrating Congo, and the General Assembly's declaration on self-determination for the colonies contributed to Swedish involvement in the new and emerging African nation-states. Newly independent nations like Kenya and Tanzania enjoyed Swedish support right from the start. Otherwise, Swedish support for the liberation struggle was what determined which countries Sweden came to co-operate with. During the struggle for independence, Sweden supported freedom movements in what were then Rhodesia and South West Africa, in South Africa and in the Lusophone (Portuguese-speaking) colonies. Sweden was, for example, one of the first countries to give official support to the struggle for independence from Portugal conducted by *Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e do Cabo Verde* (PAIGC, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde) under Amilcar Cabral's leadership, and also one of the first western countries to recognise the new republic. Many of those who later became political leaders in these countries had studied in Sweden.

Support for the liberation struggle was naturally succeeded by aid to the newly independent nations. Right up to the 1990s, destabilisation of the southern part of the continent by South Africa's apartheid regime was an important reason for supporting the neighbouring countries that suffered, as well as those that were fighting to overthrow the apartheid system. After the democratisation of South Africa and Namibia, support

for the liberation movements also gave way to co-operation between Sweden and these countries' governments and societies.

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Sweden's historical inheritance in Africa has had the result of concentrating the official Swedish presence today in the Anglophone and Lusophone parts of the continent, where 13 of our 16 embassies are located. This strong presence, combined with extensive and enduring development co-operation, has given Sweden substantial influence in these parts of Africa, and this has had dispersal effects on more general situations relating to African politics. The lack of a colonial past and strategic great-power interests has helped to enable Sweden to assume, in many forums, the role of an impartial promoter of solidarity with the deprived African peoples.

All in all, then, in our contacts with Africa, Sweden acts at several different levels and in a range of different forums. Nevertheless, the bilateral level remains the incomparably most important, especially in the countries where Sweden's presence has traditionally been strong. There, Swedish development co-operation has resulted not only in the forging of strong ties at various levels, but also in substantial reserves of mutual understanding and knowledge. In the Ethiopian or Tanzanian countryside, for example, Sweden and Sida are well-known concepts associated with school-building and health care. Interest in Swedish culture and society is also, naturally, keener in the countries in Southern and Eastern Africa where Sweden has a long-standing presence.

## 6.2 Forty years' development co-operation

As mentioned above, solidarity became an early guideline for the aid policy developed in the 1950s and '60s. Aid was intended to expand trade, alleviate suffering, convey knowledge and contribute resources to the poor countries. Vocational training and family planning were among the areas first developed in Swedish development co-operation. During the 1950s, Ethiopia and Pakistan became the first programme countries for Swedish development co-operation, with a massive Swedish presence in several branches of central government administration. In the first half of the 1960s, grant aid was more than doubled. Bilateral aid was also extended: the number of recipient countries rose to about 20, and the sectors concerned became more numerous.

During the 1960s great optimism prevailed, both in Africa and in the rest of the world, concerning the new nation-states' capacity for rapid development. Aid was devoted to such investments as road-building power stations, industries, schools and hospitals. Major projects of the 1960s in Africa included a teacher training college in Kenya and the "Nordic Tanganyika Project", which became a "development centre", with an agricultural college, an upper secondary school and a health-care centre, in the Tanzanian countryside.

In the second half of the 1960s, aid became focused mainly on six recipients: Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Tunisia, India and Pakistan. Tanzania eventually took over the role as the foremost programme country. President Julius Nyerere stood out as independent Africa's foremost proponent of an equality ideal that closely approached the Swedish model.

At the beginning of the 1970s, country programming was introduced as a method of giving aid. The principle was to focus aid on long-term co-operation with a limited number of countries. Within the scope of the funds granted — the “country framework” — the recipient country was to enjoy great flexibility in using Swedish aid according to its own plans. “Aid on the recipient's terms” became the slogan. In many respects, this is reminiscent of what is now called “partnership”. However, economic and political misrule in the countries concerned, the debt crisis and weak institutional development ruled out realisation of the partnership philosophy at that time. Moreover, aid was concentrated on projects, and sector programmes co-ordinated with other donors hardly existed. To a large extent, too, project staff were Swedish — which is seldom the case today.

During the 1980s and '90s, personnel aid has been superseded by a broader endeavour to develop local knowledge and capacity. This has taken place mainly through co-operation between institutions in Sweden and the countries concerned. Simultaneously, country-programme aid as a share of Swedish aid has decreased in favour of emergency assistance, development co-operation through Swedish NGOs, balance-of-payment support, debt reliefs and development credits.

Rapid political development in Africa has made it clear that aid does not function in a politically neutral environment. One striking — and in many instances tragic — example of aid that was humanitarian in its motives but political in its impact was the massive international support for the refugee camps in eastern Zaire following the Rwanda genocide in 1994. This aid came, in practice, to entail support to the groups that were most responsible for the killing, and which controlled the camps.

One of several conclusions from the problems that have confronted aid over the years has been that support for individual projects and programmes is not, in the long run, very beneficial unless the recipient country is capable of providing an environment that promotes development and makes good use of the aid. This realisation has prompted donors to concern themselves increasingly with the governance of central economic — and, gradually, also political functions in society, to create economies in equilibrium with the outside world and institutions capable of dealing with macroeconomic issues. Thus, donors have successive approached recipient countries' “nervous systems” in a more obvious way. In the past few years, an

increased emphasis on conflict issues has been evident, including conciliation policy, systems of judicial administration and other issues directly relating to national sovereignty.

This stronger political dimension in our co-operation with African countries will require modified forms of co-operation and more forums, and will impose requirements other than the traditional ones on the bodies responsible for aid and emergency inputs. The UN system, in particular, will be affected by these new requirements. The UN Security Council has ultimate responsibility for peace and safety in the world. If this responsibility is to be shouldered realistically in Africa, there must be understanding of the interplay between political and economic factors, and long-term and short-term development perspectives. Close co-operation that is unconcerned with prestige is also required between various international organisations — especially the UN and EU — and between the different parts of the UN system. Finally, individual governments in and outside Africa must also decide what roles they can, should and wish to play.

We are now in an initial phase of co-operation with Africa that is based on connections between politics, economics and development and has such aims as preventing and resolving conflicts, reconciling antagonist groups, reconstructing communities after conflicts, and promoting protection for human rights and respect for the principles of the rule of law. Several aspects of this work need developing further. It is essential, for example, to strengthen national self-confidence and social institutions in crisis-stricken countries; to reform the UN system in such a way as to improve its capacity to handle contemporary African problems; to formulate a clearer Africa policy in the EU for which member states can provide unanimous backing; and to support the instruments for regional peacemaking and conflict resolution in Africa that have come into being.

In this work, aid may play an important role. Nevertheless, it must be adapted to the political circumstances in the land or region where it is provided. Development co-operation must also, to a higher degree than before, become part of a concerted international effort in which various instruments work together, with African governments and organisations in the central role.

Although its content has thus changed in nature over the years, aid has continued to account for the greater part of Sweden's contacts with Africa in volume terms. In 1996, Swedish bilateral aid to sub-Saharan Africa totalled some SEK 3.2 billion, corresponding to a third of this country's total bilateral aid. Co-operation with Africa is the largest and most complex part of our development co-operation.

The volume of Swedish aid to Africa expanded fairly steadily until the early 1990s, and thereafter decreased. Africa's share of bilateral-aid

payments has similarly declined in the 1990s. Lower grants is not one of the main reasons for these decreasing aid payments; rather, they are a consequence of the fact that the focus and forms of aid have changed. One reason is probably the heavier emphasis on inputs in, for example, the sphere of democracy, which seldom entails any major payments. Roughly half of the decrease in aid is due to a decline in balance-of-payments support, which in turn is caused by the imposition of more rigorous requirements on the countries' reform programmes (including democratic aspects). The remainder of the decrease in aid is due to lower payments within the country limits, which is partially a consequence of higher requirements concerning the recipient countries' involvement in planning, implementation, accounting and follow-up. A corresponding trend of declining payments from the development banks and the UN system may be observed.

As we have seen above, the division into aid-related and non-aid-related ties already seems less meaningful, and this is a trend that will probably be reinforced. Swedish development co-operation has, over time, undergone changes in terms of both content and methods. Many inputs have yielded lasting results, albeit ones that are hard to measure. Examples are educational inputs in Tanzania, teacher training in Kenya and soil-conservation inputs in Eastern Africa.

Four decades' experience from development co-operation in Africa is now providing an opportunity to develop new forms of co-operation. A new generation of citizens, lacking experience of the colonial period, is growing up. New African leaders have not inherited their mandates from the colonial era, nor can they hold it responsible for present-day conditions. There are thus new points of departure for further development of co-operation.

### 6.3 Africans in Sweden

Africa is present in Swedish society in many ways. Swedish-African interfaces are proliferating owing to the presence of Africans living in Sweden. Domiciled African immigrants number some 35,000 at present, and the largest groups of immigrants come from Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia, followed by Uganda and Gambia.

Many African immigrants have established small companies through which they not infrequently maintain contacts with their home countries. There are also a substantial number of African societies and associations, companies and projects aimed at developing economic or cultural relations with Sweden-domiciled Africans' countries of origin. Unemployment among these "Swedish Africans" is, however, high and there are non-profit African associations engaged in improving their scope on the Swedish labour market. Others work for the integration of African graduates.

It is worth mentioning that a number of Africans who have obtained their education in Sweden now hold senior posts in their own countries or in international organisations.

Personal exchange between Sweden and Africa is reciprocal. During the 1990s, some 500 Swedes have opted to settle in Africa annually, mainly in countries like Tanzania or South Africa.

#### 6.4 Research, culture, tourism and sport

Swedish universities were — formerly through the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation (SAREC), now through Sida — engaged in aid collaboration with Africa from an early stage. Sida assists in funding the involvement of around 200 Swedish institutions in research co-operation with African researchers via bilateral agreements or with grants from Sida's developing-country research council. All major Swedish universities and colleges have a diverse range of contacts with African institutions. In several cases, extensive relations have evolved from co-operation that began with academic teachers' and researchers' postgraduate studies. The Karolinska Institute, for example, has established broad co-operation with the Faculty of Medicine at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia. Uppsala University is assisting in the development of corresponding subjects at Asmara University in Eritrea. The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Uppsala is currently engaged in 35 different research projects in about ten African countries. Within the framework of the International Science Programmes (ISPs) funded by Sida and SAREC, Swedish institutes of higher education are attempting to develop long-term co-operation between Nordic research departments and their counterparts in the developing countries. ISPs collaborate with universities and departments in a dozen African countries. One example is support for solar-energy research at the University of Dar es Salaam. Stockholm and Göteborg Universities are co-operating with universities in Tanzania, Kenya and Mozambique.

The purpose of research aid is to support research with a bearing on the recipient countries' development. This means, above all, support for strengthening developing countries' capacity to engage in research that can help to solve their major problems. Roughly a third of Sida's grants for research co-operation go to bilateral co-operation with developing countries, which currently include Botswana, Tanzania, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Zimbabwe.

Contacts at student level have developed through Sida's Minor Field Studies (MFS) scholarships, which have offered Swedish students a chance to travel to Africa in order to collect material for their special projects on the spot. Since 1993, nearly 800 students have utilised this opportunity of in-depth studies in Africa. By carrying out a small field

study, the student can spend a couple of months obtaining preliminary experience of working in a developing country. The hope is that the MFS dissertations will result in the students' continued involvement in issues related to these countries, and contribute to an increase in understanding of aid problems. The programme is popular among students, and there is keen competition for the roughly 400 scholarships that are awarded annually, half of which result in special projects on various African countries. Several Swedish university departments regularly send MFS students to colleagues in Zimbabwe, for example in biotechnology, microbiology and water technology. The institutions that provide most MFS students are the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm and SLU in Uppsala. To a limited extent, there are also flows of students in the opposite direction. In the past five-year period the Swedish Institute, which administers a scholarship programme with this purpose, has awarded some 35 scholarships annually to Africans wishing to study in Sweden.

Cultural contacts with Africa relate mainly to music, dance, art and handicrafts. Through Sida since the mid-1970s, Sweden has had a programme of cultural exchange focusing on developing countries. In addition, roughly a quarter of the Swedish Institute's (SI) grants for cultural exchange with development countries are directed at Africa. Alongside this cultural exchange, a large number of contacts are forged through the exchange of experts and study-visit programmes arranged through SI. The number of study visits to Sweden from Africa has more than trebled in the past few years, from 25 in 1993/94 to 92 in 1995/96.

In recent years SI has, on average, contributed to about 20 projects involving cultural exchange with Africa each year, in both directions. One such project is the African film festival (FESPACO) in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Cultural exchange covers a broad field of activities. In 1997 Sweden was visited, for example, by the OYO Theatre of Burkina Faso, the Masai Youth of Tanzania, and the Black Noise musical group of South Africa. In the same year, numerous Swedes active in the arts travelled to Africa to take part in music, film and theatre festivals and art exhibitions, give guest performances, and so forth. Such contacts are slightly more developed with Southern and West Africa than with countries in Central and Eastern Africa. In recent years, interest in expanded cultural exchange with South Africa, in particular, has grown.

Interfaces between Swedish and African societies have also been broadened by the growing number of tourists' visits. Swedish travel agencies began arranging tours to Africa in the 1960s, and the number of programmes and destinations has increased continuously. Today, some 20,000 Swedes each year join travel agencies' organised tours to Africa. These figures do not include the large number of Swedes who travel to Africa independently. Kenya and Tanzania are the most important destinations. Tourism to the whole of Southern Africa has

grown substantially since the democratisation of South Africa. One sector that is forecast to expand in the future is ecotourism.

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There are Swedish-African contacts in the world of sport as well. The Swedish Sports Confederation's involvement in Africa began in Tanzania in 1968, in co-operation with other Nordic countries and Sida. In co-operation with the National Sports Council of Tanzania, a "Sport for All" project was conducted in the Arusha region between 1983 and 1993. Several Swedish sports clubs have been involved, and a Swedish project leader was appointed to co-ordinate the project, organise seminars and develop club activities. The programme was aimed at school pupils, young people, women and the disabled. Since 1990, the Confederation has helped to organise a semi-marathon and women's ten-kilometre running race in Arusha, and these are events that recur annually. In Uganda, the Confederation has contributed sports equipment to a school for orphans. In Zimbabwe, a new "Sport for All" project was commenced in 1995 in co-operation with the Sports and Recreation Commission in Harare, and in South Africa Sweden co-operated with the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SANROC) in the anti-apartheid movement in sport. In 1993 and 1994 the Swedish Sports Confederation provided support for the Soweto Ladies' Soccer Team, and in 1994-95 a development programme was conducted by the Gothenburg district sports federation in Soweto. All these programmes were co-ordinated by the National Sports Council of South Africa. Swedish coaches are also engaged in swimming and running training for the mentally handicapped in Natal, in co-operation with the Natal Sports Association for Severely Mentally Handicapped.

Some of these sports events take place in Sweden, in conjunction with various tournaments. One example is the Gothia Cup in football — a tournament in which 30,000–40,000 young people from around 60 countries take part each year. The African team that usually competes comes from Cameroon, Kenya, South Africa and Eritrea. The organisers have provided support for football clubs in South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria. Another example is the Partille Cup, a handball tournament that attracts some 100–300 African players to Sweden each year.

## 6.5 Non-governmental organisations

Swedish development co-operation is rooted in popular movements, societies and associations, and NGOs. The first aid projects were conducted by Swedish missionaries in Africa in the 19th century, and popular movements were among the groups whose pressure resulted in the commencement of state aid in 1952. Sweden's sense of solidarity and commitment have enabled the Government and Sida to bring about substantial development co-operation through Swedish NGOs.

Today, more than 160 Swedish NGOs are engaged in 40 of the 48 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, often but not always with the backing of aid. The spectrum ranges from political parties, trade unions and churches to schools, youth clubs and environmental associations. Roughly one-fifth of Swedish bilateral aid is channelled through these NGOs, of which 13 have a “framework agreement” with Sida. This means that they themselves plan each individual project within the framework of a given budget. Several of the organisations have their own staff — some as volunteers in the countries they co-operate with. These organisations are the Africa Groups of Sweden, Diakonia, Forum Syd (“Forum South”), the Council of International Trade Union Cooperation of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) and Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO), the Church of Sweden Foundation for Church Work (formerly Church of Sweden Aid and Church of Sweden Mission), the Olof Palme International Centre, the Pentecostal Mission, Rädda Barnen (Swedish Save the Children), the Swedish Red Cross, SHIA, the Swedish Mission Council and Utan Gränser/Swedish Cooperative Centre.

Health care and education are the two areas in which the NGOs are mainly engaged. In recent years, other types of joint project have also expanded, such as support for democratisation and opinion-moulding, development of organisations and local competence, humanitarian assistance and emergency assistance.

The Christian denominations have long experience of work in Africa. Those that began their work in the form of missions over a century ago have developed broad co-operation that includes, for example, emergency assistance and collaboration with sister churches in the continent. At the same time, missions play a very significant part in providing medical care in rural areas in many countries. Swedish churches also engage in development co-operation, paid for with their own collected funds as well as through Sida. The active churches and religious organisations include Caritas, Diakonia, the Pentecostal Mission, the Baptist Union of Sweden, the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden, the Swedish Mission Council and the Church of Sweden Foundation for Church Work.

The work of trade unions in Africa was commenced on a large scale in the 1960s. International trade-union solidarity and the knowledge that poverty and infringements of union rights are a threat to all workers have been central motives underlying the trade unions’ international involvement. The work has included, for example, large-scale adult education and support for organisation of union activity. LO and TCO conducted around 100 projects in Africa in 1994/95. In several countries, education focusing on women is conducted. The number of mutual visits has been considerable over the years.

The political parties and their youth associations have played an important part in strengthening democratic forces in African society. Solidarity and exchange between parties with similar values have meant support, especially in periods of oppression. Contacts have been established that stretch far beyond actual development co-operation.

An important part of the work of popular movements has been linked with national liberation and opposition to apartheid, racism and oppression or violation of human rights. These organisations were particularly active in the fight against apartheid.

Over the years, a number of friendship organisations have been formed to promote contacts between Sweden and certain African countries. Examples are the Swedish-Tanzanian Association, the Sweden-Zimbabwe Friendship Association, the Kenya-Sweden Friendship Association, the Swedish-Zambian Association, the South African Association in Sweden, Amigos de Cabo Verde, the Swedish-Gambian Association and the Burkina Faso-Sweden Friendship Association. The initiators of these associations are often Swedes who have previously worked in Africa or Africans domiciled in Sweden.

## 6.6 Economic exchange

Over a long period, economic exchange between Sweden and Africa has stagnated. Africa's share of total Swedish exports has successively fallen to just over 1% in the mid-1990s, corresponding to just over three billion Swedish kronor a year. Imports from Africa amount to only about SEK 1bn, which means that Africa has a large trade deficit with Sweden. The flow of private investments from Sweden to Africa has almost dried up.

However, the past few years have shown a tendency towards an upturn. Swedish exports have increased, largely owing to the abolition of sanctions against South Africa. Swedish subsidiaries are concentrated mainly in Eastern and Southern Africa, especially South Africa. The Swedish Trade Council's activities in Africa are currently confined to the southern part of the continent.

For several Swedish companies, especially major ones, the African market is significant. Other Swedish subsidiaries may be found mainly in Eastern and Southern Africa. ABB and Ericsson operate in large parts of Africa. A recent decision by Volvo to invest in an assembly plant in Botswana, mainly to supply the South African market, is a case in point. In recent years Uganda, thanks to its favourable political and economic development, has succeeded in attracting Swedish investors, including Telia. The Export Credits Guarantee Board's capacity to guarantee deals in Africa appears to be growing since the SAPs are now beginning to bear fruit. Simultaneously, it is important for countries in a difficult or

precarious debt situation not to be tempted to take out large commercial loans that counteract efforts to extract themselves from the debt trap. Skr. 1997/98:122

Accordingly, an unutilised potential for increased economic exchange is evident. This has already been discovered by business and industry in a range of other countries — the American bid to make a new start in its economic and commercial ties with Africa is one example — while Swedish companies, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), have generally been cautious in their approach.

One precondition of increased exchange through trade and investments is development of business and industry in the African countries. In 1996-97, on behalf of the Government, Sida carried out both an overview of business co-operation and a survey of the financial sector. Support for business and industry is to be extended and focused more on contributing to establishment on the institutional framework, and also on infrastructure and public-sector business operations. In the financial sector, it is proposed that priority be given to helping to improve infrastructure and develop financial markets and institutions, which are crucially important for the financing and development of business and industry.

One important instrument in promoting business development and Swedish investments in Africa is Swedfund International AB. Its main task is to assist in the transfer of Swedish business know-how to developing nations and countries in Central and Eastern Europe, and to promote industrial and economic development in these countries. The purpose is to provide venture capital, especially in joint ventures between local and Swedish companies, and know-how for long-term investments. Activities are to be conducted on a commercial basis, which means that project selection will take place on business grounds and, in the long run, that the investments must cover their own costs.

In the 1990s, Swedfund has assisted in projects in Tanzania, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola, Ghana and Benin, in co-operation with Swedish companies such as ABB, Telia, Swedish Match, SAS and Svalöf Weibull, to name but a few. Swedfund also helps to finance companies, mainly SMEs, through its inputs in venture-capital funds in several African countries. In 1998, Swedfund plans some special investments both to strengthen its inputs in Africa and to identify means of promoting Swedish SMEs' internationalisation. This Africa venture includes, over a two-year experimental period, having a person in a strategic place in sub-Saharan Africa.

Another instrument of economic co-operation with Africa is Sida's "Start South" programme, which is aimed at encouraging Swedish SMEs to invest in productive operations in African and other countries where Sida is engaged in active business co-operation.

### 7.1 Africa and the Nordic countries

Together, the Nordic countries provide aid to Africa on a substantial scale — as much as or more than that of the USA, the UK and Germany separately. Only the EU, Japan, the World Bank and France are clearly larger donors. Trade exchange between Africa and the Nordic area is not, however, at a corresponding level. Apart from Sweden, other Nordic countries that have long conducted an active Africa policy and maintained aid of around 1% of GDP are Norway and Denmark. Finland, for its part, has increased its aid to Africa.

The Nordic profile in African affairs is distinct and coherent. In several countries in Eastern and Southern Africa, Nordic co-operation plays a major part in Swedish conduct. In Tanzania, for example, the Nordic countries have devised a joint policy which has had decisive influence on all donors' relations with Africa. Nordic co-operation seldom takes the form of joint projects, but co-ordination is far-reaching and administrative savings can frequently be made. In the UN and the multilateral banks, systematic and intensive joint action takes place. The Nordic dimension will remain an important part of Sweden's Africa policy.

One example of Nordic development co-operation is the Nordic Development Fund (NDF), which grants credits for projects that promote economic and social development in developing countries. The granting of credit is co-financed with such bodies as the World Bank Group, the regional development banks, the Nordic Investment Bank and the bilateral development organisations. NDF's objective is for some 50% of its activities to focus on Africa, especially the very poorest countries, to reflect the priority given by the Nordic countries to Africa as the principal region receiving Nordic aid.

NORSAD (Nordic/Southern African Development) is another example of Nordic co-operation, in this case between Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden on the one hand and the member states of SADC on the other. NORSAD's objective is to assist economic and industrial development by such means as forming joint ventures between companies in the two regions. Another purpose is knowledge and technology transfer.

### 7.2 Africa and the European Union

EU membership gives Sweden a new dimension in our relations with Africa. For many of the Union's member states, Africa policy is an

extremely important aspect. Colonialism and also the post-colonial period are now past, but links with the former colonies are still strong. They are also much broader than with Sweden, ensuing as they do from powerful emotional ties, extensive emigration, a partially shared history and strong contacts in the cultural and educational sphere. For Sweden as a new EU member, becoming familiar with this setting is immensely important. At the same time, we bring to bear unique African experience of our own that should further strengthen the Union's Africa profile. For Sweden, it is a matter of making the most of the EU's opportunities, for example as player in the common trade policy, in foreign and security policy, and within the framework of the Union's development co-operation. The Union's importance to the continent is great: of Africa's exports, 46% go to Europe, and EU member states together account for half of all aid to the continent.

The common trade policy means that the EU member countries have joint external tariffs, and that all trade relations with a third country are managed jointly. Trade co-operation thus takes place under the first (Community) pillar. Trade policy gives member countries great weight in trade negotiations, while changes in the common policy require support from the majority of these countries. Union member states are strong promoters of the international trade system in the WTO, and the scope for undertaking changes is therefore limited by the commitments made there, based on the "most-favoured-nation" principle.

Under the Union treaty, member states have established co-operation in the area of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP). This co-operation takes place under the second pillar, which is essentially intra-EU in nature, and within which decisions must be taken unanimously. Within the CFSP framework, the EU deals with current issues relating to political and security-policy situations in Africa. Among the members, continuous consultations on political development in Africa take place, and form the basis for statements by the Council of Ministers, visits in the African capitals concerned and decisions on joint standpoints. The Council can also decide on joint measures. One example of such a measure is the decision to appoint a special envoy for the crises in the Great Lakes region. Questions of conflict prevention and resolution are high on the agenda in CFSP work. Other areas of particular interest in an African perspective are democracy and human rights. The EU actively follows development in these areas, and regularly requests reports from its local heads of mission as documentation for various measures.

The EU's development co-operation comes under the first pillar and, like trade policy, thus comes within the scope of the European Communities. Co-operation is financed both by means of the Community's regular budget and through special contributions from the member states to the European Development Fund (EDF). Despite a

volume increase, Africa's relative share of joint aid fell from 65% in 1990 to 49% in 1995.

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One of the EU's potential strengths is that, in one and the same context, it can deal with such issues as trade, foreign and security policy, development, migration, etc. There is therefore scope for the Union to conduct a policy towards an individual country that is consistent, i.e. whose various components work in concert in a manner that is favourable to the country and/or region. Nevertheless, there are at present certain inconsistencies between the Union's various policy areas. Sweden is working actively in the EU to make them more consistent.

### **Post-Lomé negotiations**

EU co-operation with Africa takes place mainly within the framework of the Lomé Convention, which governs relations between the ACP countries (in Africa, the West Indies and the Pacific region). The first three Lomé conventions ran for five years each, while the present one (Lomé IV) is in force for ten. The objectives are to bring about economic, cultural and social development in the ACP countries. Besides aid and preferential tariffs for the ACP countries in relation to other developing countries, the Lomé Convention contains a clause aimed at partially compensating them for their loss from falling raw-material prices.

This co-operation has hardly matched up to the original expectations. Several of the central objectives have not been attained: the ACP countries' raw-material dependence has not decreased, and Africa's share of EU imports fell from 6% in 1976 to around 3% in the 1990s. Although the main rule for trade is that the ACP countries have free access to the EU market, most products included in the Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) are exempt. For these products, a complex set of regulations that include, for example, extensive import quotas are applied.

Lomé IV will expire in February 2000. Not later than in September 1998, negotiations are to be commenced on future co-operation, one long-term objective of which is free trade. Broadly speaking, the member states have declared their support for *five guidelines* prior to the negotiations for a new co-operation agreement with the ACP countries.

The *first* guideline is that the partnership should be given a strong political dimension. One requirement of this is more effective and open dialogue, aimed at realising a joint political vision embracing human rights, democracy, the rule of law, good governance, conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

*Secondly*, poverty alleviation is to be the focus of the new partnership. It is important to tackle poverty in a way that takes into account both factors relating to economic growth and the social and environmental aspects of this growth. Particular attention is to be paid to equality between the sexes. Besides governments, it is proposed that the players of partnership should include civil society (NGOs, trade unions, etc) and the private sector. All players are to have a chance of participating in planning and implementation of co-operation.

The *third* objective is to promote the ACP countries' integration into global trade through a change-over from trade preferences to a broader economic partnership. This is to be based on co-operation agreements at regional — or, initially, subregional — level that may, in the future, develop into free-trade agreements. The EU also seeks to develop close co-operation in such areas as investments and development of the private and financial sectors, which are assuming ever greater importance to international economic and commercial flows.

*Fourthly*, the EU wishes to simplify and rationalise the instruments of economic and technical co-operation. One objective is to make possible greater differentiation between countries; thereby promoting enhanced effectiveness. These are to be attained by such means as clearer programming of aid and drawing-up of country strategies.

*Fifthly*, the ACP countries are to remain as a cohesive group while, at the same time, regionalisation takes place.

Sweden has contributed actively to the debate on future relations between the EU and the ACP countries, and several Swedish standpoints are expressed in the guidelines for future co-operation. The Swedish priorities in Lomé co-operation were defined back in November 1996 as partnership, a focus on Africa, poverty alleviation, effectiveness and compatibility with the WTO agreements.

One precondition for greater effectiveness in development co-operation is for the focus to be shifted from Brussels and the EU to Africa and the African co-operating countries. This requires reinforced EU field representation in the co-operating countries. It is utterly fundamental for country programmes to be based on the needs and priorities of the co-operating countries concerned. The large range of instruments used to date must also be reviewed.

Through the preferences offered to African countries by the EU within the framework of the Lomé Convention, all industrial and most agricultural products are allowed into the European market free of duty. Owing to the nature of the CAP, however, the European market for certain farm products is heavily protected, while the EU subsidises exports of its own agricultural surpluses. For our part, Sweden

advocates drawing up a future agreement in accordance with WTO regulations. Our endeavour is to simplify EU regulations on preferences for developing countries, and we wish the separate system of preferences for the ACP countries to be discontinued. Sweden is a powerful driving force for offering all the least developed countries exemption from duty on all goods. It is also important for the original rules applied for granting preferential treatment to be generous and simple to apply.

Developing the confidence-generating nature of Lomé co-operation is another vital aim. The EU should demonstrate a long-term and wide-ranging commitment to development in Africa. A genuine partnership must be based on a political commitment on the part of the ACP countries as well as the EU. Better use should be made of co-operation for a political dialogue. Moreover, the partnership between the EU and Africa should be expanded to include not only central-government players, but also civil society and the private sector.

### 7.3 Africa and the United Nations

The UN has a long history of involvement in Africa. During their liberation from the colonial powers, many countries received UN help in spreading understanding, generating sympathy and gaining support for their struggle. Regarding the fight against apartheid in Southern Africa, in particular, the UN's role was central for 30 years. South Africa was excluded from the organisation and subjected to UN-led sanctions.

The clearest traces of UN work may nonetheless, perhaps, be discerned in the development sphere. Organisations like UNDP, UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and UNAIDS perform very important tasks in their respective areas of responsibility. UNICEF's vaccination programme, UNAIDS's information campaigns and the WFP's provision of food for refugees in the continent are examples of UN activities that yield results.

In the UN spheres of activity relating to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, humanitarian law, development co-operation and human rights, African countries and their situation are often high on the agenda. Some 60% of the Security Council's work in 1997 related to African issues. In addition, several UN peacekeeping inputs have been implemented in sub-Saharan Africa over the past 40 years, while the UN's funds, programmes and central, specialised bodies estimate that 35-50% of their efforts are focused on the region. Africa's relationship with the UN is thus multifaceted, and very often also highly complex.

As the proportion of internal conflicts increases, both globally and in sub-Saharan Africa, the pressure is mounting on the UN to change, in

order to be able to tackle the new crises and needs that have arisen. UN inputs in Somalia, the Great Lakes region and elsewhere have prompted serious criticism. However, this criticism is often contradictory: the UN is either regarded as too active and urged to refrain from involvement in countries' internal concerns, or deemed to have intervened too late and too weakly to meet humanitarian needs. It is very difficult to strike a balance, and the political consensus and will that hard decisions require on the member states' part are often lacking. The result is that the UN's reputation in Central Africa, in particular, has worsened — and so, accordingly, have the organisation's chances of acting in accordance with its mandate. At the same time, particularly in the light of the severe political, humanitarian and developmental problems affecting the region, the need for UN activities is manifestly increasing. Enabling the organisation to act in a well-advised and constructive way in African crises, and also securing confidence in the UN, should be central tasks of countries like Sweden with a clear multilateral foreign-policy profile.

In the UN's international work, the African countries belong to the "Group of 77" (named after the original number of countries) that, in the 1970s, made up a strong and unified developing-country bloc on certain issues but today represent widely divergent interests. As a group, the developing countries today often represent more disparate interests and wills than before the end of the Cold War. More marked regionalisation is noticeable, but in traditional G77 co-ordination the African group appears, in some situations, to find it difficult to gain a hearing for its standpoints. For the UN's legitimacy and credibility, it is crucial for all regional groupings to perceive themselves as owners of, and responsible for, the work. Global UN co-operation is therefore favoured by clear attention paid to African countries and their issues

Confidence in the UN's work in Africa has traditionally been great, but as mentioned above certain adverse changes have taken place in the 1990s. To reverse this trend and tackle such matters as the unfavourable legacy of UN passivity during the genocide in Rwanda, several measures are required: the UN should be able to show more convincingly that it protects small countries and does not primarily identify with great-power interests. The UN's presence at country level should be strengthened and co-ordinated in accordance with the reform ideas originated by Sweden, among other countries. The UN should also help to develop the African countries' capacity to deal with crises and work for a solid foundation for this capacity to be established in Africa, with African "ownership".

In the present situation, African countries often give priority in the UN to issues relating to development co-operation, which are handled at policy level both in the General Assembly and in the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and, in operational terms, are conducted by the UN's various funds and programmes. Sweden and its Nordic

neighbours are highly active in UN development co-operation, and provide proportionally very large contributions to these efforts. Sweden accounts for 7-12% of the voluntarily funded regular budgets of the central funds and programmes. Altogether, Sweden provides two million kronor annually for UN development co-operation, of which 35-50% is estimated to go to sub-Saharan Africa. This active role may be seen partly as a continuation of the support that we, not only bilaterally but also through the UN, gave to African countries' aspirations for independence.

Nordic co-operation fulfils a natural and important function in UN work, notably in the light of the good co-operation established through the "Nordic UN projects". The Nordic countries often act collectively on the boards of the UN's operational bodies.

Over the years, the UN has launched a range of initiatives to bring development problems in Africa onto the international agenda. All the global conferences have, for example, noted African countries' grave economic and social situation and recommended measures to promote sustainable development. In 1996, prompted by the decrease in aid flows to Africa, the UN Secretary-General took a joint initiative that also included the World Bank and IMF, to mobilise additional resources for development in Africa. Its success to date has been limited.

In addition to development issues, certain African countries are also active in matters relating, for example, to disarmament, conflict prevention, humanitarian inputs, international trade and certain environmental questions. Their interests often vary and are sometimes far removed from Swedish standpoints. In the UN's work, a gap between North and South is very often evident in these and other spheres. Poor countries perceive themselves as marginalised and the UN as ruled by the North. Simultaneously, however, there are clear signs that traditional country groupings are being superseded by new alliances that are arising on specialist issues.

In the two trade-policy organisations UNCTAD (the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) and the WTO, the North-South conflict has subsided and a more unified view on the causes of underdevelopment and which measures should be taken to achieve sustainable development has emerged.

Industrialised and developing countries agree on the necessity of continued economic reforms and liberalisation of trade in the latter.

#### 7.4 Africa and the International Financial Institutions

For Africa, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank Group, African Development Bank and other International Financial Institutions

(IFIs), including the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), are central players. Together, during 1996, the IFIs provided resources corresponding to more than SEK 40 billion in the form of loans and donations to fund economic reform programmes and project activities in African countries (with particular emphasis on the poorest). Their technical advisory services also play an important role.

The IFIs are not entirely autonomous power centres that autocratically decide what policies borrowers should conduct. They are international bodies, and they have mandates and act on the basis of the guidelines that the owners, i.e. member countries, have laid down for them. The IFIs' involvement has been the subject of intense debate in the African countries. What many people perceived as being subjected to dictates from abroad has, however, been superseded in time by more relaxed and pragmatic co-operation. The World Bank, in particular, has gradually modified its way of working and now stands out, to many present-day African spokesmen in the sphere of economic policy, as a constructive partner. Nonetheless, the IFIs work in an environment and on issues that have great political range and explosive force. Their working methods and policy recommendations alike will undoubtedly be examined and re-examined over the years ahead.

### **The World Bank**

The World Bank is the largest multilateral financier in sub-Saharan Africa, with annual lending of around SEK 16 billion. Virtually all of this sum is channelled through the Bank's soft-loan facility, the International Development Agency (IDA). The International Finance Corporation (IFC), which is the private-sector part of the World Bank, has also expanded its activities in Africa: in 1997, its investments amounted to over SEK 3 billion. As a further sign of swelling private flows, the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA, a body in the World Bank Group) has also recently established itself in the region.

The importance of the World Bank to Africa's development is due not only to the volume of its resources but also, just as much, to its predominant influence over most countries' development strategy. Long before structural adjustment and macroeconomic conditionality were on the agenda, the Bank exerted its influence through the selection and design of projects. With hindsight, many of these may be said to have been misdirected, often large-scale and unrealistic projects under state auspices. During the 1980s, it was the World Bank that, in many cases, shaped the detailed provisions of the SAPs, although the IMF was responsible for their basic macroeconomic conditionality. African borrowers negotiated their loans with World Bank officials who had travelled to the continent, while the Bank's permanent representation on the spot was relatively limited.

Today, wide-ranging efforts are under way in the Bank to reform this way of working. In its quest for a changed role and a new type of partnership, the World Bank is reviewing its relationship with Africa. This bears the stamp of years of structural adjustment, but also of the Bank's upper hand over borrower countries in terms of skills and efficiency. The risk has thus been that the Bank lacks the patience to wait but, instead, takes over and runs processes, thereby undermining the local ownership that it has nonetheless been aiming to create. The same problem has existed in relation to other aid donors.

The current reforms are the most sweeping since the World Bank came into existence. They strengthen its aspiration to become a partner to Africa that is not only important in volume terms, but also better and more knowledgeable. Accusations of lack of interest in listening to the opposite party have resulted in extensive training programmes for Bank staff and systematic decentralisation of activities to the co-operating countries. Changes in attitudes take time, and it is a large organisation that must undergo these changes; but the purpose of the current reorientation is to introduce a new culture into the Bank.

Research findings show that increased participation results in a higher degree of target fulfilment. The Bank has taken note of these findings, although the degree of local participation in projects and programmes continues to vary. More work on the process of obtaining local backing and involvement is required. Civil society is considerably more actively engaged in the preparation of country strategies than before. More can be done in this respect as well, but the change is clear. Moreover, the need for better local support for the SAPs has been discussed. One initiative launched in 1997 to evaluate the programmes from the grass-roots perspective also deals with the problem of participation methods. In Africa, this initiative includes Ghana, Mali, Uganda and Zimbabwe, and it entails a new type of co-operation between the World Bank, civil society and these countries' governments.

Another initiative that may become significant for development in Africa focuses on capacity-building throughout the continent. This initiative identifies an important obstacle to development. Nevertheless, to become a practicable strategic tool for capacity-building, the initiative in its present state must be revised. Instead of the planned function as, above all, a channel for financial resources it could become a forum for the exchange of ideas, lessons and methods. This type of catalytic instrument has been successfully used in microfinancing contexts. Some local capacity, for example in the macroeconomic sphere, also exists in the African countries. It is important for such institutions as the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) and African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), which have played an important role and received active Swedish support, to continue to develop and consolidate their African roots and identity.

The notion of good governance is central to all partnerships. It has particular relevance in Africa, with its young and deficient democratic structures. The Bank's guidelines for good governance from as early as 1991 cited such key areas as responsibility for the running of public services, public control of administration and strengthening of the rule of law and its institutions as crucial to the degree of success that the World Bank's inputs in a co-operating country could achieve. Since 1997, the key areas cited have also included corruption. Corruption has an adverse effect on partnership and should be combatted jointly by the co-operating country and the World Bank and IMF as well as other donors.

Another obstacle to Africa's development is the occurrence of war and conflicts. In its reforms, the World Bank has given priority to involvement in post-conflict countries where the Bank's capacity and experience can make a valuable contribution to establishing public administration on a new basis that facilitates peaceful development.

The African countries' economic growth today is, broadly speaking, on a par with countries in South-East Asia, for example, but in the Bank's estimation this growth is not sustainable without large-scale investments, both public and private. High growth is, as mentioned above, necessary to attain the objective of poverty reduction. Sweden has for many years, in co-operation with its Nordic neighbours and other likeminded countries, been a strong driving force for strengthening the World Bank's and other development banks' poverty profile. The foundations of this reform work are, to a high degree, these countries' long bilateral experience in the poverty sphere. The work has resulted in considerable improvements, but much remains to be done. Sweden will continue to play an active role in these institutions in the future.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) was established in 1963, to fund development projects, by the countries then belonging to the Organization of African Unity (OAU). All the African nations are now members of AfDB. In the early 1980s, non-African countries were given the opportunity of entering as minority stakeholders (owning one-third of the share capital). The African Development Fund (AfDF), which has been a freestanding part of the AfDB Group since the early 1970s and is funded by the traditional circle of donors, focuses its operations on supporting development projects in the poorest countries through advantageous lending and donations. The Bank's lending in 1996 totalled SEK 3.4 billion and the Fund's SEK 1.9bn.

After wrestling with severe problems of an administrative, financial and operative nature for a number of years, the Bank is now undergoing a thoroughgoing reform. With the partnership idea as their starting point, Sweden and the other Nordic countries are playing a prominent part in the reform process, which is closely linked to the current negotiations on a fifth increase in capital. The process is aimed at restoring confidence in the Bank, so that it can act more effectively in promoting African development. The efforts to improve operations in AfDB have begun to yield results, but the Bank is still in need of better control and more efficient administration, and these improvements are expected to result from the negotiations on reform and capital replenishment.

Within the framework of reform work in the Bank, a process is under way to formulate its future role in an Africa where new political and economic conditions prevail. The Bank's poverty-oriented work should include a sharper focus on regional integration and private-sector development, in which the Bank should serve as a catalyst for private capital flows. Issues like gender equality and good governance, for which the Bank's strong African roots and identity are advantageous, should also form an important part of the Bank's work.

## **The European Investment Bank**

Much of the Community's financial support for Africa is channelled through the European Investment Bank (EIB). The EIB is a Community institution, and the bulk of the funds it provides for sub-Saharan Africa ensue from the financial protocols accompanying the Lomé Conventions. At the same time, the bank is an independent IFI that is owned directly by EU member countries. Decisions on projects are taken by the Bank's own board.

During the period 1991-96, the EIB funded projects for nearly SEK 12 billion in the African countries that had signed the Lomé Convention. The Bank funded, in particular, projects in the following sectors:

energy, transport and communications, water supply and purification, industry and the financial sector. Roughly half the funds were paid in the form of subsidised loans, while the remainder were disbursed through direct investments in companies or financial institutions, or through the more risky types of loan financing (convertible loans or debentures).

In conjunction with the post-Lomé discussions, the member countries are considering both giving the EIB a more independent role in managing the Community's financial support, and also allowing it to use more financial instruments in its activities.

### **The International Monetary Fund**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) plays a very important part in Africa. First, this relates to macroeconomic monitoring and short-term lending to member countries (all the sub-Saharan African countries are members of IMF). Secondly — and even more importantly — its influence is exerted through the concessional loans that are provided to fund the SAPs: the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF). A total of 22 African countries have received support from the IMF on concessional terms in one or more rounds of lending.

The IMF's assessment of economic policy is a direct determinant of the World Bank's and bilateral aid donors' support for the SAPs. Balance-of-payments support is given, in principle, only if the IMF has approved the recipient country's economic policy, and the same applies to debt renegotiations in the Paris Club. The IMF's and World Bank's joint HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) Initiative for debt relief is also constructed around the implementation of the ESAF. Sweden's support for economic reforms (debt relief and balance-of-payments support) is normally given to countries that implement IMF programmes, although there is scope for providing support notwithstanding minor delays in the economic reform programmes, or when unforeseen external obstacles impede the fulfilment of certain conditions.

An IMF arrangement may thus be said to exert a catalytic effect since, first, it makes debt renegotiations possible and, secondly, enlarges the scope for other resource flows, in the form of both bilateral aid and private investments. But this also means that the IMF secures an influence that is not merely a matter of economic policy in the narrow sense, but also touches on political and social reality. It is therefore not surprising that the IMF's recommendations and conditions — “conditionality” — have become controversial. This topic is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8.

There is awareness in IMF that the institution's role has become much broader than it was originally. Nowadays, both social issues and good governance are actively discussed. But it is important to stress that the

IMF's role is primarily to issue recommendations and provide funding for the purpose of attaining macroeconomic stability. The unique competence of the Fund in this sphere is unquestionable; but greater openness and flexibility will be required in the co-operation of the future. It is gratifying that certain measures have already been taken to increase transparency and public control over the IMF's work.

## 7.5 Africa and the international trade system

One basic precondition for international trade is reliable and predictable ground rules for the economic players. The multilateral regulations for trade have been established in the WTO. The African countries are all small players in world trade, and therefore dependent on being able to rely on the WTO's regulations. Most of the countries in Africa are already members of the WTO.

The foremost tool of the international liberalisation process has been the agreements that have been negotiated over the years in the WTO and its forerunner, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The poorest countries, which are largely located in Africa, have benefited from the customs-duty reductions and abolition of other trade barriers in the industrialised countries that have stemmed from negotiations in the WTO/GATT. They have also been offered special preferences. These commitments have been made without requirements being imposed on the developing countries to liberalise their trade. It was not until the negotiations in the Uruguay Round that the developing countries participated actively and made certain commitments — albeit limited ones — not to raise their own trade barriers. Most developing countries are still not living up to the demands entailed by WTO membership, and special support programmes exist for this reason. More rigorous requirements must now be imposed on the developing countries to accelerate their integration into the global trade system.

The continued negotiations within the WTO framework will come to be highly significant to the countries in Africa. The year 2000 will mark the start of negotiations on enhanced market access for agricultural products, and other sectors will then probably also be included in the talks. There are high expectations that the developing countries will play an active part in these negotiations, with their own offers of liberalisation measures. The trend towards trade liberalisation that has taken place in Africa is, to date, mainly a result of the SAPs negotiated with the IMF and World Bank. Within the SAP framework, the focus is on phasing out the trade barriers that most damage the countries' domestic economies.

One means of enabling African countries to become more effective participants in the global trade system is the trade-related technical aid provided both bilaterally and through the WTO, UNCTAD and the

International Trade Centre (ITC, a joint undertaking of UNCTAD and WTO). This aid is a form of support that ranges from improvements in quality control to devising national strategies for trade development, and from establishing infrastructure to phasing out non-tariff barriers to trade. Sweden is traditionally one of the largest donors to this multilateral aid. Swedish aid in the trade sector has increased over the past year.

Sweden has also acted as a strong driving force in the initiative taken by UNDP, the World Bank, the IMF, UNCTAD, the WTO and the ITC, at the WTO ministerial conference in Singapore in December 1996, to integrate trade-related technical aid inputs to the least developed countries (LDCs), and also to increase the preferences for the LDCs' products on markets in the industrial countries and the more developed of the developing countries.

Investments have a key role in economic development. In Africa, the supply of domestic capital is inadequate, and most African countries are working actively to attract foreign capital. The main reasons why foreign investors hesitate to put their money in Africa include insufficient return and uncertainty concerning economic policy and the legal situation. Through investment agreements and various forms of investment guarantees, this uncertainty can be reduced. The number of bilateral investment agreements in the world has risen dramatically to a current total of 1,630, of which 260 were drawn up by African countries. Investment agreements may sometimes need supplementing with development co-operation aimed at boosting governments' capacity to conduct a stable policy that promotes development and favours domestic and foreign companies alike.

Sweden is working for the drawing-up of a multilateral agreement for investments. Negotiations of this kind are under way in the OECD, the aim being for the participant countries to agree, by the spring of 1998, on a "Multilateral Investment Agreement". The objective for Sweden's part is for the principles that OECD member countries agree on to become multilaterally applicable within the WTO framework. However, an agreement that includes the African countries as well is still a remote prospect.

Sweden is a member of the above-mentioned Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), which offers insurance cover for non-commercial risks over a period of 15–20 years. Swedish companies are thereby able to insure their investments in the great majority of African nations that are also members of MIGA.

### 8.1 Background

For Africa, the 1980s were in many respects a lost decade. In contrast to all the other continents, growth in the sub-Saharan countries was, on average, negative. Heavy borrowing during the oil boom, used for consumption and unproductive investments, created dramatic debt traps for many countries. Weak economic policy with misdirected incentives exacerbated the crisis. The response was SAPs under the aegis of the IMF and World Bank. Seldom have two institutions exerted such power over development as these two did in Africa during the 1980s. The price of the necessary economic consolidation was not only initially stagnating growth and regression in the social sectors, but also that the countries themselves, to a high degree, lost control over their own development. With hindsight, the lack of local support and genuine “ownership” may be said also to have undermined the SAPs’ legitimacy and effectiveness.

During the 1990s, important political and economic changes have taken place in Africa. A new generation of leaders have appeared, with new ideas about political and economic development. Democracy has gained a foothold and the democratisation process is continuing. The abolition of apartheid in South Africa represents a new start for the southern part of the continent. The 30-year civil war in Ethiopia has been settled and Eritrea has emerged, with new ideas about African self-reliance. The Mobutu regime has fallen, as one of the last bastions of outdated authoritarian rule. Several peace processes are under way, and respect for human rights is growing in many countries.

At the same time, immense problems remain. The genocide in Rwanda in the spring of 1994 stands out as one of the world’s worst disasters. It will be a long time before the resulting wounds can heal, and instability remains marked in the region. In addition, more African countries have succumbed to armed conflict. The number of poor people is still rising in most countries, and population growth, environmental degradation and social problems of various kinds are, in many places, increasingly intractable. HIV/AIDS has hit Africa particularly hard and is eliminating a large proportion of the productive generation.

If — as South Africa’s Vice President Thabo Mbeki hopes — the next millennium is to involve a renaissance for Africa, great difficulties must be surmounted. Several African leaders wish to make themselves independent of aid, secure a higher degree of reciprocity in relationships and, as soon as possible, see their countries incorporated into customary international trade exchange and capable of attracting private investments. Here, then, is a desire to develop new relations with

the surrounding world. A new generation also characterises the private sector, the academic world and other parts of society. Impatience has begun to grow; and the response must be decisive reforms and vigorous concerted efforts.

This shift in political ideology and approach to economic development is welcome — but may not be interpreted as meaning that the surrounding world's continued responsibility for Africa's deprived populations is being laid aside. Our support is needed, perhaps even more than before, to reinforce and consolidate the progress made to date.

During the 1990s, the new economic policy has begun to yield results in Africa, if in considerably more modest terms than in most other parts of the world. There is a general understanding of the importance of improved "ownership". If a rapid increase in growth is to be achieved — and this is necessary to lift Africa out of poverty — the African countries must take over the management of their own development. Without powerful national leadership and "ownership" with grass-roots support from the people, the requisite reforms will be difficult to implement and popular backing for national development plans inadequate. The large number of predetermined conditions of the SAPs (one programme could contain a hundred) and aid, negotiated by a small circle of participants, neither contributed to "ownership" nor were realistically possible to fulfil. Their management was, accordingly, unreliable. The time is now ripe to switch, instead, to management by objectives and look at the results.

In the light of this process of change in Africa and the lessons yielded by the past decade of co-operation, the need to bring about a qualitatively new co-operating relationship has been felt ever more strongly, in Sweden and elsewhere. Partnership is the notion that has come to include these ambitions.

## 8.2 A new partnership

The concept of partnership is used today by the majority of donors: the World Bank, the EU, the UK, the USA, etc. It has a variety of meanings, but one common feature is the aspiration for enhanced equality in relationships with countries in Africa, and increased breadth. These in turn are based on a shared understanding that the traditional relationship between donor and recipient must change if better results of co-operation are to be attainable. In the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), the donor countries are now — after discussions with recipient countries — discussing the requirements for attaining better partnership relationships and what a good partnership should involve.

Partnership should be seen as an attitude, in a form of co-operation that is based on a shared basis of values and mutual trust. Joint and clearly formulated objectives, conditions, obligations, roles and responsibilities are part of partnership. The aspiration should be to bring about increased equality and mutual respect in the relationship, in awareness of the fundamental inequality represented by the donor's upper hand in terms of resources.

Partnership is also aimed at strengthening the weaker party. This aim includes an idea of solidarity, as well as a realisation that an endeavour to bring about a more equal world is also in the long-term interest of the stronger party. Sweden should be able to protect Africa's interests in international contexts where the African states are not themselves represented, provided that these interests do not conflict with crucial Swedish foreign-policy aims.

A shared basis of values may consist of some of the conventions to which almost all countries are signatories. These relate to political and civil rights, equality between the sexes, the rights of the child, basic democratic rules, and social and economic rights. The intention is not to lash poor African countries with the moralist whip, but to establish a fundamental ethic to govern co-operation — an ethic that the players of partnership have decided to support in their international normative work.

### 8.3 A code of conduct

The qualitative side of partnership includes a code relating to such conduct as the following:

- ◆ openness and clarity concerning the values and interests that govern co-operation;
- ◆ a basic attitude relating to sustainability and long-termism;
- ◆ an increased element of management by objectives and result orientation of aid, instead of a multitude of predetermined conditions;
- ◆ a humble, listening attitude with respect for African assumption of responsibility and awareness of the local environment;
- ◆ clarity on resource commitments, payments and reporting principles;
- ◆ desire for co-ordination among the donors.

These are primarily Swedish starting points. For both parties, examples of additional points may be determination to combat corruption or increase openness in local decision-making processes, or improved accounting.

A code of conduct elucidates the premises for co-operation in partnership, enhances transparency and entails a declaration of intent on the manner in which the parties wish the co-operation to be pursued.

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#### 8.4 The methods of partnership

In order for a new form of partnership to be given a genuine content, methods of co-operation must be changed. An international discussion has begun in this area, and a number of conclusions about the desirable emphasis may already be formulated:

- ◆ African leadership and ownership. This is perhaps the most important lesson of the past few decades' development co-operation with Africa. One implication is that a partnership should be based on the country's own development planning and priorities. Such plans are now increasingly being devised in consultative and democratic processes within the countries concerned that include, for example, discussions in parliament. This does not spell an appeal for a return to centralised state planning; rather, it expresses a responsive endeavour to take into account, as far as possible, the planning processes at national and local level that shape priorities in the country. It is also desirable for the various country strategies that are now being drawn up for a country in the World Bank, EU and UN, and among bilateral players, to be as closely associated as possible with the national plans. Co-ordination of aid is thereby also facilitated.
- ◆ Improved local backing and participation. During the 1980s, the content and conditions of the SAPs were usually negotiated solely between the IMF and/or World Bank on the one hand and a few officials in the ministry of finance on the other. Important development issues must now be backed and legitimised in quite a different manner, in a national political process with participation by the government and parliament and, preferably, openness to the media. This kind of procedure takes time and is more complex but is, first, a self-evident part of democratic development and, secondly, a precondition for a good final outcome.
- ◆ Improved co-ordination. Effective African ownership requires good donor co-ordination, preferably under the recipient country's own management. This in turn is based on the donor countries having on-the-spot representation with the right to take decisions and the capacity to play an active part in local co-ordination forums and decisions. Increased delegation of this kind is now being actively conducted by, for example, the World Bank, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom, for the above purpose among others. Co-ordination is also facilitated if the consultative group meetings under the auspices of the World Bank, which are now usually held in Paris, take place in the capital of the country concerned instead. This makes it

easier for civil society, business people and other local players to participate. Such a development has now been commenced.

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Highly developed interaction between donors and recipients in other co-ordinating forums, such as the Global Coalition for Africa (GCA) and the World Bank's Special Program of Assistance for Africa (SPA), can also contribute to more effective co-ordination.

- ◆ Well-developed sectoral and budget support. One of the most burdensome tasks imposed on African administrations is that of keeping what are very often thousands of projects, conducted in co-operation with various foreign players, in order. It is desirable for development co-operation, instead, to give way to sectorally co-ordinated activities under the country's management in which all donors to the sectors concerned co-ordinate their resources, or alternatively to budget support at sectoral or macro level. The mechanisms for such support are now being developed, within the SPA and other frameworks. This also calls for measures on the recipient's side.
- ◆ Simplified procedures. Many African countries are wrestling with many different reporting systems and numerous procurement regulations, payment procedures, accounting routines, etc. It is urgent to attempt to develop, as far as possible, common procedures and also to support the establishment of effective local systems that are acceptable to the majority of donors. The question of untying aid should, at the same time, be pursued further. Research shows that the tying of aid makes matters both more expensive and more complicated.
- ◆ Contractual clarity and transparency. It is essential for the clarity and transparency concerning basic principles of co-operation referred to above to be expressed in contract form between the parties as well. This applies to the objectives of co-operation, reciprocal rights and obligations and follow-up agreements as well. One form of such contractual procedure in partnership has been tried by the Nordic countries and Tanzania since 1996.
- ◆ Increased coherence between different areas of policy. A partnership must be shaped in the awareness that the spheres of trade, development, security, migration, environment are interconnected and must evolve in a single context. This issue is, at present, being actively tackled in, for example, the EU in the run-up to the negotiations on a new Lomé Convention. Coherence has also been made a main issue of the new British Government's White Paper on development.

- ◆ Rewards for progress. Instead of the traditional plethora of conditions not been complied with and sanctions not applied, management by objectives should be introduced, with measurable, simple performance targets whose attainment is required for continued aid. One implication of co-operation in partnership should be that countries able to show good results from co-operation will be able to attract more resources.
- ◆ Extraordinary debt-relief inputs for certain countries. For some of the poorest and most indebted countries in Africa, inputs over and above the HIPC Initiative must be provided. The internationally co-ordinated inputs must give every debt-stricken country a realistic chance of extracting itself from the debt crisis within the foreseeable future, by a combination of reforms and debt relief.

## 8.5 The dimensions of partnership

The above description of the various components of partnership refers mainly to the development co-operation conducted between governments. Although this co-operation will play a crucial role in the interface with Africa in the future, as now, partnership has more dimensions and more players. There is a wish, notably on the African countries' part, to broaden their relations and exchange with the rest of the world. Important elements are trade, private investments, research exchange, technical co-operation, culture, etc. Some of these contacts can be stimulated and subsidies through official bodies, while others are based solely on voluntarily assistance from other players. NGOs, churches, businesses, universities, etc may wish to take part, and then be inspired by the framework of the official partnership and sometimes also participate within it.

It is in Sweden's interest, as part of a strengthened Africa policy, to seek to broaden relations between Sweden and Africa and intensify the two countries' joint involvement. Development co-operation also covers a very wide range of activities, with numerous Swedish players involved; but more can be done, especially to bring about self-sustaining co-operation for mutual benefit. The official partnership can provide a framework for this, and other forms of partnership can develop in parallel.

In order for an official partnership, with the components described above, to be effective, first, there must be a readiness to participate on the part of African countries, and secondly it must be possible for a joint approach with more donor countries to be achieved. A qualitatively new partnership as described above entails major challenges to both parties. Is it possible to implement? It must be a gradual process, and it cannot include every country. Nor can it be all-embracing everywhere. The emphasis must be laid on the fact that it entails an attitude that can

probably be realised only step by step and a little at a time. A capacity to take the first steps requires certain minimum conditions to be met. Skr. 1997/98:122

A successful partnership represents a qualitative step forward, permitting a more effective contribution to reducing poverty in Africa.

## 8.6 Conditionality and partnership

Resource transfers between countries are never entirely unconditional. When they consist in purely commercial loans, the condition is repayment on strictly market terms. When they consist in transfers that include elements of aid, conditions are imposed to safeguard stability, development, and effective utilisation of the resources. When they are loans from the World Bank, IMF and other IFIs, a sound economic policy is also stipulated, for the purpose of ensuring repayment and, by the same token, continued lending.

Today, in contrast to the situation in the early 1980s, there is a common basic view of the problems and of which reforms are necessary. The shortcomings that previously characterised conditions have also been successively improved over time, and the social consequences are dealt with more appropriately. Efforts are now made, too, to bring about a small number of key indicators and avoid the large number of conditions and indicators that have previously been common in various loan documents. A discussion is also under way on replacing traditional condition packages with lending based on an assessment of the policy conducted in lender countries. There are good prospects of a new phase in the SAPs in which they are designed to a larger extent by lenders and borrowers jointly, and result in lasting progress.

One problem, however, may be that the recipient lacks capacity to implement a genuine change. Here, the institution-building and the knowledge transfer effected by the institutions are major means of strengthening countries' ability to carry out reforms. The IMF and World Bank have advanced expertise and play an important part in providing advice and building domestic capacity.

With the starting point that national ownership is essential, the question is how multilateral and bilateral financiers can co-operate to provide optimum support for a reform process aimed at sustainable growth and poverty alleviation. In accordance with the above, it is appropriate for bilateral balance-of-payments support to be linked with a sound economic policy and IMF programmes.

Different donors have different roles, which should be clarified. At the same time, there must be better co-ordination between the donors, preferably under the recipient country's management. On the basis of specific conditions in the countries, the IMF should engage in a more

active discussion with aid donors, to improve its ability to predict the future inflow of balance-of-payments support and other aid. There should be mechanisms that can easily co-ordinate the donors' efforts when countries are hit by external shocks and the preconditions for SAPs therefore change. Bilateral donors, and also the EU, will assume a clearer macroeconomic role in the transition to sector-programme support, and there should be systems for handling this. Bilateral aid also has an important part to play in the technical sphere (Swedish assistance for public administration and management being one example) that may be relevant to the IFIs.

## 9 Revitalising Sweden's Africa policy

### 9.1 A changed basis

Africa is in a transition phase, owing both to development in the continent and to the rapid changes under way in the surrounding world. Many countries have undergone a process in a democratic direction and now have, at least superficially, a democratic order with popularly elected leaders and functioning parliaments. The democratic gains made since the early 1990s have, in an African perspective, been substantial; but they are still fragile and need consolidating and developing further. There are hopes that the new generation of leaders will have the capacity and will to work in this direction.

In many countries, concurrently with the democratisation process, the economic reform programmes have laid the foundations of sustainable economic development. Conditions for increased African participation in the world economy are thereby on the way to being created. Nevertheless, there is a risk of Africa being excluded from the globalisation process and further marginalised — a trend that might, in a longer perspective, have serious economic and political consequences, not only for Africa but for the world as a whole.

In the interconnected world of today, foreign and security policy includes a strong and mutual interest in reducing the gaps and preventing sharply divergent development. Economic equalisation and increased contacts between peoples promote peaceful global development, which is to the benefit of all. Economic development, peace and democracy are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Security and solidarity are indivisible.

All countries, and perhaps small ones in particular, need a rule-based international order that safeguards not only the strongest countries' interests. In order for such systems to be devised and complied with, all

the players must act in concert, on the basis of a minimum of consensus regarding what the global problems are and how they should be tackled. Thus, it must be possible for every nation to be included in this international discussion.

Back in 1968, in one of the fundamental documents of Swedish aid policy (Govt. Bill. 1968:101), this connection was expressed in a manner that is still relevant: “Social justice and equalisation are required within nations, and the same requirements must be laid down for relations between nations. Injustices in distribution of the world’s resources give rise to tensions and conflicts within and between countries. A cross-border sense of solidarity and responsibility is the expression of the realisation that peace, freedom and prosperity are not exclusively national, but increasingly universal and indivisible, concerns. The past few years’ many open international conflicts have, almost without exception, arisen in the poorer parts of the world.”

Today, it may be added that international conflicts are no longer as common as internal armed conflicts, into which the civil population is drawn in an increasingly brutal way — while poverty remains a major reason for the conflicts. The UN Security Council today devotes more than half its work to such conflicts in Africa. As a member of the UN, Sweden shares the global community’s responsibility for remedying this situation, and the African nations also have an interest in Sweden’s continuing involvement in peacekeeping and conflict resolution.

Besides the general interest in peaceful global development, there are also risks associated with a persistently unstable situation in large parts of Africa. This instability primarily affects the African countries themselves, but also influences Sweden and the rest of Europe — which after all, in global terms, is part of Africa’s “near abroad”. Growing illegal immigration is one such problem, as is increasing international crime relating, for example, to drugs. International terrorism is another phenomenon that may ensue from people seeing themselves as economically, politically or socially held back.

In a longer perspective, Africa’s relatively small and undeveloped economies constitute a large unutilised potential. Increased economic integration and ever more rapid and highly developed trade exchange between African countries themselves may, in the long run, generate new markets. Today, Africa is a small market, but investments in recent years — such as Volvo’s in Botswana and Telia’s in Uganda — reveal the new opportunities that nonetheless exist. A market of several hundred million people in countries where infrastructure investments are sorely needed, and with an average growth rate of more than 5% a year, is naturally interesting to foreign investors and exporters.

The fact that Africa plays an important role as an integrated part of the global community is also clear in other, specific areas. A few examples

may be found in the environmental sector: deforestation and desertification may result in climatic changes that affect ecological parameters worldwide. Similarly, the threat to biodiversity spells risks for agriculture and technological development in every country, since the starting material for plant processing research may disappear.

More than anywhere else, Africa's raw-material resources have remained unexploited. With growing scarcity elsewhere, their importance to global subsistence is set to increase. It is a universal long-term interest for the continent's natural resources to be utilised in a sustainable and ecofriendly manner.

Broadened and intensified Swedish involvement in Africa may also be seen as a means of helping to reduce African countries' dependence on vested interests in other countries. For Sweden's part, we benefit from more detailed knowledge about the African countries where Swedish involvement has hitherto been limited, that enables us to make full use of our membership of the EU and the UN (in the latter, currently as a member of the Security Council).

While responsibility for development is primarily borne by the countries themselves, the surrounding world's support is crucially important in the transition stage that Africa is now undergoing, as described above. The idea of solidarity is the basis of Sweden's Africa policy. It assumes the duty, shared by humankind in general, of reaching out to help those who are less well off. With concerted efforts, Africa's marginalisation can be replaced by the opposite trend. A renewed focus on Africa involves adopting a supportive standpoint towards further aspirations for global equality and collective, harmonious development.

Given the above considerations, a revitalised and strengthened Swedish Africa policy focuses on the following objectives:

- ◆ *supporting African-led processes of change towards consolidated democracy and sustainable development, focusing particularly on the situation of the poor;*
- ◆ *developing partnerships between Africa and the surrounding world;*
- ◆ *strengthening the long-term contacts between Sweden and Africa.*

The recommendations presented below should all be considered in the light of the basic ideas of partnership.

9.2 Supporting African-led processes of change towards consolidated democracy and persistent economic growth, focusing particularly on the situation of the poor

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**Democracy, human rights and good governance**

Africa faces the great challenge of intensifying, broadening and consolidating the democratisation process that has gathered real momentum in the 1990s. Sweden can support African countries in various ways in their endeavours to find their own forms of democracy, based on the objectives and values laid down in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent six conventions. The African culture of consensus and, above all, the vigorous present-day debate on democracy in Africa give reason to hope for dynamic changes in the years ahead.

Civil society is crucially important to making democracy secure and promoting its further development. One vital element in Swedish development co-operation with African countries in recent years has been support for civil society, either directly or through Swedish and international organisations.

*As described in particular in the Government communication on "Democracy and Human Rights in Sweden's development co-operation", Sweden aims to work for the following aims, among others:*

- ◆ viable civil society with a multitude of democratic organisations;
- ◆ a democratic culture of tolerance, respect, participation and openness;
- ◆ effective democratic institutions and procedures;
- ◆ free and independent media;
- ◆ respect for human rights.

Sweden aims, in particular, to support processes in public-sector activities and civil society alike that can enhance transparency and public control, diversity and dynamism, readiness to compromise and bridging of antagonisms, and the assumption of responsibility.

Sweden's instruments for promoting this are a combination of dialogue on development policy and specific measures. Aid to Africa that directly promotes democracy and human rights should increase in

volume, be made more efficient, be strategic and have a long-term perspective.

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*For the purpose of promoting good governance, Sweden's efforts will include:*

- ◆ laying heavier emphasis on issues connected with good governance, in the political dialogue with various African countries as well as in development co-operation;
- ◆ supporting inputs to strengthen the capacity and skills of the public sector, including local administration;
- ◆ working for more effective application of the principles of the rule of law;
- ◆ continuing to support efforts to combat corruption by, for example, working for broad international backing for the regulations drawn up in the OECD, and also working for the World Bank, the IMF and the UN system to persist in paying close attention to problems connected with corruption.

### **Preventing and managing conflicts**

Democracy, economic and social development, and peace and stability reinforce one another. A capacity to prevent, manage and resolve violent conflicts on a lasting basis requires inputs and advances in every sphere. In recent years, there has been growing awareness of the need for various instruments and, especially, for conflict-management capacity to be developed. In the African context, the players of development co-operation — the UN, the World Bank, bilateral donors and many NGOs — have become ever more important in dealing with complex crises, but also in handling crises in more long-term situations.

In the new political thinking that has emerged in Africa, one important component is for Africans to take increasing responsibility for preventing, managing and resolving violent conflicts. In 1993, the OAU established a special “conflict-resolving mechanism”. This has now secured the resources for systematic monitoring of development in potential trouble spots and provision of data on which political decisions may be based. Action methods and specific measures are still being established, but to date they have included efforts on the part of special envoys and observers. Subregional organisations, for example in SADC, have also become involved in similar activities.

*In this area, Sweden's aims include:*

- ◆ playing an active part in current attempts to strengthen African capacity to prevent and manage violent conflicts in Africa, by peacekeeping and other means;
- ◆ assisting in the further development of forms of closer political dialogue and collaboration in peacekeeping efforts between the Nordic countries and Africa;
- ◆ making further efforts to build the EU's capacity for conflict prevention, and working for systematic use of the Union's and member countries' information to discuss potential hotbeds of conflict and policy options — early warning and early action;
- ◆ within the framework of development co-operation, bilateral as well as multilateral, utilising opportunities to identify causes and risks of conflict, and also as far as possible shaping co-operation in such a way as to counteract and eliminate these causes and risks;
- ◆ continuing to develop Swedish skills on these issues.

### **Economic reforms and growth**

A sustainable improvement in poor people's living standards is unattainable without a sharp increase in economic growth. A growth rate averaging nearly 5-7% a year (i.e. 2-4% per capita) is deemed necessary in order for the number of poor people to decrease. In addition, the structure of production and distribution of resources must be such that growth also reaches deprived groups and areas.

The international community must work to consolidate and boost the upturn that is now evident in the African economies. The processes of economic reform must continue and develop. Understanding of this and of the complex and long-term nature of these processes is now far greater than when they began in the early 1980s, among African governments as well as foreign financiers.

The reform process relates not only to macroeconomic stability and market liberalisation. These are the first steps — and they are relatively easy to define. Many countries have yet to take these steps, but many countries' growth is also curbed by the debt crisis. Macroeconomic stability, a functioning market economy and a way out of the debt crisis are, nevertheless, within the reach of a large number of African countries. With international co-operation, this minimum can be achieved. However, success requires a sharper focus on public-sector responsibility, efforts to combat corruption, institutional development at national and local level, basic infrastructure, development of foreign trade and, above all, social development.

At the same time, knowledge of the preconditions for the reforms at micro level is insufficiently widespread. This applies, for example, to the realisation that institutional and sociocultural factors at grass-roots level — especially those connected with men's and women's different roles — have a major bearing on the scope for implementing reforms that result in economic growth. These factors combine to release the productive power of the poor, especially in agriculture, and to enable the ever stronger entrepreneurship to emerge. Knowledge of this must be developed and applied.

*In this area, the goals Sweden will work for include:*

- ◆ continued support, multilateral and bilateral, for economic reform programmes aimed at stable and long-term economic and social development;
- ◆ international collaboration for one country after another to extract itself from the debt crisis;
- ◆ support for development of capacity and institutions for implementation of the reform process;
- ◆ support for development and application of knowledge of institutional and sociocultural prerequisites for the reform process at micro level;
- ◆ a sharper focus on aspects of the economic reform programmes relating to trade policy and industrial development.

### **Rights of the poor**

Poverty alleviation is the overriding objective of Sweden's development co-operation. Despite growth, the number of poor people in Africa continues to grow. Barring a reversal of trends, nearly half the world's poor people will be in Africa by the year 2010. In the OECD document *Shaping the 21st Century*, the industrialised countries have undertaken, in a new spirit of partnership, to assist in halving the number of poor people.

In its report *The Rights of the Poor — Our Joint Responsibility* (in Swedish, Communication 1996/97:169), the Government reported on how Sweden's development co-operation can be strengthened to contribute to poverty alleviation.

*In line with this communication, action taken by Sweden will include:*

- ◆ developing a broad partnership at various levels in society, based on an open dialogue with the government in each country concerned;
- ◆ focusing development co-operation on processes in which the poor themselves take responsibility and have a sense of participation, and which reinforce their security, capacity and opportunities. The starting point should be poor people's view of their own situation;
- ◆ to a higher degree, focusing aid on programme aid, with active co-ordination under the recipient country's management;
- ◆ supporting equitable economic growth, for example by helping to bring about the preconditions for productivity increases in small-scale farming and for small-scale private enterprise;
- ◆ considering the situation of children in particular, by working for the application of a systematic child perspective in international development co-operation in Africa, both bilateral and multilateral, on the basis of children's rights.

Good governance and effective rule of law enable both women and men to make themselves heard and influence the political agenda. Since women's and men's rights and participation in decision-making forums are generally based on notions of men's superior and women's subordinate role — economically, culturally and politically — a broad spectrum of economic and social measures are required to boost women's participation in democratic processes at all levels and strengthen their enjoyment of human rights. Support for civil society must take into account the fact that women participate considerably less than men in decisions at various political levels: internationally, nationally, regionally and at village level, and also in issues that relate to their own families and themselves. Support for the building of a democratic society must therefore focus partly on women who become active locally, outside formal structures, concerning practical issues of economic and social collaboration.

In this area, Sweden's efforts will include:

- ◆ supporting the initiatives, involvement and organisations in the African societies that are directed at making the equality perspective, i.e. women's rights, a matter of everyday reality;
- ◆ working for all development co-operation, bilateral as well as multilateral, to be based on women's and men's equal rights, opportunities and obligations.

**Boosting capacity**

Partnership requires investment in the development of skills and institutions in co-operating countries. Knowledge and capacity must be boosted, to enable the African countries to shape an effective policy of their own to combat poverty. One fundamental prerequisite for this is for the countries' systems of skills provision at various levels to be developed, as well as their competence in utilising and developing knowledge. Concurrently with continued support for basic education to permit universal participation in democratic social development, vocational training centres and universities must be developed. Progress in the IT sector is creating new prospects for more efficient exchange of information and knowledge.

*To assist in boosting capacity in African countries, Sweden's action will include:*

- ◆ continuing to support increased breadth and quality in the countries' basic education, with a focus on primary schooling;

- ◆ promoting development of universities for higher education and research;
- ◆ promoting the countries' basic capacity for research development in key areas, both as a precondition for quality in higher education and to pave the way for independent knowledge development, analysis and debate;
- ◆ continuing to support independent African research institutions and networks;
- ◆ supporting national and regional institutions for training of public servants in key functions;
- ◆ supporting the building of capacity to investigate and clarify social issues for decision-makers and the public;
- ◆ drawing up an IT policy for development co-operation with particular reference to the situation in Africa.

### **Regional co-operation**

Regional co-operation is an important factor in the creation of political stability and economic development. The changes in Africa in the 1990s have improved preconditions for regional collaboration, although political and structural obstacles still impair and delay the integration process. The AfDB is focusing its reform efforts on stepping up regional co-operation. In recent years the OAU, as well as a number of subregional organisations — notably SADC, EAC, ECOWAS and IGAD — have become active and may, in the long run, be of major importance to development in Africa. Over the years, Sweden has supported regional co-operative efforts in Africa, especially Southern and Eastern Africa. During the year, the Government will adopt a strategy for Swedish support for regional activities in Africa.

*To promote increased regional co-operation, Sweden's efforts will include:*

- ◆ supporting African endeavours to increase regional economic co-operation, reduce trade barriers and develop modern, joint economic legislation;
- ◆ backing measures to promote skills development and institution-building in regional organisations;

- ◆ supporting regional co-operation in such areas as peace and security, agriculture and land conservation, use of water resources, and democracy and human rights; Skr. 1997/98:122
- ◆ in the EU, working for increased co-operation with regional organisations in Africa;
- ◆ working for regional co-operation relating to Lake Victoria, inspired by the success of Baltic Sea co-operation.

### **Sustainable use of natural resources**

Agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing and forestry are the staple means of subsistence in an African setting, where natural conditions are utilised to the utmost to secure human survival. The issues of food security and sustainable use of natural resources are therefore crucially important to the whole African continent. Many natural resources, such as water, are shared by several countries. An ability to use such resources in a sustainable manner requires co-operation between the countries.

In its Bill for approval of the International Convention to Combat Desertification (Govt. Bill 1995/96:42) and its communication *Sweden's International Co-operation for Sustainable Development* (in Swedish; Communication 1996/97:2), the Government has defined how Swedish development co-operation should contribute to sustainable utilisation of natural resources. The Government has also approved the action programme for sustainable development drawn up by Sida.

*To promote sustainable utilisation of natural resources, Sweden's efforts will include:*

- ◆ assuming the countries' assumption of responsibility, nationally and in international commitments, and their priorities in its support for sustainable production systems and improved natural-resource management, especially with respect to water, land and forest;
- ◆ helping to strengthen the building of capacity and institutions by such means as reinforcing the Regional Soil Conservation Unit in Nairobi, which bases its work on Swedish experience in Eastern Africa;
- ◆ paying due attention to traditional knowledge, which in combination with the development of local crops can help to bring about enhanced food security;
- ◆ supporting regional co-operation for sustainable utilisation of water resources, and helping to ensure that measures for water utilisation decided upon within the framework of the UN Commission on

Sustainable Development are effective, and also that the Global Water Partnership's work is supported;

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- ◆ through various channels, helping the countries to implement their own commitments under UN conventions and protocols relating to the environment and development, and especially their efforts to combat desertification, climatic change and depletion of the ozone layer, and to maintain biodiversity.

### 9.3 Developing partnerships between Africa and the surrounding world

The international discussion about Africa is highly characterised by the wish to lay a new foundation for relations. Partnership is the concept commonly used, not only in Sweden, to express the ambition of reducing dependence, broadening interfaces and bringing about a qualitative and methodical renewal.

When it comes to realising the idea of partnership in the international community, an extensive sphere for closer co-operation between Sweden and Africa is opening up, through development co-operation as well as in other forms. First and foremost, Sweden should — in line with its traditional foreign-policy goals — continue to work for a policy that results in favourable development in Africa. This means that we must listen to our African partners and, as far as possible, act in concert with them when Africa-related issues are dealt with in international contexts. Extended consultation procedure in international matters of joint interest, or of interest to either party, is another natural implication. It is also important for dialogue with the African countries — on issues unrelated to African problems as well — to be broadened.

Building capacity and skills in Africa is an important part of efforts to strengthen Africa's international involvement. Bilaterally, and also through international organisations, Sweden supports measures aimed at enhancing African competence in this respect.

#### **The European Union**

The European Union is the world's largest trading partner and financier of international development co-operation. EU co-operation with the African countries and regions is very important to Africa: roughly half of Africa's exports go to the EU, and half of the aid received by the continent is derived from Europe. The EU also has a special interest in co-operation with Africa: part of Africa lies within Europe's "near abroad", and the EU countries have considerable aggregate experience of the continent. Through its closeness, its extensive relations with

Africa and the fact that its external relations include the three areas of common foreign and security policy (CFSP), development co-operation and trade policy, the EU can play a significant role in Africa's further development. Sweden's tradition of political involvement and large-scale development co-operation in Africa gives us special opportunities.

Within the framework of CFSP, the EU follows political development in Africa and attempts, through various measures, to help bring about peace and reconciliation, democracy and enhanced respect for human rights. Increased coherence between the EU's various policy areas is an important issue, both in future Lomé co-operation and in the EU's co-operation with developing countries as a whole.

Negotiations on a new agreement between the EU and ACP countries will be commenced during 1998. Sweden has actively contributed to the debate on future relations with these countries, and several Swedish standpoints are included in the political guidelines for the negotiations.

*Sweden's aims in the EU include working for:*

- ◆ greater coherence between the Union's various policy areas;
- ◆ implementation of the partnership idea in joint security and foreign policy, as well as in the EU's development co-operation and in its future relations with the ACP countries;
- ◆ better co-operation between the EU and the UN;
- ◆ a continued political dialogue between the EU and Africa;
- ◆ a sharper focus on poverty alleviation in the EU's development co-operation;
- ◆ in the forthcoming negotiations between the EU and ACP countries, working for the WTO's regulations to be reflected in the new agreement;
- ◆ liberalised trade, with increased access for goods from the ACP countries to all the signatory countries' markets;
- ◆ increased support for regional co-operation between the ACP countries;
- ◆ strengthening of the EU's organisation, structure and skills for development co-operation, by such means as selective forms of aid, e.g. sector support, and increased delegation to staff in the field, for the purpose of making aid more effective.

## **The United Nations**

The United Nations plays a crucial role in African affairs. From decolonisation, the fight against apartheid and present-day measures of conflict management to the extensive humanitarian, economic and social efforts, the UN's work has been intimately bound up with Africa's future. Efforts to strengthen and reform the UN are therefore vitally important to Africa.

As a consequence of Sweden's distinct multilateral profile and involvement in matters of global justice, and also of the large-scale Swedish support for the African liberation movements, Sweden — in common with the other Nordic countries — enjoys considerable trust on the part of African countries in the UN context as well. The prospects of boosting Swedish co-operation with African countries on various multilateral issues are thus favourable, as is the scope for helping to enhance confidence in the UN and its purposes and activities in the continent. It is also important to help place on the UN agenda issues of African interest — as was done, for example, through the "Africa initiative" and the special Security Council session on Africa during the autumn of 1997.

*Sweden's efforts in the UN will include:*

- ◆ seeking close co-operation with the African countries in the UN's work;
- ◆ working to ensure that the organisation fully assumes its statutory responsibility for international peace and security in African conflicts;
- ◆ working for a greater impact for UN activities, and better partnerships with the African countries and the OAU in its peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts;
- ◆ continuing to be a strong driving force in the work of reforming the UN's economic and social activities and making them more effective, especially at country level;
- ◆ investigating the scope for special co-operation on multilateral issues between Sweden or groups that include Sweden, on the one hand, and African groups or individual African countries on the other, for example by creating co-operative mechanisms for compliance with various international human-rights conventions.

## **The IFIs and the debt burden**

The economic reform programmes must continue to develop. This process must be pushed forward by every individual country according to its capacity. However, the IFIs must contribute funds, advice and resources for capacity-building.

In co-operation with the countries' governments and on the basis of their specific conditions, the IMF should formulate basic macroeconomic targets and help to promote capacity-building in their special areas. There should be co-ordination of the IMF's and other donors' support for the reform process, for the purpose of laying the best possible foundations for sustainable economic and social development.

The World Bank has a dominant role as financier and should primarily concentrate its activities on sector programmes, co-ordinated with other donors' programmes under the management of the co-operating country and integrated in its national budget. These programmes should to a larger extent be planned and followed up by the country's own agencies and institutions in co-operation with the private sector and civil society. Support for capacity-building for this purpose should be included in the programmes.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) has an important role in financing sector programmes in Africa, in close co-operation with the World Bank, in particular. Special resources have been allocated for the HIPC Initiative and other debt-relief measures. It is essential for the reform work now under way in the Bank to be completed, so that the Bank's role and capacity as an African institution are strengthened.

A definitive solution to the poor countries' debt problems must be found. The HIPC Initiative is an important step in this direction, and must be given all possible support. Simultaneously, other forms of debt-relief support must be given, to prevent the situation from deteriorating while the countries await debt relief within HIPC. The NGOs' "Jubilee 2000" campaign is a welcome form of support in the work for a solution to the problems of debt.

On these issues, Sweden must conduct a co-ordinated and consistent policy, and continue the active work within the IFIs that we have engaged in hitherto, to realise the objectives of development co-operation.

*To attain these aims, Sweden's efforts will include:*

- ◆ within the framework of the IFIs' mandate, in a co-ordinated manner, working for enhanced responsiveness and understanding for the borrower countries' own processes, and increased local ownership of the projects and programmes financed. This ownership must be

supported both in the government and in civil society in the borrower countries; Skr. 1997/98:122

- ◆ working for integration of poverty alleviation in the economic reform programmes, so that their impact on the poor is the starting point for the formulation of the programmes and the positive interaction between social and economic development is reinforced;
- ◆ working actively for increased co-ordination of multilateral and bilateral aid under the management of the co-operating country, within the framework of the Special Program for Africa (SPA);
- ◆ helping to strengthen African capacity to negotiate with the IFIs;
- ◆ working intensively for internationally co-ordinated inputs, so that every individual country affected by the debt crisis has a clear prospect of attaining a tenable solution to its debt problems early in the new century;
- ◆ supporting initiatives and programmes aimed at strengthening the competence and capacity of poor and debt-burdened countries with respect to debt management and debt analysis.

### **Trade and investment policy**

Broadened trade exchange and a larger flow of investments are wished for by Sweden as well as the African countries. The positive economic development we see today in many countries in Africa is paving the way for increased trade. Since the latter favours both parties, the process of change and reform in Africa is a Swedish interest. We therefore support processes whereby the African countries develop dynamic economies with strong economic growth and increases in welfare for all citizens. Similarly, our objectives include helping to liberalise trade, and supporting development in the African countries towards modern societies subject to the rule of law, with modern economic legislation that provides secure and predictable conditions for trade and investments.

For Sweden's part, at the global, multilateral level, we should provide continued support for all efforts to phase out trade barriers in Africa, and also for elimination of the trade barriers that hamper African products on other markets. Continued negotiations within the framework of the WTO will have a bearing on the African countries, since in the year 2000 negotiations will continue on such matters as increased market access for agricultural products. Free trade for farm products is a Swedish objective that would also improve the preconditions for African exports of these products.

*To boost trade and investment exchange, Sweden's efforts include:*

- ◆ working for world trade to become entirely free in the long term. With respect to African countries, Sweden is working for all the LDCs to be offered duty-free access to markets in the more developed countries, and for a change in the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to open up the food market to increased exports from Africa;
- ◆ working for continued liberalisation of the African markets and for all the African countries to become members of the WTO in the long term;
- ◆ working for an increase in the trade-related bilateral and multilateral technical aid that is aimed at supporting and facilitating the African countries' participation in world trade and the multilateral trade organisations;
- ◆ supporting the African countries' endeavours to create better scope for attracting foreign investments and foreign capital, through improved economic growth and by developing economic and legal conditions. Sweden is working to bring about a Multilateral Investment Agreement in the WTO and negotiating on such an agreement in the OECD. Through the EU, we support efforts to establish agreements on investment protection on a regional basis in Africa;
- ◆ stimulating the increase in private capital flows to Africa through support for development of institutions and regulations, and also guarantees;
- ◆ through Sida, promoting the development of capital markets in Africa.

### **International civil society**

Globalisation is changing the conditions for all kinds of exchange between nations. The rapid development of communications, media and information technology is creating scope for "international civil society" alongside commercial and inter-governmental relations. This is already a reality today, but will exert an even greater impact in the future. One example is the research community, which is profoundly internationalised today. The universities in Africa are integrated in this community and can nowadays, in principle, receive information and ideas as rapidly as their counterparts in Europe and North America.

Similarly, many NGOs establish international networks. At both regional and global level, there are organisations of this kind that work to forge contacts, but also often to exert direct influence in certain issues. Through their focus on individual matters, these groups often have better information than the national governments. It has also been possible to create alliances between various types of network and organisation in order to influence, for example, the IFIs and the UN system. The international campaign against anti-personnel landmines and Jubilee 2000 are examples that illustrate the scope for global action of this kind.

Through international civil society, Africa has new opportunities for asserting itself. Naturally, however, not all countries can automatically benefit from this, here as in other areas. First and foremost, the requisite infrastructure must exist, such as functioning telecommunications. Secondly, if co-operation is to be constructive, the organisations must have some form of local legitimacy or representativeness. Unfortunately, IT also creates scope for undemocratic forces to spread their messages.

*In this area, Sweden's efforts to promote Africa's opportunities of taking part in and acting through international civil society will include:*

- ◆ promoting more intensive exchange between African and international civil society;
- ◆ working for greater understanding and an increase in research on civil-society development and organisations in Africa;
- ◆ working for free media to be given enhanced scope in Africa, and for augmented exchange between African and international media;
- ◆ supporting African universities' opportunities of international exchange by means of IT, journals and other publications, and also personal contacts;
- ◆ continuing to promote the emergence of global networks relating to such matters as technical conditions and infrastructure, especially in the communications sector.

#### 9.4 Boosting long-term exchange between Sweden and Africa

##### **Importance of contacts between societies**

Over the years, Sweden's ties with Africa have been dominated by the aid relationship in one form or another — intergovernmental development co-operation, and the activities of popular movements and NGOs. Through aid, a broad network of functioning and viable contacts has been created at various levels between Sweden and Swedish society, on the one hand, and many African nations on the other. The role of trade unions in the anti-apartheid movement, sports and cultural exchange, and co-operation between various Christian churches are examples of such contacts.

The partnership idea includes toning down the support element in these contacts in the long term, and replacing it by relationships that thrive and develop unaided. One objective of Sweden's Africa policy is therefore to consolidate and expand existing links between Swedish society and the African societies. Continued economic and social development in Africa will, in a longer perspective, mean that these contacts are strengthened and become ever more significant, while the need for state support to maintain them decreases.

Influencing attitudes is an important part of the work of developing broader co-operation. If Swedes' notion of Africa becomes more balanced, this may have a positive impact on political, economic and cultural exchange, and notably on investments and the influx of tourists. One priority is therefore to apply educational inputs and engage in opinion-moulding activities, through the media, study associations, folk high schools and other organisations engaged in adult education. Sida conducts opinion-moulding activities to reach young people. Through new channels such as television, the popular press, educational material and contacts on the Internet, Sida aims to build up keener interest in development issues. To stimulate increased research exchange, Sida has drawn up a proposal concerning possible ways of promoting the knowledge and contacts of higher education with countries outside Europe and North America. It is proposed that the National Agency for Higher Education should administer a special Africa fund, financed by Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

African immigrants can serve as a link between Sweden and Africa, by becoming involved in business projects and other exchange, and also by providing important knowledge in development co-operation. In its work, Sida should strive to broaden interfaces between Swedes and Africans. Within the framework of Forum Syd ("Forum South"), development co-operation is already in progress through a Swedish partner organisation consisting of African immigrants. Sweden encourages and supports efforts to involve African immigrants in such organisations' information and aid work.

*Efforts to strengthen contacts between Swedish society and African societies will include:*

- ◆ regularly consulting NGOs, trade unions, churches and other relevant organisations, for example those for African immigrants in Sweden, on African issues; Skr. 1997/98:122
- ◆ reviewing means of encouraging increased co-operation in the spheres of culture, education, research, specialist exchange and sport, for example by broadening the scope for awarding scholarships for mutual exchange of knowledge;
- ◆ developing further and reinforcing the Africa-related research and teaching under way at Swedish universities;
- ◆ taking initiatives to engage African immigrants in Sweden in development co-operation and to support African-Swedish business projects.

### **Long-term challenges of development co-operation**

For a long time to come, development co-operation will be the focus for other countries' — including Sweden's — relations with Africa. The immense challenges of development perspectives in Africa and the multifaceted potential of aid mean that the importance of development co-operation will not decrease in the foreseeable future. On the contrary, it is probable that the improved political and economic conditions now prevailing in many countries, the greatly improved knowledge of what is and is not workable, and the better international co-ordination will permit an increase in the impact of development co-operation.

What is crucial for its effectiveness is concentration on the task of development co-operation: to free people from poverty. With this as the objective — and partnership as the value basis and method — the chances are great that more and more nations, including the many aid-dependent countries in Africa, will be successively able to achieve enduring economic and social progress, based on a combination of their own resources and capacity with gains from global integration — a kind of modern version of self-reliance.

In the light of the above considerations, the irrationality of the fact that several countries which have never attained the 0.7% target for their aid have now, in this phase, reduced their aid volumes stands out even more clearly. Understanding of the improved scope for development co-operation to yield decisive results is reflected in the standpoints of the UN system, the World Bank and the EU, and this understanding should have a greater political impact and, on the contrary, prompt increases in aid volumes. The policy document of the broad OECD bloc, *Shaping the 21st Century*, has clarified what is an appropriate level of ambition.

After a period of cutbacks, Sweden is now once more increasing its aid. Norway, Denmark and The Netherlands have retained their high levels. The UK and a few other countries are raising theirs, or have announced increases. EU aid is large in volume. But several donors, including the USA and Japan, have not managed to adhere to their previous levels. All in all, this resulted in a fall in the five-year period 1992-97 from 0.33% to 0.25% of the OECD countries' national income — the lowest level for decades.

At the same time, global integration is necessitating international co-operation in numerous areas. Co-operation for peace and security, the complex global interplay of environmental problems and the diversity of tasks, large and small, involved in economic integration will require not only political leadership and concerted efforts in various policy areas, but also institutions and resources.

The challenges of globalisation are also reflected in Swedish aid. Today, development co-operation is already of unparalleled breadth. Aid is active in virtually every sector of society and, as such, requires Swedish resources and relates to Swedish interests. Aid thus has relevance for Sweden's internationalisation. Development co-operation has a clear task, and simultaneously stems from a domestic environment that is being internationalised at an ever more rapid pace. All in all, this aid permits feedback of experience to Sweden while, in the other direction, it can be based on Sweden's ever broadening international involvement. Mutual fertilisation between aid-financed and non-aid-financed exchange may thus become an increasingly interesting aspect of Sweden's partnership with African countries.

*To meet the long-term challenges of development co-operation, Sweden's efforts will include:*

- ◆ utilising lessons from and the potential afforded by development co-operation to meet the challenges of globalisation;
- ◆ working for increased aid, improved funding systems and burden distribution, and a strong African profile in the international organisations;
- ◆ focusing on the function of aid — to raise poor people's living standards — and, on the basis of our long international experience of effective methods of co-operation, ensuring that our understanding of the importance of domestically led processes of change and the partnership approach help African countries to mobilise their own capacity and resources for lasting development and global integration;

- ◆ increasing Swedish aid and, when the parameters of public finances so permit, attaining the 1% target once more;
- ◆ enlarging Africa's share of aggregate Swedish aid;
- ◆ making development co-operation a multifaceted, flexible and effective instrument of Sweden's international assumption of responsibility in global political and institutional co-operation;
- ◆ to an even higher degree, utilising the potential for mutual fertilisation inherent in the breadth of development co-operation and in Sweden's non-aid-financed internationalisation, for the purpose of giving this country's emerging partnership with the African countries more substantial content.

### **Modern promotion policy**

Sweden and the African countries have the extension of trade and investment exchange as a reciprocal aim. Most African countries are currently pursuing a development policy that actively promotes business interests. It is a Swedish objective to make more effective use of existing resources in its government agencies, foreign representation and business sector, in order to promote an expansion of trade and investments.

The endeavour to boost trade and investments needs to be given a clearer profile. Increased gathering of information and intensified reporting, and also a focus on contact-forging activities, to support Swedish companies that are interested in African markets with development potential and to promote African companies' export interests on the Swedish market, should be central features of a revitalised Africa policy.

Export-promoting inputs stand out as particularly desirable in Africa, since the lack of information and the uncertainty regarding market conditions may have a constraining effect on individual companies. Financially favourable deals on promising markets are in jeopardy without the existence of concerted "bridge-building". Several leading countries, such as the USA, have noted this situation and therefore substantially increased their promotion activities in Africa.

Swedish export promotion in Africa is conducted mainly by diplomatic and consular missions abroad, in close collaboration with the Swedish Trade Council. The Council's function is to initiate, co-ordinate, market and implement measures to promote Swedish exports. The Export Credits Guarantee Board performs its function of promoting exports by issuing various types of guarantee, especially export-credit guarantees.

The Swedish Export Credit Corporation provides export credits for the medium and long term, including state-backed export credits.

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For financial reasons, the Trade Council has reduced its activities in Africa in recent years, and is currently represented only by a single office in South Africa, albeit one whose responsibility includes the whole of Southern Africa. The Trade Council may also be said to engage in wide-ranging co-operation with various stakeholders, such as chambers of commerce, that to some degree compensates for its lack of broad, direct coverage of Africa.

Promotion work is two-sided. It is extremely important to the continent's economic development for Africa to be able to export goods and services in sectors where it is competitive. Sweden works actively in the EU and the WTO to liberalise trade in agricultural products, which would favour African producers. Sweden also works for the African countries to liberalise their own imports.

An equally important task is to inform African producers of the actual opportunities available on the Swedish market and of the market's requirements regarding product design and quality. Here, Sida and the embassies have an important role to play, in co-operation with the business organisations in the Import Council — a department of the Swedish Federation of Trade — and the chambers of commerce. Through its support for business co-operation and establishment of functioning capital markets, Sweden can also help to boost the African countries' scope for participating in increased economic exchange. Swedfund International AB contributes directly to the promotion of Swedish investments in Africa, in collaboration with local parties, and also to the supply of venture capital, through inputs in venture-capital funds.

*To promote trade with and investments in Africa, Sweden's efforts will include:*

- ◆ developing co-operation between the business sector and the state. For example, special Swedish trade strategies will be developed for African countries in co-operation between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Swedish Trade Council and diplomatic and consular missions involved;
- ◆ setting up a reference group with representatives from the business sector and its organisations, linked to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs;
- ◆ improving knowledge in Sweden of business opportunities in Africa, through increased reporting on economic issues and matters relating to trade policy relevant to business from the diplomatic and consular

missions in Africa, and improved monitoring of procurement of relevance to Africa in international organisations;

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- ◆ supporting development of African exports to Sweden and the European market. The objective here is to increase the technical aid that goes to trade-developing inputs in Africa — bilaterally, multilaterally and through the EU's joint aid. Sida will continue, in co-operation with chambers of commerce and the Import Council of the Swedish Federation of Trade to provide support for the import of African goods;
- ◆ through venture-capital inputs via Swedfund International AB, assisting in the transfer of Swedish industrial and business know-how to Africa.

### **Regional orientation**

A new Africa policy should build further on gains already made. In many countries, especially in *Southern and Eastern Africa*, Sweden has established a strong presence. Extensive, long-standing and close contacts with these countries have paved the way for continued and broadened co-operation. Our political dialogue with these countries should continue and be intensified, while efforts are also made to expand the Swedish presence and boost economic exchange. Development co-operation will continue to be on a large scale, but may need to be adapted in order to correspond better to the objectives listed above. This may mean new work procedures, shifts of emphasis between aid sectors and/or concentration of inputs in fewer programmes.

In *Central Africa*, especially in the Great Lakes region, inputs of a partially different kind are needed. The situation in this region and how it develops in the future are the foremost issue where peace and security in Africa as a whole are concerned. Major antagonisms both internally and between the countries, with numerous victims, and the absence of progress in regional and internal peace and reconciliation processes have resulted in a situation that not only threatens stability in the region, but also involves risks of instability spreading to other parts of the continent. Simultaneously, the shift of power in Kinshasa has created chances of a new start in the region that must not be forfeited.

There are hopes in this region that Sweden, with no colonial taint and with its growing presence in the area (in Kinshasa, and through Sida representatives in Bujumbura and Kigali), could play a role in efforts to help solve the crises. In this region too, where several governments regard the UN system and the international community as a whole with distrust, Sweden with its distinct Africa profile may have scope for achieving results, not only with aid, but also with messages that help to

restore confidence. Swedish churches and congregations have, in several of these countries, helped to create Swedish credibility that may be used for bridge-building purposes.

In *West Africa*, with some exceptions, Sweden has played a limited role. Given the partially dynamic development in this region and the new political patterns that are emerging, this role should now be strengthened. Sweden's Africa policy must also attain better coverage of this important part of the continent, with its some 20 countries undergoing processes of change of various types. Matching this objective is a West African interest in broadening contacts over and above the traditional pattern. Another reason for us to follow developments in West Africa is our EU membership. EU aid to the region is extensive. Being well informed about development in different countries in this region enhances our scope for influencing EU co-operation, not only in terms of aid policy but also in other spheres.

The region is well adapted for increased co-operation, with many players involved and a relatively high degree of reciprocity. Swedish business and industry should, for example, be encouraged to take more interest in this region. There are also ample opportunities for extended cultural exchange.

In West Africa, too, there is a strong aspiration for regional co-operation, both political and economic, which should be supported by Sweden bilaterally and also through the EU and multilateral organisations. Conflict prevention and management are an increasingly important part of this regional co-operation, which is simultaneously one of the most successful African examples in the economic sphere.

As mentioned above, West Africa is nonetheless a highly heterogeneous region that includes both some of the continent's richest and some of its poorest countries. In a few of the latter, above all, there is reason to expand Swedish development co-operation, which has already been commenced primarily through non-governmental and multilateral organisations. Environmental co-operation relating to desertification and other issues is one area of such co-operation that is already established, and inputs to promote democracy are another.

Sweden's comparatively less distinct role in West Africa means that the EU dimension of Swedish policy has particular emphasis here. The presence, aid and influence of the EU are substantial. In Francophone Africa, Sweden's EU membership is thus a primary instrument, but one that needs successively supplementing with a strengthened on-the-spot presence. Such a presence is currently being considered, within the framework of the Foreign Service's resources. This country's capacity for internally influencing common EU policy is thus central, and will be particularly important in the work of shaping the next phase of Lomé

co-operation. Dialogue, coherence and partnership should be restored as instruments of control for co-operation.

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Enhancing the depth, breadth and quality of partnership and co-operation presupposes knowledge and presence. Sweden's representation abroad therefore plays a major role. The integration of embassies and Sida's field offices in the programme countries that was carried out in 1995 has resulted in better co-ordination and improved utilisation of resources in Africa. It has also meant that Sweden's official presence in Africa, while being reinforced, has simultaneously come to include more countries.

This presence nonetheless, as we have seen, remains heavily concentrated in the southern and eastern parts of the continent. Many of the West African countries are currently monitored by Stockholm-based ambassadors. This system should be changed in the long term, so that available resources are concentrated on the spot in the region instead.

The combination of sound knowledge and skills relating to Africa in the Government Offices, the advantages of the integrated approach to work in the reorganised Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and field representation of which better use is made enlarges Sweden's scope for making an active contribution to international co-operation. At the same time, it is clear that only if the ambitions expressed in this communication are shared by large segments of Swedish society — popular movements, NGOs, sports associations, practitioners of the arts, academic institutions, individual companies and organisations in business and industry, as well as individual people — can a new phase of intensive exchange between Swedish and African societies become a reality.

## 10 Glossary

ACBF	African Capacity Building Foundation
ACP countries	The countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific region that are included in Lomé co-operation with the EU
AERC	African Economic Research Consortium
AfDB	African Development Bank
AfDF	African Development Fund
ANC	African National Congress
BAWATA	Tanzanian women's organisation (abbreviation of its name in Swahili)
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy (EU)
CFA	<i>Communauté Financière Africaine</i> , the West African monetary union ("franc zone")
CFSP	Common foreign and security policy (EU)
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DAC	Development Assistance Committee, part of the OECD
EAC	East African Cooperation (formerly the East African Community)
ECA	UN Economic Commission for Africa
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDF	European Development Fund
ESAF	Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility

EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GCA	Global Coalition for Africa
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IDA	International Development Agency
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISP	International Science Programme
ITC	International Trade Centre (WTO/UNCTAD)
LDC	Least developed countries
MFS	Minor Field Study (Sida)
MIGA	Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
NDF	Nordic Development Fund
NORSAD	Nordic/Southern African Development
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAIGC	<i>Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné ê do Cabo Verde</i>
PTA	Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa
SACU	Southern African Customs Union

SADC	Southern Africa Development Community	Skr. 1997/98:122
SADCC	Southern African Development Cooperation Conference	
SANROC	South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee	
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes	
SAREC	Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation	
SHIA	Solidarity, Humanity, International Aid (the international aid association of Swedish disabled people's organisations)	
SI	Swedish Institute	
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency	
SLU	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences	
SPA	The World Bank's Special Program of Assistance for Africa	
UDEAC	Union douanière et économique de l'Afrique centrale	
UEMOA	Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine	
UN	United Nations	
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme	
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund	
WFP	World Food Programme	
WTO	World Trade Organization	

## Ministry for Foreign Affairs

### **From the minutes of the Cabinet meeting of 5 March 1998**

Present: Prime Minister Persson, chairman, and cabinet ministers Hjelm-Wallén, Peterson, Freivalds, Wallström, Tham, Åsbrink, Schori, Andersson, Winberg, Uusmann, Ulvskog, Sundström, Johansson, von Sydow, Klingvall, Pagrotsky and Östros.

Rapporteur: Pierre Schori

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The Government approves Government Communication 1997/98:122, *Africa on the Move. Revitalising Swedish Policy towards Africa for the 21st Century.*