



NATIONAL LEVEL DISCUSSION – MONITORING COMMISSION FOR AFRICA COMMITMENTS REPORT

14TH FEBRUARY, 2006

MASERU SUN CABANA, LESOTHO

**By Tsebo Mats'asa
Democratic Governance and Election Monitoring,
Coordinator**

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
“Civil Society and Commission for Africa: Expectations and Commitments to the process and Content” by Shani Winterstein, SARPN.	4
“Civil society expectations from Commission for Africa” by Seabata Motsamai Executive Director LCN.....	6
“Reflection of Key Recommendation and Commitments of CFA and its implications for Lesotho”, by Sehoai Santho.....	7
Group Work.....	8
WAY FORAWARD.....	10

Background

Following the establishment of Commission for Africa (CFA) by the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair in February, 2004, with the Southern Africa Regional Poverty Network (SARPN)¹ led discussion on the Commission's report.

CFA report, entitled "Our Common Interest" was published on the 11th March, 2005 and its key recommendations were on the following;

- Governance
- Peace and Security
- Investing in People
- Trade, aid and debt
- Growth and Poverty Reduction

The CFA report was as the result of concerted efforts by seventeen (17) members of the Commission, nine (9) of whom were from Africa.

The report was addressed to the leaders of the G8, the people of Africa and the wider international community. The measures proposed by the Commission constitute a coherent package to achieve its goal of the strong and prosperous Africa. An outcome of the CFA process was the identification by the different actors of their own commitments in relation to proposed opportunities to be pursued. In Southern Africa SARPN was closely involved in discussions relating to CFA. With this regard, SARPN organized follow-up fora to ascertain the extent of sustained civil society engagement with the CFA themes, post the CFA report. As a result in Lesotho SARPN partnered with Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisation (LCN).

Introduction

On the 14th February, 2004, the LCN in partnership with Southern Africa Regional Poverty Network (SARPN) held a one day discussion on Commission for Africa report at Maseru Sun Cabanas. The meeting was attended by 25 participants² from the local Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Lesotho.

The purpose of the meeting was to

1. Reflect on the key recommendations and commitments from the Commission for Africa report and its implications for Lesotho's pro-poor development;
2. Be updated on progress 'Word to Action': Lesotho stakeholder's actions to date around the CFA recommendations (Government, Civil Society and Donors) and who is monitoring these.
3. Make known Civil Society expectations from the CFA and its key commitments to both the process and content (Regional perspective + plenary for nation specific commitments)
4. Develop specific advocacy messages targeted at specific stakeholders around the CFA recommendations that can be popularized for use by larger civil society.

¹ SARPN is a non-governmental organization based in South Africa.

² Refer to the attached participants' list.

5. Agree on Way Forward by Lesotho civil society around the CFA.

The objectives of the meeting were as follows;

- To ascertain the extent to which civil society actors are following up on or monitoring the commitments made in the CFA,
- To ascertain the extent of civil society implementation of their own commitments and
- To ascertain the civil society challenges and expectations in this regard.

The expected outcomes were;

- Bring key civil society actors to current issues on the CFA recommendations and progress made so far
- Commitments by civil society on their role around the CFA, especially in monitoring progress on the recommendations,
- The start of advocacy around the CFA commitments.

The meeting took a form of presentations, discussions and group work. The following, therefore were summaries of presentations, discussions and recommendations.

Presentation One

“Civil Society and Commission for Africa: Expectations and Commitments to the process and Content” by Shani Winterstein, SARPN.

The presentation was more of a background³ to the establishment of the CFA and snap shot on the report’s key commitments / action point / recommendations. The key areas covered the following; Governance, Peace and Security, Investment in people, Trade, Aid and Debt, Growth and Poverty reduction.

Governance

Africa was recommended to strengthen pan-african, regional bodies and programmes, including Peer Review Mechanism.

Specific commitments were for the developed countries to provide resources needed to strengthen governance institutions ranging from parliaments, local authorities, judiciary, civil society to the media, while economic development initiatives such as business groups, farmers, and trade unions are supported.

Fight against corruption was singled out as very important if our governance were to be strengthened.

Peace and Security

Conflict and war are seen as leading to human insecurity for the continent, hence resulting in poverty. Conflict prevention and resolution therefore, were recommended Africa with

³ Refer to back ground section of this report.

institutions like Africa Union suggested as key in maintaining and sustaining peace and security in Africa.

Commitment was made to build capacity of Africans on conflict prevention and resolution.

Investing in People

It was recommended that for Africa to develop investing on human resource development through education and training. This goes along with research and infrastructural development to enhance the level of education for young people.

Commitment was made to provide grants, exchange programmes and widening up of educational opportunities for the people of Africa in and out of the continent.

Growth and Poverty Reduction

The following specific recommendations were outlined in a view to improve growth and reduce poverty;

- The public and private sectors should be encouraged to work together so as to create jobs, promote entrepreneurship, and engage in foreign and domestic investment.
- An extra \$10 billion a year until 2010 for investment in infrastructure and subject to review then, an increase to \$20 billion for the next five years.
- Promote enterprise, support for the AU/NEPAD Investment Climate Facility – a private sector led facility to act on investment climate issues identified by the APRM and other processes.
- Support funding in the region of US\$100 million over ten years to improve the climate observation network.

Trade, aid and debt

Effective aid, free and fair trade, as well as debt cancellation were recommended. Developed countries were urged to double aid to sub-Saharan Africa and do cancel 100 per cent debt the continent.

Discussions

N.B. arrangements to have the presentation sent or distributed to participants prior to the meeting did not succeed, therefore there was an element of a very low level of information dissemination on CFA.

The following were issues that came up during the discussion;

- It was felt that the report silent about children.
- There was a debate on whether the report contains African views or British. However, Tony Blair an emphasis that it was African's view report.
- There was also uncertainty on the extent to which the report has influenced debt cancellation. However, it was shared the report was holistic and not country specific. As a result issues pertaining to certain countries would not be easily addressed.
- SARPN finds Africa to have fallen into another white elephant in the form of the report as EU with UK were not following the recommendations of the report.
- There was a need to CSOs to monitor the CFA recommendations and commitments..

- Networking with UK media and CSOs such as Oxfarm was recommended..

Presentation two

N.B. The first presentation was finished one hour earlier than planned⁴. Since the second presenter was scheduled for 12:00noon and could not be reached to request him to come earlier, the third presenter was asked to present.

“Civil society expectations from Commission for Africa” by Seabata Motsamai Executive Director LCN

The following two points were formed a crust of the presentation’s introduction;

- The Commission aims at responding to African Union together with its development arm, NEPAD to bring about positive changes, and
- The established of the Commission coincided with UK’s chairmanship of G8 and EU, a good moment to influence Africa’s agenda.

The following Nepad’s objectives and principles were found relevant to CFA’s.

- To eradicate poverty;
- To place African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path to sustainable growth and development
- To halt the marginalisation of Africa in the globalisation process and enhance its full and beneficial integration into the global economy;
- To accelerate the empowerment of women
- Good governance as a basic requirement for peace, security and sustainable political and socio-economic development
- African ownership and leadership, as well as broad and deep participation by all sectors of society;
- Anchoring the development of Africa on its resources and resourcefulness of its people
 - Partnership between and amongst African peoples;
 - Acceleration of regional and continental integration;
 - Building the competitiveness of African countries and the continent;
 - Forging a new international partnership that changes the unequal relationship between Africa and the developed world; and Ensuring that all partnerships with NEPAD are linked to the Millennium Development Goals and other agreed development goals and targets.
- To generate an idea and action for strong and prosperous Africa
- To support the best of existing work on Africa (AU and NEPAD) and ensure this work achieves its goals

The following were outlined as the civil society expectations;

⁴ Refer to the attached programme

- Consolidation of democratic governance as oppose to democratic rule
- When institutionalising itself in a war mapped continent; Sudan, DRC, Uganda,
- Development of poverty reduction strategies for the continent
- Defining strategies for reducing the impact of HIV/AIDS, particularly for Sub-Sahara region
- Trying to cope with hunger due to bad policies in Africa, Zimbabwe as a case study
- Trying to break the chains of debt for most of its countries
- Competing for fair trade with the global world
- Making attempts to have a peaceful and secure continent
- The Commission should add value to the existing initiatives
- Africa should be considered as an equal partner in global negotiations not
- Africa should be allowed to initiate and based on such initiative be supported with necessary resources
- The Commission should add value to the existing initiatives
- Africa should be considered as an equal partner in global negotiations not
- Africa should be allowed to initiate and based on such initiative be supported with necessary resources

The Role of Civil Society Organisations;

- The idea of democratic rule is founded on the persistent belief that citizens can through effective and efficacy deliberations govern themselves.
- Democracy assumes that ordinary people have capacity and the means to determine their destination.
- Through the representative democracy, ordinary citizens elect representation in parliamentary systems to make decisions that would impact on their lives positively.

N.B. Due to time constraint, the discussions were deferred to end of the next presentation

“Reflection of Key Recommendation and Commitments of CFA and its implications for Lesotho”, by Sehoai Santho.

N.B. The presentation had a lot of information that the previous two presentations had. Therefore the following were some of its outstanding points.

DFID Policy review

Review of DFID Policy has to be monitored as it assumed the agency was better positioning itself to enhance CFA course.

Issues that led to the development of CFA

- Millennium declaration inspired the formulation of CFA.
- In 2000 there was UN report Can Africa Claim the 21st Century, has influenced positive reactions from the various role players in development.
- Declining governance quality in Africa

Worth monitoring areas of the report

The report was focused and its analysis was good. The challenge is how could Africa make best out of the report findings. Areas of monitoring would be on;

- How best is the debt relief money used to poverty reduction
- African Partnership Forum – G8, AU and Nepad – be monitored especially in increased aid (US\$25 Billion) on enhancing good governance by 2010.
- Millennium Development Goals aligned PRSP at national levels must be monitors in the following ways;
 - Country should have MDGs and PRSP monitoring strategy,
 - Review existing strategies,
 - Conduct a needs assessment on reaching MDGs,
 - Develop a 10 year framework for action,

Discussions

- The CFA was just elections campaign strategy and not necessarily poverty reduction strategy.
- The world had already missed target into meeting the MDGs .
- Lesotho did not apply for debt cancellation because it was not regarded as Heavily Indebted Poor Country.
- The absorptive capacity issue is still faced with a lot of debate. Political thinking is still influenced by the implementation of projects. An example was made of the M40million of loan from World Bank for LFDC; Irish has 60 million for building a hospital. Lesotho has to seek for M20 million in addition to the 80million. Lesotho opted for requesting the 80 million from a commercial bank. Lesotho does not have capacity to absorb.
- There is a need to assess the quality of aid that we receive.
- It was true that Blair was cleaning himself from Iraq scandal, however, it was good and we had to take advantage of that.
- We have to work on our capacity on trade if trade is to be good for everyone.
- Hold another forum to engage DFID to share their experience on the policy the policy review. Engage the Lesotho High Commission in London and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- The Public Private Partnership must be closely monitored.

Group Work

- 1. What are CFA's commitment that worth monitoring?**
 - Governance
 - Peace & Security
 - Investment in people
 - Trade, Aid and Debt
 - Growth and Poverty Reduction

- 2. Define your role in monitoring & how will you do it?**

The participants were divided into three groups. All the groups were answering the two questions. The following was a summary of their responses.

First Questions

1. Governance

- CSOs will monitor the extent to which CFA contributes to ***strengthen democracy and good governance*** in Lesotho, Southern Africa Development Community region and the entire African Continent.
- CSOs will monitor the extent to which CFA contributes in ***fight against human rights violation*** in Lesotho, Southern Africa Development Community region and the entire African Continent.
- CSOs will monitor the extent to which CFA contributes in ***promotion of service delivery*** at local and national levels in Lesotho, Southern Africa Development Community region and the entire African Continent.

2. Peace and security

- CSOs will monitor the extent to which CFA contributes in ***uplifting of human security*** in Lesotho, Southern Africa Development Community region and the entire African Continent.
- CSOs will monitor the extent to which CFA contributes in ***building Conflict Resolution mechanisms*** in Lesotho, Southern Africa Development Community region and the entire African Continent.

3. Investment in People

- CSOs will monitor the extent to which CFA contributes in ***bringing about free basic and compulsory education*** in Lesotho, Southern Africa Development Community region and the entire African Continent.
- CSOs will monitor the extent to which CFA contributes in ***the provision of free health services and facilities*** in Lesotho, Southern Africa Development Community region and the entire African Continent.

4. Trade, Aid and Debt

- CSOs will monitor the extent to which CFA contributes in ***the support of debt cancellation and promotion free trade that improve human development than profits*** in Lesotho, Southern Africa Development Community region and the entire African Continent
- CSOs will monitor the ***quality of grants by CFA to*** Lesotho, Southern Africa Development Community region and the entire African Continent

5. Growth and Poverty Reduction

- CSOs will monitor the extent to which CFA contributes in ***development of policies that adhere to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*** in Lesotho, Southern Africa Development Community region and the entire African Continent

- CSOs will monitor the extent to which CFA contributes *in linking MDGs with Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers in Lesotho and other development initiatives* in Southern Africa Development Community region and the entire African Continent.

Second Questions

- To encourage bi-lateral relationships, lobby governments to form partnerships with civil society and form global civil society monitoring mechanisms.
- Hold frequent sessions on CFA related issues.

WAY FORWARD

The report of the meeting would inform the development of a concrete monitoring strategies for civil society organisations in Lesotho on CFA. Therefore there would be follow-up meetings to map the way forward.