

# chapter 5

## Towards a multi-pronged Africa advocacy strategy: recommendations for World Vision

This chapter was originally written to provide recommendations to help World Vision develop its strategy for engaging with advocacy at the continental level in Africa. It was intended primarily to provide World Vision with food for thought on the basis of which a detailed strategy can be developed and the requisite resources allocated to its implementation. However, the recommendations contained in this chapter can also provide guidance to CSOs generally in their quest to develop advocacy programmes targeting the AU and related regional institutions.

The chapter draws on interviews with World Vision staff members, on documentation provided by World Vision on existing advocacy work in Africa and on discussions at a CSO-AU roundtable held on 22nd-23rd November 2006 in Nairobi, Kenya. The two day roundtable discussed this Research Report and deliberated on experiences of other Africa based civil society organisations. Thirteen organisations based in different African countries as well as World Vision staff were represented at the roundtable.

This Chapter is divided into five sections:

- The chapter begins by charting the evolution of World Vision's advocacy work in Africa and laying out the rationale for World Vision's decision to engage in sustained continental advocacy alongside its existing work.
- The second section makes the case for a multi-pronged Africa advocacy strategy as opposed to one focused solely on the AU Commission.
- The third section lays down a number of principles and approaches that should underpin the proposed World Vision strategy.
- The fourth section highlights the thematic priorities World Vision should focus on in the initial phases of the strategy.
- The chapter ends by suggesting strategic civil society partnerships with which World Vision could partner.

### 5.1 The Rationale for Continental Policy Advocacy

Development organisations working in Africa traditionally focused their work on humanitarian and emergency response and service delivery. World Vision, for example, although focused broadly on the well-being of children, has historically invested less in advocacy. Community development and humanitarian response have been the main vehicles for delivering World Vision's work programme.

However, as the understanding of the meaning of development has shifted globally, development organisations have found themselves focusing on upscaling advocacy and mobilisation. Even then, they have tended to focus more on international advocacy targets placing less attention on regional and continental bodies. Even with the relative success of GCAP it is widely acknowledged that despite high international visibility, national policy engagement and inclusive campaigning at national level was lacking.

Africa Vice President Wilfred Mlay cites two reasons for the increasing interest of CSOs in continental advocacy, including a focus on the African Union. One is the renewed optimism since the inception of the AU that African leadership is beginning to seriously engage with developing its own agenda for the continent. "If you look at the statements that are coming out, they are talking about African integration, and accountability of leadership amongst themselves. Before it was protect yours, I will protect you, you will protect me. But for the first time there is awareness that leaders have a mutual accountability for the whole region", says Mlay. He points to advent of NEPAD and the increased engagement of the AU peace initiatives as sure signs that "...for the first time the African leadership is taking on an African agenda".

A second reason, says Mlay, is the growing interest by global and multilateral organisations to work through the AU. "The AU is being taken seriously by the rest of the international community, and they want to engage with and through it in assisting to deal with issues (in) Africa... So World Vision cannot, if it is going to be a catalyst for

change in Africa, ignore working with these institutions – both in the way in which we look at the external environment but also in the way we operate internally”.

In addition, a strong track record in service delivery and community development has made it easy for development NGOs like World Vision to begin leveraging their credibility to seek to influence decision-makers. “People have realised”, says Mlay, “that actually we have been doing so much at the grassroots and that it gives us authenticity and a level of authority – because when we speak we’re not just speaking as rabble rousers... but as people who have seen how policies made at the higher levels impact and sometimes even enslave the people who are working so hard to improve their well-being and the well-being of their families and children”.

For Rudo Kwaramba, World Vision UK’s Advocacy, Communication and Education Director, scaling up advocacy to continental level in Africa must be based on a nuanced understanding of the realities on the ground in each country. While civil society in one country may be ready to engage at continental level, in other countries it may not. This necessitates a realistic understanding of the opportunities that exist. Otherwise, she warns, “we may succeed in AU level engagement, but then we’ll have to struggle to gather the evidence in the countries. A key task is therefore to define the different levels of entry, and to ensure engagement at all these levels.

## 5.2 AU Strategy or Pan-African Strategy?

The terms of reference for the research that resulted in this publication were clearly predicated on the understanding that the focus of World Vision’s continental advocacy strategy should be the African Union. However, on the basis of the evidence detailed in previous chapters, a key recommendation is that to be effective development agencies envision **Pan-African** engagement. A strategy that targets different points of the African institutional landscape in a strategic way is much more likely to have

the desired impacts than a one-dimensional engagement with the AU alone.

The first argument to be made, and as illustrated in Chapter 1, is that the AU is not a monolithic entity, but constitutes a vision, a project, and an array of institutions and arrangements. In terms of policy advocacy, the AU Commission is an important target, and should be the centrepiece of continental advocacy. However, CSOs should also find ways to engage strategically with other AU organs, such as the PSC, PAP, ACHPR, African Court, and so on. This is because the design of the AU system envisages multiple sources of authority. The AU should therefore be seen as a set of institutions to be influenced, through a range of different strategies implemented at different levels of the African architecture. As highlighted in Chapter 2, the plan by a number of CSOs to set up a focal point in Midrand to engage with the NEPAD, APRM and PAP Secretariats is clearly predicated on the understanding that the AU Commission is not the only hub of continental policy making in Africa.

A second argument is that the AU is a work in progress, with severe financial constraints and a staffing profile that has not evolved significantly since the days of the AU. As Adekeye Adebajo, Executive Director of the Centre for Conflict Resolution puts it: “To over-focus on the AU is setting it up for failure because it simply doesn’t have the capacity”. What is more, several organisations are either planning to deploy focal points to work exclusively on the AU, or have already done so. In July 2006 Oxfam GB appointed a Pan-Africa Senior Policy Analyst, who is based in Addis Ababa. The All-Africa Conference of Churches is also reported to be creating a position in Addis Ababa, while several other INGOs are in the process of developing engagement strategies that involve the deployment of staff to work with the AU Commission. All of this adds up to a proliferation of actors wishing to work with a Secretariat that is weak, making it difficult for potential partners to engage effectively with the Commission.

Third, influencing the AU process to get text into Declarations, Protocols or Charters promulgated

by African leaders is worthy work, and yet represents only the beginning. A proliferation of norms and standards exists at the continental level, and yet the challenge faced by all is implementing and domesticating them in African countries. As Tawanda Mutasah, Executive Director of the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) points out, the major weakness with decisions and treaties made at the continental level is that “legally, not every nation-state is designed constitutionally in such a way that it has to absorb those decisions”. Given that the AU does not implement, the real action is in individual African member states. This has been clearly demonstrated by the SOAWR campaign. World Vision’s strength at country level (of all the INGOs working in Africa, it probably has the largest number of National Offices) gives it a clear comparative advantage in bridging the gap between continental standards and national and community-level implementation. World Vision’s ability to empower communities also makes it more likely that continental norms and standards can be influenced from the bottom-up.

A fourth consideration is that there is significant activity at the level of the RECs, both programmatically and in terms of civil society engagement. As previous chapters have shown, not only has the AU recognised the pivotal nature of the RECs and is seeking to engage them at all stages of its decision-making; but the RECs themselves have made great strides towards sub-regional integration. As far as accountability is concerned, state parties are much more likely to adhere to commitments made at REC level than at AU level. The case of WACSOF in West Africa (see Chapter 2) also demonstrates that mechanisms for civil society engagement with RECs are more advanced and effective than those at the AU level. Together with WACSOF, ECOWAS is developing a Youth and Child Policy for West Africa, and opportunities like these to work in a sub-region where children are vulnerable and in need should not and cannot be passed over.

## 5.3 Guiding Principles for World Vision

In light of the evidence gathered, and with World Vision’s own Core Values<sup>26</sup> firmly in view, the following are some principles to guide World Vision’s continental engagement.

### 5.3.1 Leverage World Vision’s Strengths

These strengths are a focus on children, community-level reach, and a strong network of National Offices. World Vision’s commitment to the well-being of children already provides it with a unique selling point, as few INGOs working in Africa explicitly focus on children. Furthermore, and as has been argued by senior World Vision staff, viewing issues through the lens of children necessarily means addressing structural issues that affect the context in which children live. Working on children’s issues opens a window to almost any programmatic area from peace and security to economic justice. Although child-related policies exist continentally, sub-regionally and in-country, these are often left on the backburner in favour of other areas perceived to be more urgent priorities. World Vision’s child focus therefore allows it to significantly raise the profile of the issues at hand. “One of the advantages of advocating at AU level would be to bring the strength of World Vision’s country work to a continental level... And that can then be taken back to the countries and World Vision can use the leverage it already has as a strong actor to engage government”, says Victor Madziakapita of World Vision.

### 5.3.2 Strike a Balance Between Campaigning and Lobbying

World Vision must strive to strike a balance between high-profile, high-visibility campaigning and more patient, process-oriented lobbying. Campaigning, of the global kind pioneered by other INGOs, clearly has its advantages. “World Vision has set as one of its goals ‘to help build a global movement of people working on poverty’,” explains

<sup>26</sup> See Annex C, page 63.

Wameyo. “The idea is that if you’re campaigning you build a movement quicker. But it’s also about profile, because the more you campaign, the more people see you, and the more you have impact over other policy areas”. However, in engaging with the new Pan-Africanism, and given the sensitivities of policymakers, low-key lobbying may be more effective, depending on the advocacy issue and the specific context. In any event, it is possible to employ a judicious mix of campaigning and lobbying strategies towards achieving a common outcome, in global campaigns that have regional specificity. The guiding principle is that it should not be an ‘either-or’.

### 5.3.3 Educate Senior Policy Makers and Decision-makers

As detailed in Chapter 2, differing perceptions exist about the role of INGOs in advocating for policy change in Africa, with many questioning the legitimacy of civil society organisations originating in the North to lead campaigns in Africa and engage with the AU system. If World Vision is to influence Pan-Africa policy, it needs to educate focal institutions and senior policymakers as to the kind of work it does, the impacts achieved, and its overall value added to African development. Wilfred Mlay espouses this view: “I feel there is a lot of education to be done to expose the AU [organs] to the work that we do at the grassroots – to see who is doing the work, how is it organised, who sets the agenda, and so on”. There is a need for World Vision to enhance its name recognition at senior and technocratic levels alike. In doing so, it should also emphasise its commitment to building the capacity of indigenous NGOs, and its ultimate goal of communities speaking for themselves.

### 5.3.4 Generate the Evidence Base to Inform Advocacy

A survey of the continental landscape reveals that while civil society advocates recognise the value of strong research, few are able to devote the expertise and resources to generating the evidence-base needed to make an impact. “Unfortunately sometimes the governments, even the leaders, don’t understand what is

happening in their own countries”, notes Victor Madziakapita, adding that CSOs need to carry out research that provides compelling evidence. The problem with generating research is that it is time-consuming and expensive. However, since huge gaps exist in what is known on specific issues in Africa, for example as related to children, research should be considered a *sine qua non* for effective advocacy.

### 5.3.5 Work in Coalitions

Working in coalitions is generally considered good practice. “NGOs work best in single-issue co-programmes or coalitions”, counsels Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem. “Nobody’s asking any NGO to give up whatever self-given mandate they’ve got, but even within that... they should be able to link up to influence things”.

As an organisation whose Christian values and commitment underpin its work, World Vision can play an important role in strengthening the impact of faith-based organisations (FBOs) in coalitions in Africa. Despite a proliferation of FBOs on the ground, the impact of these organisations remains fragmented, and there remains a dearth of initiatives to work with FBOs in a coherent and concerted manner. World Vision should seek to partner with FBOs so as to leverage their belief systems towards strengthening the FBO response to children’s issues.

## 5.4 Thematic Priorities – Suggestions for World Vision

An important lesson learned from this research is that the continental arena is strewn with policy issues, institutions and actors. The AU system alone is so expansive that no single CSO or NGO could hope to engage with every organ, Directorate or initiative. Civil society advocates engage on a wide range of issues, often with a singular lack of coordination and coherence, resulting in dispersal of impact. This being the case, World Vision should focus on a limited number of themes, and build its engagement incrementally. The themes proposed are: Child Rights; Peace and Security; Economic Justice; Governance; and HIV and AIDS.

*Community Accumulated Savings and Credit projects in Lubombo, Swaziland.*

photo: Mandia Luphondvo



The following proposal of priority themes takes into account ongoing initiatives as well as World Vision's own vision, mission and priorities. It also presupposes that, on the basis of these suggestions, World Vision will undertake further reflection to refine its priorities. This is particularly pertinent given that in some of the thematic areas proposed, such as Trade, and Peace and Security, World Vision will need to strengthen its internal capacity prior to engaging in advocacy. It may, for example, make sense to predicate the initial phase of the strategy on Child Rights-related advocacy, consistent with World Vision's core competency, and then establish linkages with HIV and AIDS (OVCs). All of this can be elaborated in a detailed plan with benchmarks and timeframes.

#### 5.4.1 Child Rights

The first order of priority for World Vision's continental strategy should be to advocate for the rights of Africa's children. Some of this work should be supportive of the AU's own agenda, while other work, based on World Vision's own knowledge of the terrain, should be pro-active, seeking to help set the agenda.

The primary continental instrument related to children is the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which was adopted by the OAU in July 1990 and entered into force in November 1999. The Charter spells out rights as well as responsibilities for Africa's children. As at July 2005, 39 countries had signed the Charter and 38 had ratified it. Articles 32-46 of the Charter established the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child<sup>27</sup>, to promote and protect the rights enshrined in the Charter and monitor and implement its provisions. The Committee, made up of 11 members, has met at least 7 times since being set up in 2001. Its activities are included in the work programme of the Social Affairs Directorate of the AU. Only 3 countries – Egypt, Mauritius and Rwanda – have so far submitted reports to the Committee.

The office responsible for child-related issues is involved in a number of other activities. An important output is the African Common Position on Children – 'An Africa Fit for Children', prepared as Africa's contribution to the 2002 UNGASS session. It includes a Declaration and Plan

<sup>27</sup> For more on the Committee, go to <http://www.africa-union.org/child/home.htm>

of Action, and consists of guidelines as well as a framework identifying priorities and roles for Governments and other stakeholders. A mid-term review of the Common Position is being conducted, to assess the level of implementation and chart the way forward. Member states are being asked to submit reports highlighting what countries have done to implement the Plan of Action. The Social Affairs Directorate is also preparing for the UN Special Session on Children, to be held in 2007.

Further to the Heads of State decision in July 2005 on 'Accelerating Action for Child Survival and Development in Africa to meet the MDGs', the AU is working closely with UNICEF and WHO to develop a roadmap on achieving the goal. On orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs), UNICEF takes the lead, with the AU participating in regional meetings. A new innovation launched in advance of the 2006 Banjul AU Summit was the 'AU Award for Children's Champions in Africa'. The idea is to enhance the rights and welfare of the child by "recognising initiatives of individuals and organisations in promoting the rights of the child and their commitment in raising the living standard of children in their communities".

Given this broad programme of work juxtaposed against the fact that the Social Affairs Directorate has only one Child Protection Officer, World Vision's engagement with the Directorate is timely and urgent.

World Vision could also explore the possibility of collaboration with ECOWAS around the formulation and implementation of the Youth and Child Policy for Africa. The main point of contact would be the Special Adviser to the ECOWAS Executive Secretary on Child Protection.

#### 5.4.2 Peace and Security

A second priority for World Vision is peace and security, which is the AU's core competency. At this early stage, and given that the continental architecture is still under construction, there are few entry points. However, continental advocacy to protect civilians, particularly children, should remain a priority. In line with World Vision's earlier advocacy on Darfur, and given that the conflict had

provoked a global reaction, the AU's PSC should be viewed as a critically important institution with which to engage.

Article 20 of the Protocol establishing the PSC states that it "... shall encourage non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations and other civil society organisations, particularly women's organisations, to participate actively in the efforts aimed at promoting peace, security and stability in Africa. When required, such organisations may be invited to address the Peace and Security Council". Article 18 provides for the PSC to submit reports to the PAP, including an annual report on the state of peace and security in Africa. Article 19 provides for the ACHPR to bring to the PSC's attention any relevant information, implying that human rights abuses reported to the ACHPR related to conflicts can be taken up by the PSC. The PSC itself is mandated to meet at least twice a month, at the level of Permanent Representatives, Ministers or Heads of State.

In 2005 the AU Commission started work on a proposal for the demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration of child soldiers, and subsequently developed a 2-year work plan beginning January 2006. On the basis of the project proposal and the work plan, the Government of Japan has given the AU US\$ 2 million for the implementation of the ex-child soldiers' project. On the face of it, this looks like an interesting area of engagement for World Vision. Nevertheless, there are serious concerns as to whether the AU should be involved in implementing projects at community level in African countries. However, when interviewed for this paper, the AU's Head of Conflict Management expressed an interest in exploring collaboration with World Vision on child soldiers and other conflict-related issues, ranging from landmines to small arms and light weapons.

World Vision is already advocating on three priority conflict areas in Africa – Sudan, Uganda and the Great Lakes. This work should continue, leveraging AU mechanisms and entry points opportunistically. However, as a rule of thumb, and given the fact that RECs are closer to the ground, World Vision should ensure it engages

with the RECs in the different sub-regions. For example, at the request of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), World Vision has been asked to collaborate with the Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution Committee to promote peace, conflict resolution and reconciliation in the sub-region<sup>28</sup>. Whether on a pro-active or reactive basis, World Vision should always view the REC in question as the primary focus of engagement, with AU- and UN-level advocacy as supportive and reinforcing. How in practical terms partnership proceeds will ultimately depend on a) the issues on the ground; b) proximity and effectiveness of the REC and sub-regional CSO advocacy mechanisms in question; and c) the desired outcome.

### 5.4.3 Economic Justice

As demonstrated in Chapter 3, the economic justice agenda is broad and deep, with a large number of sub-themes. Given World Vision's preoccupation with addressing the macro-level structures that mediate poverty, injustice and disadvantage at the micro level, it is imperative that the continental advocacy address economic justice issues as a third priority. However, within the broad theme, and given that World Vision does not work intensively across the full range of aid, trade and debt issues, the proposal here is that it focuses selectively on a few sub-themes.

*Aid:* The AU views aid in the broader context of development finance, which it views as one of the major economic challenges for Africa. Essentially, while it welcomes the 2005 pledges to double aid, it considers external development assistance as having failed, and focuses its work programme on: creating the new financial institutions; structural reform of African economies; developing new means of domestic resource mobilisation, such as taxing air travel and hydrocarbon exports; eradicating corruption and ensuring better wealth distribution and domestic savings. To deliver on these ideas, the AU

Commission convenes a host of meetings – including the annual Conference of African Ministers of Economy and Finance (CAMEF) and the proposed biennial Economic Summit of Heads of State, and a host of expert meetings. Yet capacity to engage is thin on the ground, and in practical terms expertise resides in the NEPAD Secretariat, UNECA, and the AfDB.

While maintaining a close watch on the AU's Economic Affairs programme of work and supporting AU positions on aid and debt, World Vision should focus on deepening work in areas it is already strong, in partnership with relevant institutions. Another important process is the AU Conference on Financing for Development which provides a high level forum for Africa to review its commitments. As African countries evaluate their experience with the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) Process, there is new impetus to ensure that second-generation strategies (SGPRS)<sup>29</sup>, are African-owned, driven and responsive to Africa's needs.

*Trade:* This is a burning economic justice issue for Africa. The AU, through its leadership of African negotiations at the WTO and its African Position, is making significant progress in articulating an African voice in the global context. The AU is also increasingly asserting Africa's Common Position on EPAs, and a joint EU-Africa strategy is in the making. The AU-EU Summit planned for 2007 is likely to constitute an important moment in Africa's quest for development-serving agreements. Traditionally, policy advocacy on trade-related issues has not been World Vision's strength. Nevertheless, it considers trade important, not least because of the direct impact global trade decisions have on communities. As such, Outcome 4 of the 2005-2007 WV Africa Advocacy Strategy reads: "African governments actively influence global trade agenda in favour of developing countries". A hallmark of

<sup>28</sup> Notes from meeting between EALA and World Vision March 2006 and May 2006.

<sup>29</sup> For several years and on an annual basis UNECA convened the 'African Learning Group on the PRSPs'. The AU and UNDP have now come on board, and the three co-organised the 'African Plenary on Poverty Reduction and the Implementation of the MDGs', held in Cairo, Egypt in March 2006.

the Pan-African advocacy strategy should therefore be to identify areas where World Vision can add value to ongoing campaigning, working in coalitions or partnerships.

#### 5.4.4 HIV and AIDS

The AU Strategic Plan and Plan of Action on HIV and AIDS spells out strategies to tackle the issue of children infected and affected by HIV and AIDS, particularly OVCs. The 2001 Abuja Declaration constituted a powerful lobbying tool for Africa advocacy at both the UNGASS session in 2001 and the UNGASS review meeting in June 2006. This AU prioritisation is consonant with the Africa goal of World Vision's *Hope Initiative* – reducing the impact of HIV and AIDS on Africa's children. On the basis of the substantive experience gathered working in Africa – on community care coalitions, engaging with the church and faith-based organisations, and providing value-based life skills training – World Vision is in a strong position to galvanise action at continental level to address the orphan crisis in Africa, fuelled in large part by the HIV and AIDS pandemic. With the figure of 12 million OVCs in Africa today likely to rise to 30 or 40 million by 2010, precisely when the 2005 aid dividend is supposed to kick in, Mlay sees this as “an important area where we have to raise our voice and influence, first of all an awareness of this

*...far from being new, the African OVCs crisis has been in existence for close to a decade ... We have done enough talking and agonising. What needs to happen now is action. World Vision could do two things to make a difference in this area: first, it could conduct research in conjunction with the AU Commission to provide African governments with practical guidance on how to act on OVCs, including on the controversial issue of the setting up of orphanages; second, it could advocate in the North to ensure that any Northern-initiated initiatives in Africa support, rather than undermine, local capacity.*

Theo Sowa, leading African child rights expert

looming crisis, and secondly for governments at every level, donors, multilateral organisations, the UN, to take a position and action”.

It is important that dialogue is established with the AU Commission to find out what their current and proposed plans for implementing the AU Strategic Plan of Action on HIV/AIDS regarding OVC and to identify key areas of mutual interest and opportunity for CSOs like World Vision. Practitioners agree that we have moved from a time for issue identification to a stage where commitment and effective strategies are needed to address the OVC crisis.

#### 5.4.5 Governance

The APRM provides a significant entry point for World Vision advocacy on governance issues in Africa. Although the AU Political Affairs Directorate is involved in the political peer review and the AU Chairperson is overall in charge of the process, the hub of activity is the APRM cluster in the NEPAD Secretariat. The APRM process also provides multiple entry points for World Vision advocacy at country level and community level.

On Governance, therefore, World Vision could:

- *Input to the country self-assessment reports* and the national consultation processes in countries where peer review is scheduled to take place or is underway, where possible with local coalitions or CSO umbrellas.
- *Establish official contacts* and a working relationship with the NEPAD/APRM Secretariat in Midrand, as well as the NEPAD CSO focal point.
- *Harness APRM country processes* to deliver advocacy messages from related World Vision thematic campaigns.
- *Collaborate actively with civil society projects* (such as AfriMAP) seeking to hold governments accountable for their APRM and other commitments, and conduct joint research.
- *At technical level, explore collaboration with institutions* providing their expertise to the APRM process – primarily UNECA, UNDP Africa and the AfDB.



Table 3: Focus Institutions for suggested thematic priorities

Institution	Focus
<b>AU Commission:</b> Bureau of the Chairperson	High-level engagement on HIV/AIDS-OVCs, general WV/AU collaboration
<b>AU Commission:</b> Social Affairs Directorate	High-level, technical-level engagement on Child Rights
<b>AU Commission:</b> Economic Affairs Directorate	High-level, technical-level engagement on Economic Justice (Aid, Debt)
<b>AU Commission:</b> Trade and Industry Directorate	High-level, technical-level engagement on Economic Justice (Trade)
<b>AU Commission:</b> Peace and Security Directorate	High-level, technical-level engagement on Peace and Security
<b>AU Commission:</b> African Citizens Directorate (CIDO)	Technical-level engagement on WV/AU civil society collaboration
<b>AU Organ:</b> Peace and Security Council	Lobbying on African conflicts
<b>AU Organs:</b> ACHPR, African Court	Lobbying on abuses of Child Rights, possible channel to PRC
<b>AU Organ:</b> Pan-African Parliament	Lobbying on all key themes
<b>NEPAD/APRM Secretariat</b>	Engagement on APRM, Economic Justice (esp. mutual accountability)
<b>UN Economic Commission for Africa</b>	High-level, technical-level engagement on SGPRs, APRM, APF/Mutual accountability, HIV/AIDS and Governance, Poverty research
<b>African Development Bank</b>	High-level, technical-level engagement on HIV/AIDS, APF/Mutual accountability
<b>ECOWAS Secretariat</b>	High-level, technical-level engagement on Youth and Child Policy

## 5.5 Strategic CSO Partnerships

In the course of conducting the research for this report, and in the process of sharing information on their work as related to continental initiatives, several respondents expressed a strong interest in collaborating with World Vision. A selection of these proposals is highlighted below, along with recommendations as to how World Vision might want to consider proceeding.

*ActionAid International* partners with Oxfam GB on a number of Pan-African programmes and initiatives and is also involved in the Addis Ababa CSO hub initiative. Its Africa Strategic Plan 2005-2010 identifies food security and unjust trade; women in Africa; HIV and AIDS; poor governance; too little aid and too much debt; and human insecurity as its key priorities. In addition, democracy and governance, and human security in violent conflict and emergency, are two new priorities. HIV and AIDS is a major priority area and a theme for collaboration with World Vision. The rights of girls are listed as part of a key objective, the right to education. Its hallmark is increasingly rights-based advocacy, informed by substantive research leveraged from its global network. The 'Real Aid Report' is a good example of the kind of research ActionAid undertakes to provide the evidence base for campaigns. World Vision should consider collaboration that taps into ActionAid's research and thinking capacity, specifically as related to Pan-Africa advocacy.

The *Africa Child Policy Forum*, based in Addis Ababa, described itself as "an independent, Pan-African organisation working for the realisation of child rights". In May 2006 it convened its 2nd International Policy Conference on the African Child, on the theme 'Violence Against Girls in Africa'. The AU Commission was among continental organisations represented at the Forum, which adopted an 'African Declaration on Violence Against Girls'.

The *African Monitor* is an initiative started in the aftermath of 2005 by the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, Njongonkulu Ndungane. The idea is "... targeted grassroots monitoring of development compliance

in key sectors [with health as a leading priority]". African Monitor plans to develop and implement an advocacy strategy towards effective and urgent delivery against international development commitments.

*CIVICUS*, the World Alliance for Citizen Participation, is well known to World Vision, with Secretary General Kumi Naidoo having participated in previous World Vision discussions on advocacy in Africa, and World Vision having co-organised events during the May 2006 CIVICUS World Assembly in Scotland. One immediate possibility for collaboration on the Pan-African agenda is the CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI), described as "...an action-research project that aims to assess the state of civil society in countries around the world, with a view to creating a knowledge base and an impetus for civil society strengthening initiatives". CSI harnesses a unique methodology called the Civil Society Diamond, which maps the development of civil society over time. CSI is underway in 53 countries worldwide, including at least 5 in Africa. There is significant scope for Civicus and World Vision to work together in expanding the research in Africa – this would be of great help in providing the data needed to strengthen national and continental capacity among African CSOs, and to build coalitions.

The *Open Society* network is steadily becoming an important part of the Pan-Africa landscape, with at least five initiatives in Africa so far. An interesting project is the *Africa Governance Monitoring and Advocacy Project (AfriMAP)*, which aims to "monitor and promote compliance by African states with the requirements of good governance, democracy, human rights and the rule of law". It plans to produce reports identifying achievements and challenges in complying with international standards, support and promote the active engagement of civil society organisations as independent monitors of government, and complement and engage in critical dialogue with the AU and its monitoring efforts, particularly the APRM. Research is currently underway in 5 countries – Senegal, South Africa, Malawi, Mozambique and Ghana. AfriMAP is interested in collaborating with World Vision on research,

*Displaced families fleeing from fighting wait to receive a 10 day supply of wheat or millet, sugar and oil from a food distribution centre. Otash IDP Camp, Darfur.*

**photo:** Jon Warren



among other areas. Another initiative under discussion is to put in place hubs in different parts of the continent to support Pan-Africa civil society lobbying and information sharing.

*Oxfam GB* is a market-leader among INGOs prioritising continental advocacy, and was among the first to prioritise campaigning around the AU. It has also emphasised working in coalitions led by African CSOs, and has sought to facilitate and build capacity while essentially remaining in the background. *Oxfam GB*'s Pan-Africa programme has established partnerships with as many as 50 key organisations in Africa. For example, it is working with AFRODAD and the Open Society AfriMAP on research aimed at strengthening the knowledge-base for CSOs wishing to engage around AU Summits<sup>30</sup>. It is also a leading member of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP). And as described earlier, *Oxfam GB* is also an active member of the SOAWR coalition campaigning on the AU Protocol on the Rights of

Women. *Oxfam GB* considers its major weakness to be in generating policy research, and this constitutes an area of potential collaboration with World Vision. In addition to women's rights and gender equality, HIV and AIDS is a major Africa priority for *Oxfam GB*, along with public accountability advocacy towards good governance, trade and financing for development. *Oxfam GB* is among the group looking at developing a joint civil society hub in Addis Ababa to maximise engagement with the AU, and would like World Vision to sign up.

The *Southern Africa Trust*, dedicated to strengthening civil society policy engagement, is thinking intelligently and intensively about how best to strengthen civil society capacity to engage around key African policymaking hubs – in particular the so-called Midrand institutions – PAP, NEPAD and APRM (see Chapter 2 for more details on the initiative). The Trust is keen to engage with World Vision on this project, and there is likely to be room for partnership on other issues as well.

<sup>30</sup> Towards a People-Driven African Union: Current Obstacles and New Opportunities. Launched early 2007.

*This health clinic in Zambia is understaffed but vital help is provided by a community health worker trained by World Vision.*

**photo:** Andrea Dearborn

