



civil society
organisations
and the **African Union**

towards a continental advocacy strategy
for World Vision

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Published April 2007 by World Vision Africa

World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. Motivated by our Christian faith, World Vision is dedicated to working with the world's most vulnerable people. World Vision serves all people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender.

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Cover image: Children at a World Vision Child Friendly Space,
Otash IDP Camp, Darfur.

photo: Jon Warren

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contents

acknowledgments	iv
list of acronyms	v
executive summary	1
introduction	5
chapter 1:	
Overview of the African Union and continental decision-making structures and processes	
1.1 The Emergence of a New Pan-Africanism	7
1.2 Key African Union Organs	7
1.3 The Continental Institutional Architecture	13
1.3.1 The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)	13
1.3.2 African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)	14
1.3.3 Regional Economic Communities (RECs)	14
1.3.4 United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB)	16
1.4 Opportunity and Challenge	16
chapter 2:	
Institutional opportunities for civil society engagement	
2.1 Towards a People-centred Union	19
2.2 The Road to ECOSOCC	19
2.3 Mechanisms, Structures and Spaces – an Assessment and Critiques	20
2.3.1 The Interim ECOSOCC	20
2.3.2 The AU Africa Citizens Directorate (CIDO)	23
2.3.3 Bilateral Engagement with AU Directorates	24
2.3.4 The AU-CSO Pre-Summit Forum	25
2.3.5 CSO Mechanisms in the Regional Economic Communities	27
2.3.6 The African Commission on Human and People's Rights CSO Observer Mechanism	29
2.3.7 NEPAD, the African Peer Review Mechanism and Civil Society	30
2.3.8 Proposals to Create Joint CSO Hubs	31
chapter 3:	
Modes of engagement and tensions in CSO-AU relations	
3.1 Different Ways of Engaging	33
3.1.1 Provision of Technical Input	33
3.1.2 Proxy Advocate	33
3.1.3 Partnering in Implementation	33

3.1.4	Consulting or Contracting	33
3.2	Blurred Line, Crisis of Expectations, Tensions	34
3.3	Dichotomy between International and African CSOs?	35
chapter 4:		
Key thematic issues for CSO advocacy		
4.1	Speaking with One Voice	39
4.2	Economic Justice	39
4.3	Gender	42
4.4	Governance	42
4.5	HIV and AIDS	44
4.6	Human Rights and Justice	44
4.7	Peace and Security	45
chapter 5:		
Towards a multi-pronged advocacy strategy: recommendations for World Vision		
5.1	The Rationale for Continental Policy Advocacy	47
5.2	AU Strategy or Pan-African Strategy?	48
5.3	Guiding Principles for World Vision	49
5.3.1	Leverage World Vision's Strengths	49
5.3.2	Strike a Balance Between Campaigning and Lobbying	49
5.3.3	Educate Senior Policy Makers and Decision-makers	50
5.3.4	Generate the Evidence Base to Inform Advocacy	50
5.3.5	Work in Coalitions	50
5.4	Thematic Priorities – Suggestions for World Vision	50
5.4.1	Child Rights	51
5.4.2	Peace and Security	52
5.4.3	Economic Justice	53
5.4.4	HIV and AIDS	54
5.4.5	Governance	54
5.5	Strategic CSO Partnerships	56
annex A:	Catalogue, Key Advocacy Opportunities, 2007-2008	59
annex B:	List of Respondents	60
annex C:	World Vision's Core Values	63
annex D:	References	64

Gathering at the Ugandan town of Odek, home town of LRA leader Joseph Kony.

photo: Jon Warren



acknowledgments

This publication culminates six months of research commissioned by World Vision Africa in 2006. The research was conducted and the report written for us by Peter da Costa. The purpose of the research was to review the operations of the African Union (AU) with a view to identifying opportunities for engagement as a means of informing a two-pronged World Vision (WV) Africa advocacy strategy. World Vision's advocacy focuses on influencing policy at one level and empowering communities at another.

The publication would not have been possible without the tireless effort of the World Vision staff who conceptualised, designed and shaped it throughout 2006. While it is impossible to list here all those who have contributed to it we would like to specifically thank the World Vision review team for their guidance and wisdom. The team included:

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While this publication bears the name of World Vision, it is the willingness of those who believe in a prosperous Africa to share their knowledge and rich experience that makes it valuable. We are indebted to members of the African Union and representatives of civil society organisations who accepted our requests for interviews and who were willing to be quoted in this publication.

We acknowledge the financial support of WVUK and WV Australia that made the work possible.

Finally we are eternally grateful to God for His faithfulness and for according us sufficient grace, opportunity and privilege to serve the children of Africa.

Wilfred Mlay, PhD

Regional Vice President WV Africa

list of acronyms

ATM:	HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria	GCAP:	Global Call to Action Against Poverty
AU:	African Union	HIPC:	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
ACHPR:	African Commission on Human and People's Rights	HSGIC:	NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee
ACP:	African Caribbean Pacific group of countries	IGAD:	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
AfDB:	African Development Bank	IMF:	International Monetary Fund
AfriMAP:	African Governance Monitoring and Advocacy Project	INGOs:	International Non-Governmental Organisations
AFRODAD:	African Forum on Debt and Development	MDRI:	Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative
AMIS:	AU Mission in the Sudan	MDGs:	Millennium Development Goals
APF:	Africa Partnership Forum	NAMA:	Non-Agricultural Market Access
APRM:	African Peer Review Mechanism	NEPAD:	New Partnership for Africa's Development
ATN:	Africa Trade Network	NGOs:	Non-Governmental Organisations
CIDO:	AU African Citizens Directorate	OAU:	Organisation of African Unity
CPA:	Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement	OVCs:	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
CSI:	Civicus Civil Society Index	PAP:	Pan-African Parliament
CBOs:	Community-Based Organisations	PRC:	Permanent Representatives' Committee
CSOs:	Civil Society Organisations	PSC:	Peace and Security Council
CSSDCA:	Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa	RECs:	Regional Economic Communities
DANIDA:	Danish International Development Agency	SADC:	Southern African Development Community
DFID:	UK Department for International Development	SERAC:	Social and Economic Rights Action Centre
DPA:	Darfur Peace Agreement	SOAWR:	Solidarity for African Women's Rights Coalition
EAC:	East African Community	UNECA:	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
EALA:	East Africa Legislative Assembly	UNGASS:	UN General Assembly Special Session on AIDS
ECCAS:	Economic Community of Central African States	WACSO:	West African Civil Society Forum
ECOSOCC:	Economic Social and Cultural Council	WB:	World Bank
ECOWAS:	Economic Community of West African States	WTO:	World Trade Organisation
EPAs:	Economic Partnership Agreements	WV:	World Vision
EU:	European Union		
EULO:	World Vision European Union Liaison Office		

executive summary

This publication culminates six months of research commissioned by World Vision in 2006. The purpose of the research was to review the operations of the African Union (AU) with a view to identifying opportunities for engagement as a means of informing a two-pronged World Vision (WV) Africa advocacy strategy.

The AU is increasingly being viewed as a critical focus of civil society advocacy because it is playing an unprecedented and pro-active role in addressing Africa's crises, is exercising leadership in global negotiations, and is being taken seriously by the international community. The demise of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and advent of the AU in 2002 has marked the emergence of a new Pan-Africanism. The sacred cow of sovereignty enshrined in the OAU's credo of non-interference and non-aggression has given way to a new doctrine mandating the right to intervene to restore peace and security in specific circumstances, including unconstitutional changes of government.

While working at the grassroots or micro level is viewed as a critical undertaking, and on the basis of the new opportunities around the AU, the conventional wisdom among civil society organisations (CSOs) is that only by engaging in policy advocacy at the highest level of decision-making on the continent can real and sustainable impact be registered in addressing poverty and injustice in Africa.

The AU system consists of several important policymaking institutions – notably the Assembly; Executive Council; Permanent Representatives Committee; Specialised Technical Committees; Economic Social and Cultural Council; Pan-African Parliament; Peace and Security Council; and the African Court on Human and People's Rights. The AU Commission constitutes the bureaucratic and technocratic engine of the Union, and is therefore a key focus for any organisation wishing to engage on continental issues. The scope of its work programme, as spelled out in the Strategic Plan 2004-2007, reflects its ambition. So too do the proposal to establish three financial institutions and Union Government. Also of importance in the African institutional landscape is the

New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD); the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM); and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Another important structure is the revitalised Joint Secretariat, bringing together the AU, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and African Development Bank.

While the AU's establishment demonstrates steady progress in Africa's quest for ownership of its own agenda, many challenges remain. One is the proliferation of AU organs and initiatives. Another is the sheer ambition of its strategic vision, amidst limited capacity and growing external expectation and demand for engagement. A third is the gulf between continental policymaking and national implementation. All these challenges force any institution wishing to engage with the AU to necessarily be realistic about what is achievable and what is not. They also imply a need to focus on a range of African institutions and initiatives, as opposed to solely on the AU Commission.

Institutional opportunities for civil society engagement with the AU are spelled out in Chapter 2. Key among the mechanisms, structures and spaces is the Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), established under the Constitutive Act to provide a permanent space for civil society to advise African governments collectively via the AU. While most see ECOSOCC as an important window for influencing AU policy, there are concerns that it is elitist and designed to circumscribe CSO participation in continental policymaking. Its advisory status is viewed as a constraint, and much remains to be done at sub-regional and country level to foster greater inclusion in its membership. Nevertheless, civil society can also engage with the AU via the Citizens Directorate or directly with the Commission's thematic Directorates.

The pre-Summit Forum, where CSOs gather to meet on the fringes of the biannual AU Summit, is considered by many to be an important space to influence continental policy, although the conclusion is that its potential will only be realised if CSOs de-link from the official programme and organise events autonomously. The

chapter points to a CSO mechanism in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Commission on Human and People's Rights as potential models. CSO structures and opportunities around NEPAD and the APRM are also critically appraised, while ongoing initiatives to establish civil society hubs in Addis Ababa (around the AU) and Midrand (around NEPAD, the APRM and PAP) are highlighted.

In Chapter 3, modes of engagement around the AU agenda are analysed, and tensions in the CSO-AU relationship examined in some detail. CSO modes of engagement with the AU generally tend to involve providing technical input to programmatic work; advocating on behalf of the AU; working as implementing partners; or being contracted to deliver specific outputs. A fear among African activists is that because of the lack of capacity, civil society experts end up writing the AU Commission's policies. In terms of tensions, while theorists speak of a "new participatory paradigm" necessitating a "critical form of engagement", in reality the absence of this recognition on both sides results in a blurred line along which AU-CSO relations happen.

Two types of CSO actors are identified – insiders comfortable with the evolving ECOSOCC; and outsiders who are becoming increasingly frustrated with what they consider to be the arbitrary and ad hoc way CSO engagement is organised. Increasingly, the crisis of expectations is pushing this second group to organise autonomously. Another pertinent issue raised in this chapter is the perceived dichotomy between international and African civil society, and the perceived efforts to exclude INGOs from membership of the ECOSOCC structure. This raises questions of legitimacy and authenticity, with one group speaking to the need for INGOs to take a back seat and work with coalitions, and to invest in building the capacity of indigenous African NGOs and CSOs as a deliberate strategy. Another school of thought asserts that successful advocacy necessitates pressure in both the North and South, and argues that a symbiotic approach between African and international NGOs is needed for real impact.

Chapter 4 spells out key themes on which CSOs have hinged their advocacy efforts. While the AU Commission's Strategic Plan 2004-2007 constitutes an ambitious shopping list, in practice the Commission cannot engage on every issue with the same intensity or dynamism. The elaboration of a new Strategic Plan from 2008 onwards constitutes potentially the single most important opportunity to influence the AU programmatically. While such a new plan is likely to be more focused, it will inevitably seek to address a number of themes experts consider to be at the heart of the new Pan-Africanism. The chapter highlights a subset of these issues, providing illustrations of how CSOs have engaged on them.

On Economic Justice, developing and articulating African positions on aid, trade and debt is viewed as being at the core of the AU Commission's advocacy role. On aid, the AU's advocacy for larger aid volumes leaves room for CSO engagement around aid effectiveness. On debt, the AU's position is that the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) be extended to all African countries. However, it is on trade that the AU has developed its strongest niche, rallying African policymakers to develop common positions in advance of critical World Trade Organisation (WTO) talks. CSOs have been actively involved as observers at AU Ministerial meetings, and this theme constitutes fertile ground for AU-CSO collaboration.

Gender is one theme around which there has been effective collaboration between the AU and CSOs, with the Solidarity for African Women's Rights Campaign (SOAWR) triggering the coming into force of Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa by successfully lobbying for ratifications. The strategy, which combined creating a sense of outrage with constructive engagement, is widely viewed as a model. On governance, Africa's agenda is largely being stewarded outside of the AU Commission, with the African Peer Review Mechanism providing unprecedented opportunities for civil society participation.

On HIV and AIDS, CSOs have been extremely active, harnessing the African Common Position developed by the

Community Care Coalition members meet to discuss agriculture and development challenges they are experiencing within their community. Keembe, Zambia.

photo: Collins Kaumba



AU for the 2006 UN General Assembly Special Session on AIDS (UNGASS)¹. The African Common Position lists a number of targets to be met by 2010 – including targets related to orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs). Another important call to action is the ‘Brazzaville Commitment² on Scaling Up towards Universal Access to HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support in Africa by 2010’.

On Human Rights and Justice, an active civil society community has developed around the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights, with attention now focusing on the merger of two institutions – the African Court on Human and People’s Rights and the African Court of Justice. Thanks to a combination of civil society pressure through campaigning, and the submission of technical proposals, African leaders signed off the proposal for a single legal instrument to merge the two courts at the 7th AU Summit in Banjul in 2006. The Coalition for an Effective African Court on Human and People’s Rights, which conducted the lobbying, provides another strong example of how CSOs are influencing continental policy.

On Peace and Security, arguably the core competency of the AU, civil society has begun to engage more consistently, particularly on the situation in Darfur – possibly the biggest ever CSO mobilisation of its kind. However, although human rights CSOs have done much to highlight the responsibility of the combatants to protect, additional engagement is needed in this area. AU initiatives on child soldiers, small arms, landmines and post-conflict reconstruction also offer room for partnership. Overall, the chapter demonstrates that the AU Commission is providing leadership on key issues – in particular Trade, Peace and Security and HIV and AIDS.

The final chapter focuses on recommendations to inform World Vision’s proposed continental advocacy strategy. The chapter begins by examining the renewed optimism that African leadership is beginning to seriously engage with developing its own agenda for the continent, and the growing interest by global and multilateral organisations to work through the AU.

The second section in the chapter argues that CSOs, including World Vision, should pursue a multi-pronged

¹ <http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/conferences/past/2006/may/summit/summit.htm>

² March 2006.

Africa advocacy strategy as opposed to one focused solely on the AU Commission. Four arguments are offered in support of this recommendation. First, while the AU should be the centrepiece of a continental strategy, CSOs should also find ways to engage strategically with other AU organs. Second, given that the AU is a work in progress, with financial and staffing constraints, the reality is one of a proliferation of actors wishing to work with a Secretariat that is weak. Third, the real challenge lies not in influencing AU norms and standards but in domesticating and implementing them in African countries. Fourth, state parties are much more likely to adhere to commitments made at sub-regional than at AU level. Put together, these arguments speak to the need for World Vision to engage with a range of organs, institutions and processes in recognition of the importance of a multi-pronged engagement in different spaces, towards common objectives.

The third section of chapter 5 spells out principles to guide World Vision's continental engagement. One principle is to leverage World Vision's strengths – its focus on children, community level reach, and strong network of national offices. A second is to strike a balance between high-profile, high-visibility campaigning and more patient, process-oriented lobbying. Third, World Vision should educate senior policymakers and African decision makers as to its role, as a means of dispelling any question marks about its legitimacy to engage with the AU system. Fourth, generating the evidence base is critical to effective continental advocacy. Lastly, World Vision should work in coalitions on issues in which it does not have a comparative advantage but wants to register an impact, for example on Trade.

The chapter also suggests thematic priorities that could be the focus for World Vision in the initial phases of the continental strategy – Child Rights; Peace and Security; Economic Justice; Governance; and HIV and AIDS. The Chapter concludes by cataloguing key advocacy opportunities in 2007 and 2008.

introduction

This research publication culminates a one-year process initiated by World Vision in Africa to identify opportunities for a World Vision Africa advocacy strategy aimed at "...transforming AU and NEPAD policies and practices towards enhancement of the lives of children and their families".

In World Vision the term advocacy is used interchangeably with the phrase seeking justice. World Vision's mission statement, adopted more than 10 years ago, makes a commitment to promoting justice through changing unjust structures³. World Vision adopts a two-pronged approach to advocacy focusing on 'Policy Influencing' and 'Citizen Empowerment'. Advocacy targeting the African Union falls under the policy influencing prong which would seek to both see policy formulated or changed as well as implemented. However, the voices from the ground as a result of the citizen empowerment provide the necessary evidence for the need for policy change.

The AU is considered a critical focus of civil society advocacy, including World Vision advocacy, because it is playing an unprecedented and pro-active role in addressing Africa's crises, is exercising leadership in global negotiations, and is seen by the international community as an important actor in global affairs. Furthermore, while working at the grassroots or micro level is viewed as a critical undertaking, World Vision firmly believes, as do other organisations, that engaging in policy advocacy at the highest level of decision-making on the continent,

combined with World Vision's community-focused development and humanitarian programming, leads to real and sustainable impact in addressing poverty and injustice in Africa.

This research publication is one step in the continental advocacy strategy development process. It will provide the basis for a two-pronged World Vision Africa advocacy strategy with a focus on the African Union and the individual Commissions. However, the recommendations contained in this publication are equally useful to Civil Society Organisations in Africa grappling with AU advocacy.

Three research methods were harnessed to generate the relevant information:

- i An in-depth review of relevant literature;
- ii Semi-structured and open-ended interviews with AU and NEPAD officials, NGO officials, CSO activists, researchers and World Vision staff;
- iii Participant observation of the 2006 AU Pre-Summit Forum process. Field visits were conducted to five countries – Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and The Gambia – with close to 60 respondents interviewed in the course of these visits (see Annex B);
- iv The draft research report was also discussed at an AU and CSOs roundtable organised by World Vision on 22nd November 2006 in Nairobi. Comments from the roundtable are incorporated in the final publication.

³ Adopted by the World Vision Council, September 1992.

A workshop presenting some of the major challenges facing women in rural communities. Nyamphanda, Zambia.

photo: Collins Kaumba



chapter 1

Overview of the African Union and continental decision-making structures and processes

1.1 The Emergence of a New Pan-Africanism

A number of commentators have highlighted the emergence in recent years of a 'new Pan-Africanism'. According to this view, the new Pan-Africanism remains committed to the long aspired-to African unity and solidarity, while taking this aspiration to an unprecedented new level – manifested by the recognition that development, peace and security, and democracy are intertwined and interdependent.

This recognition provided the impetus for the demise of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the birth of its successor continental organisation, the African Union (AU), launched in Durban, South Africa in July 2002. Critically, the sacred cow of sovereignty enshrined in the OAU's credo of non-interference and non-aggression has been replaced by a new doctrine mandating the right to intervene to restore peace and security in specific circumstances – genocide, gross violations of human rights, national instability with cross-border ramifications, and unconstitutional changes of government. The last of these is symbolic of a new willingness to usher in higher democratic standards of governance.

For many, the AU provides an unprecedented opportunity for Africa to overcome the constraints of its many borders and to have a stronger voice globally. "The AU is part of the African response to globalisation", says Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem, a leading observer of continental policy and politics. "Most of our states are becoming irrelevant globally, but as a group we potentially have a bigger voice politically, economically and diplomatically". In committing to "build an integrated Africa, a prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena"⁴, African leaders for the first time acknowledged and articulated the importance of citizen participation in building Africa's Union.

Civil society activists argue this commitment to a "people-led" Union represents a new political opportunity to engage at continental level towards a golden age of human rights, democratic governance and socio-economic development for Africa's peoples. To capitalise on this opportunity to influence policy, they argue, civil society must engage with the AU itself. "The AU norms provide legitimacy, especially in those countries that are not very open," argues think tank head Funmi Olonisakin. "The moment the AU puts a stamp of approval on anything, it opens doors in country". Abdul-Raheem agrees: "If you look at the structure of the AU, a certain level of continental coordination is intended. It is basically built like a continental government. Regionalism is a reality in Africa and therefore anybody who wants to engage with Africa must engage at that level of policy".

Garth Le Pere, Executive Director of the Centre for Global Dialogue, is equally optimistic about the new Pan-Africanism. "The broad philosophical shift from the OAU to the AU was quite a radical one in the sense that it changed the broad existential motivation for having a continental organisation, ushering in a stronger commitment to development and dealing with a range of important new normative underpinnings as these relate to peace and security, good governance and so on, all of which are enshrined in the Constitutive Act".

1.2 Key African Union Organs

Beyond the philosophical shift from unequivocal to conditional sovereignty, the AU mandate is significantly more expansive than that of its predecessor. As such, its processes and structures differ from the OAU in a number of important ways. Whereas decision-making in the OAU emanated from the Assembly of Heads of State and Government alone, the AU decision-making process is more complex, involving a myriad of institutions designed to ensure greater pluralism in the making of continental

⁴ From the AU's Strategic Plan 2004-2007.

policy. Article 5.1 of the Constitutive Act of the Union establishes several organs (at least 18, according to one source⁵), while a number of institutions are carried over from the OAU. A large number of continental norms, such as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, adopted by the OAU in July 1990, have automatically been absorbed by the AU.

The highest level of AU authority emanates from the *Assembly of the Union*, bringing together Heads of State and Government of all the AU's 53 Member States twice a year in ordinary session, as opposed to once under the OAU. The Assembly can convene more than twice a year in extraordinary session, if an urgent issue necessitates it. Another important structure is the *Executive Council*, which is effectively the old OAU Council of Ministers under a different name. Ministers of Foreign Affairs must co-ordinate, consider and approve all policy proposals before they go up to the Heads of State in the Assembly of the Union. A third level is the *Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC)*, made up of all the African Ambassadors accredited to the AU. The PRC is a crucial forum for influencing AU policy, as the Ambassadors are key players in a sophisticated game of brokering compromise between national agendas and continental policy. These three key organs meet in sequence in the course of the twice-yearly Summits⁶. The first to meet is the PRC, which prepares the agenda for the Executive Council. The Executive Council in turn recommends issues and points of action to the Assembly of the Union. Member states also engage in the different AU policy areas at ministerial or senior official level in the *Specialised Technical Committees* established under the Constitutive Act. These committees

meet on an ongoing basis to help determine issues that will end up on the agenda of Summits.

A number of other institutions and structures are worth highlighting.

For those who are critical of the fact that the key policy makers under the AU model are still Foreign Affairs Ministers and diplomats, the *Pan-African Parliament (PAP)*, established in March 2004 and based in Midrand, South Africa, restores some faith in the commitment to a more distributed model of decision-making. The PAP has one Chamber and is made up of five representatives from the Parliament of each member state. At least one of the five must be a woman, and the ultimate objective, in line with the 50-50 parity rule⁷, is to have equal representation between women and men. Initially designated as an advisory body for the first five years, the PAP will eventually have full legislative status and be comprised of members elected by the populations of their respective countries, in the same way as Members of the European Parliament are elected. In its interim phase, the PAP is experiencing teething problems (to do with financing and logistics) likely to plague all the fledgling AU organs. PAP governance structures include a Bureau made up of a President (currently Honourable Dr. Gertrude Mongella of Tanzania) and four Vice Presidents, ten sectoral committees⁸, and the Secretariat in Midrand.

The *Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC)* was established by Articles 5 and 22 of the Constitutive Act as the primary space for civil society involvement in the building of an African Union. ECOSOCC provides civil society with an opportunity to interact with all organs of

⁵ Landsberg and McKay 2005.

⁶ There have been 7 AU Summits to date. The first was in Durban, July 2002, followed by: Maputo, July 2003; Addis Ababa, July 2004; Abuja, January 2005; Sirte, July 2005; Khartoum, January 2006 and Banjul, July 2006.

⁷ The 50/50 gender parity rule, agreed to by AU Heads of State at the organisation's inception, decrees that the gender of employees of AU institutions should be evenly distributed between men and women. To date, in what has been heralded as unique among international bodies, the AU Commission has implemented the rule – 50% of its Commissioners, for example, are women. The substantive ECOSOCC will also be composed according to the gender parity rule.

⁸ For more details visit <http://www.pan-african-parliament.org/>

the AU, influence policy decisions and chart Africa's future alongside Africa's leaders⁹. As AU Chairperson Alpha Konaré has stated, "The creation of ECOSOCC is against authoritarian regimes, hostile external efforts and the negative waves of globalization... [ECOSOCC] should be by the side of those who suffer injustice and are deprived of their basic human rights."¹⁰ ECOSOCC has been heralded by some civil society actors as the jewel in the AU's crown. "We now have an organ that allows us to speak directly to the Summit", says Ayokunle Fagbemi of the Centre for Peacebuilding and Socio-Economic Resources Development (CePSEED), Abuja, Nigeria. "The ECOSOCC agenda and the ECOSOCC spirit are not just about going to meetings in Addis Ababa or being privileged to sit with the Heads of State. No, it is about making sure that the people-centred, people-friendly, people-oriented nature of the African Union is brought to bear and there's a complete accountability scheme put in place". ECOSOCC currently exists as an interim body, but will eventually have 150 members. Like the PAP, ECOSOCC is a representative body, with statutes laying down criteria for membership. Unlike the PAP, however, ECOSOCC will remain an advisory body, a fact that has

prompted some critics to dismiss it as an organ designed to rubber stamp, rather than critically engage with the policies of Africa's leaders (for more on ECOSOCC, see Chapter 2).

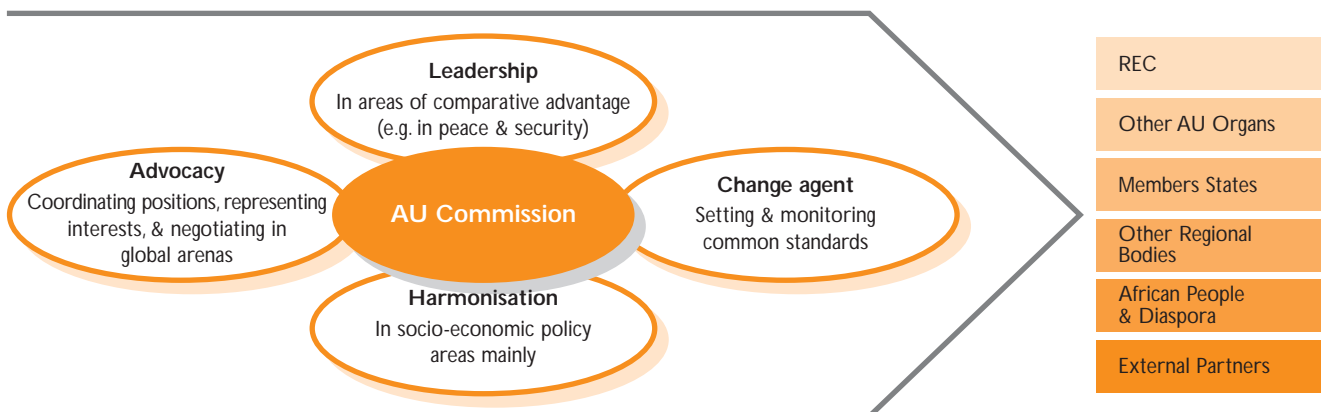
The AU Commission constitutes the bureaucratic and technocratic engine of the Union, and as such is a key focus for any organisation wishing to engage on continental issues. In its Strategic Plan 2004-2007, the Commission ascribes to itself the following four functions (see Figure 1):

- Leadership (in areas of comparative advantage, such as Peace and Security);
- Harmonisation (mainly in socio-economic policy areas);
- Change Agent (setting and monitoring common standards); and
- Advocacy (coordinating positions, representing interests, and negotiating in global arenas).

These constitute a sea of change from the old OAU Secretariat's role. Another difference is that whereas the

Figure 1: Role of the African Union

Adapted from: AU Strategic Plan 2004-2007, Vol. 2



⁹ <http://www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0001191/index.php>

¹⁰ Opening Statement of AU Chairperson Alpha Oumar Konaré at the launch of the interim ECOSOCC on 29 March 2005 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Secretary General of the OAU could not take initiatives without reference to the Assembly of Heads of State, the Chairperson of the AU Commission has a stronger mandate to take initiatives and more room to manoeuvre – as evidenced by the speed with which the AU is responding to African crises, and the exceptional leadership it is exercising on Africa's behalf in multilateral and global fora.

The scope of the AU's Directorates¹¹ reflects the ambition of the Union. Most are headed by Commissioners, who have a high degree of autonomy to direct and implement AU policy in their five-year term. The AU convenes a large number of sectoral conferences at ministerial level, such as the AU Conferences of African Ministers of Health and Ministers of Regional Integration. The Commission's work programme is spelled out in the Strategic Plan 2004-2007, and its implementation is directed by the Chairperson, currently former Malian President Prof. Alpha Oumar Konaré.¹² Konaré is more externally-focused while his Deputy Chairperson, Ambassador Patrick Mazimhaka of Rwanda, addresses internal administrative and reform issues.

A significant majority of the AU Commission's 300 or so staff members are from the old OAU Secretariat, a fact some see as problematic and a sign more reforms are needed. "The reforms have not been consequential enough to keep pace or to advance the frontiers of this new continental focus," says Le Pere. "If anything it has been subject to deep internecine squabbling around the nature of the institutional architecture, the human resources required to make that architecture functional, and so on. So you're sort of grafting new onto old in a manner that is very imperfect".

The 15-member *Peace and Security Council (PSC)* represents the AU's continued and deepening commitment to

preventing, managing and resolving Africa's conflicts. Established in December 2003, its statutes provide for citizens to bring matters to its attention. Three PSC sub-organs are in the process of being established. One is the Panel of the Wise, to be made up of five prominent Africans whose role will be to engage in preventive diplomacy and mediation. A second is the Continental Early Warning System, designed to enhance the PSC's conflict prevention effectiveness through the provision of timely information. A third is the African Standby Force, effectively a standing army for peacekeeping and peace enforcement made up of troops from AU member states organised at sub-regional level. The Peace and Security Department services the PSC and is responsible for addressing a range of conflict-related issues, including small arms, landmines, and child soldiers – in line with the AU's emphasis on human security, as opposed to the old military paradigm of state security. A recently developed Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Framework, approved by the 7th AU Summit in Banjul in July 2006, provides policy direction for the AU Commission to work in what is a new programmatic area.

Eleven judges of the new *African Court on Human and People's Rights* were elected on the fringes of the 6th AU Summit in Khartoum in January 2006. The Court, to be based in Arusha, Tanzania, derives its mandate to rule on disputes from the 1981 African Charter on Human and People's Rights – which also established the Gambia-based *African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR)* in 1987 to consider and rule on human rights violations in AU member states, and recommend corrective action against offending state parties. The African Court on Human and People's Rights is intended to bolster the long-standing ACHPR. Since the early 1990s there has been a flurry of civil society engagement around human rights in Africa, made possible by observer status granted

¹¹ Peace and Security (Commissioner Said Djinnit); Political Affairs (Julia Dolly Joiner); Infrastructure and Energy (Bernard Zoba); Social Affairs (Bience P. Gawanas); Human Resources, Science and Technology (Nagia Mohammed Assayed); Trade and Industry (Elisabeth Tankeu); Rural Economy and Agriculture (Rosebud Kurwijila); Economic Affairs (Maxwell Mkwezalamba).

¹² Due to step down mid 2007 but is eligible for another 5 year term.

to CSOs by the ACHPR. A new Pan-African coalition of CSOs has formed to lobby for an effective African Court, demonstrating the extent to which continental mechanisms are attracting interest. Lobbyists were also looking to influence the merger of the African Court on Human Rights and another new organ of the AU, with the *African Court of Justice*, set up, rather confusingly under the Constitutive Act, to protect human rights.

Three proposed *Financial Institutions* are among the most ambitious AU organs to date. The AU Commission has set up a technical committee to look into how best to implement the provision in Article 19 of the Constitutive Act for an African Central Bank (ACB), African Investment Bank (AIB) and African Monetary Fund (AMF).

Even more ambitious is the low-key effort, to develop the concept of *African Union Government*. The idea – discussed in a high-level conference attended by several African Heads of State, civil society leaders and thinkers from

across Africa in 2004 – is to devolve key functions currently carried out by national governments to a Union government. On the basis of the principle of subsidiarity, a restricted draft of a study commissioned by the AU Commission spells out a possible division of labour in strategic policy areas between the African Union Government and national governments. A three-fold division is envisaged: policy areas that will be exclusively under Union Government authority; those where authority is shared between Union Government and national governments; and residual policy areas where member states will retain their state authority. A number of policy domains to be either exclusively managed by Union Government or shared with national governments are suggested. Union Government is viewed as a halfway house to a United States of Africa. “An AU Government Towards the United States of Africa” is the theme of the 9th AU Summit to be held in Accra, Ghana in July 2007.

AIDS education for students and community members reduces the fear of treatment at local clinics. Zamtan, Zambia.

photo: Jon Warren

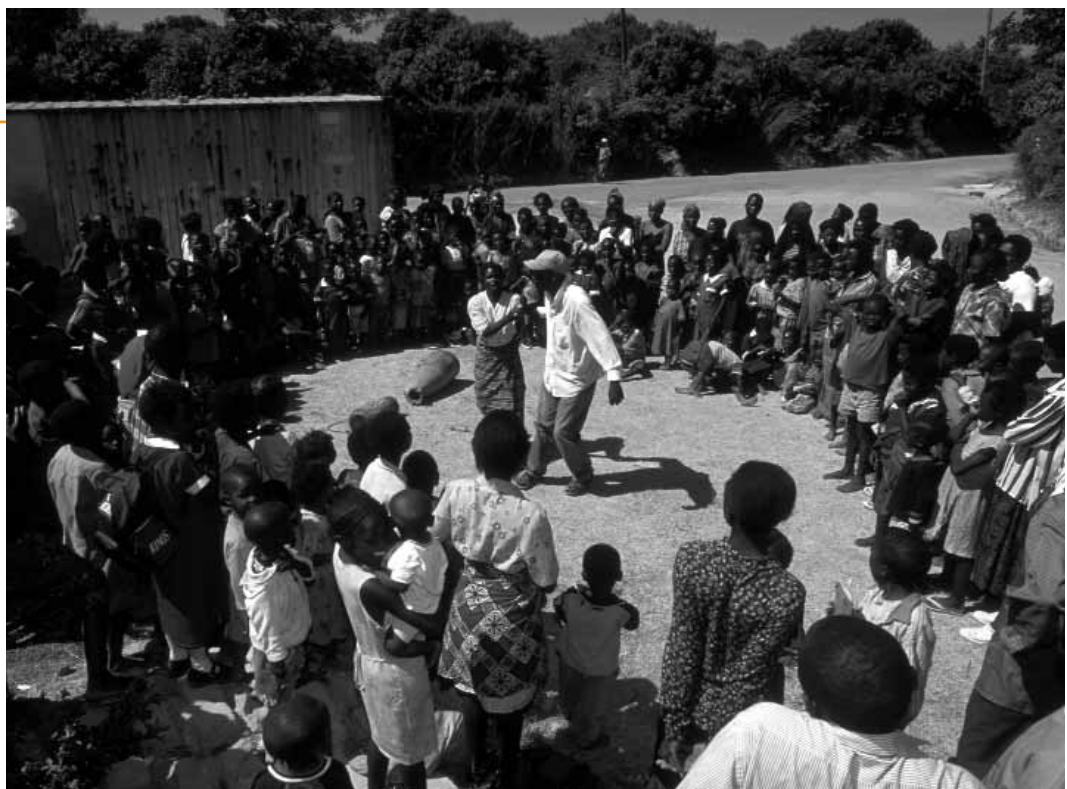
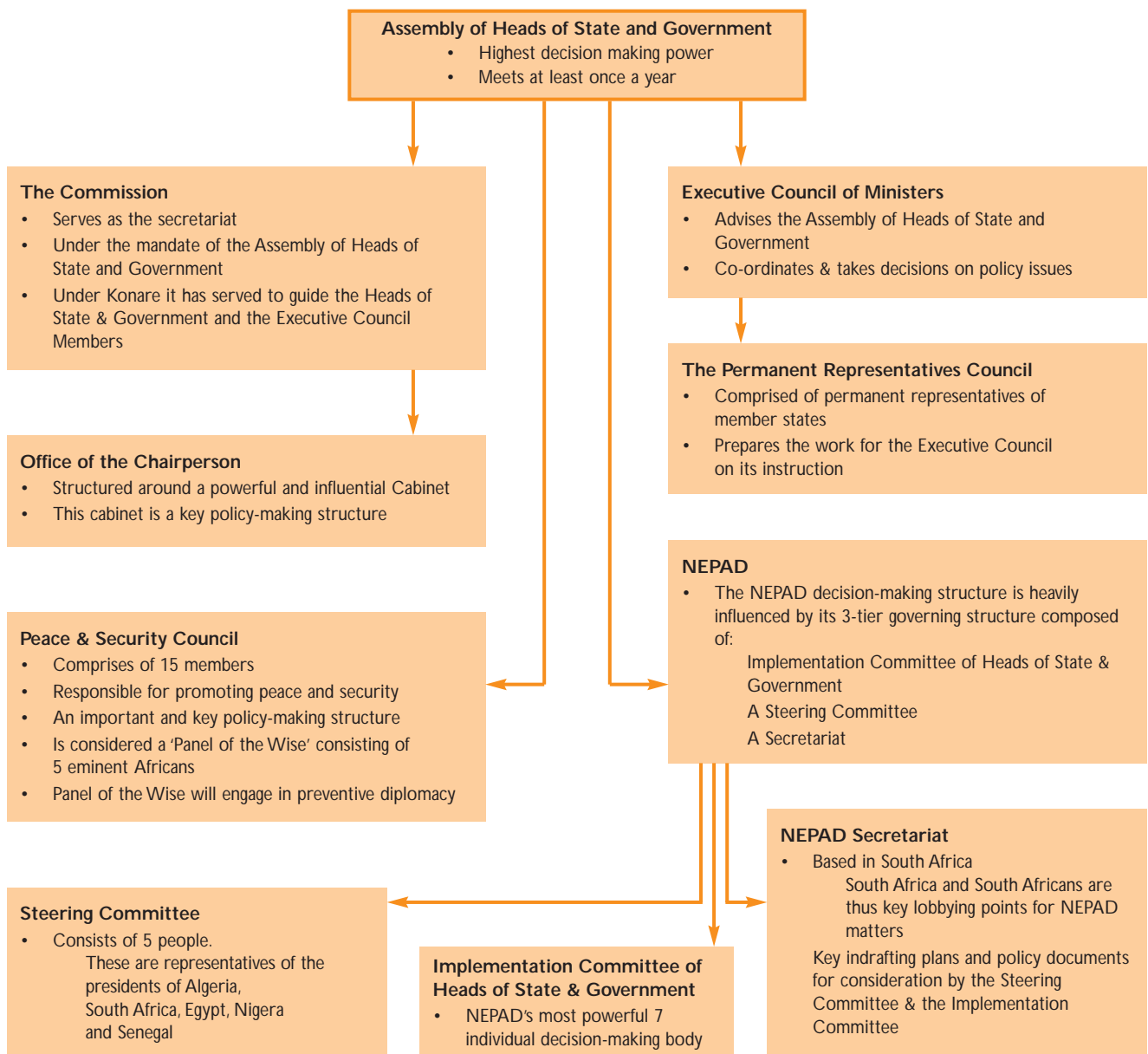


Figure 2: Decision-Making Structures of the African Union

Adapted from: Landsberg and McKay 2005



1.3 The Continental Institutional Architecture

In addition to the multiplicity of institutions created under the Constitutive Act, the AU Commission has stated, as an important goal, the desire to coordinate the activities of all continental and sub-regional organisations in Africa working towards regional integration, and economic and social development.

1.3.1 The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

NEPAD constitutes the most prominent initiative under the AU's umbrella. NEPAD emerged in 2001 as a separate initiative stewarded by a small group of African leadership – Presidents Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria and Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal. Like the AU, NEPAD emphasises the importance of peace and security, democracy and good governance, but goes further, articulating a two way mutual accountability compact binding African leaders and African peoples, and African countries and the international community. NEPAD also spells out an economic vision for Africa's development that assigns a leading role for the private sector as an engine of growth. A fundamental difference is that while the AU's strategy is driven from the inside by African actors, NEPAD places significant emphasis on Africa's external partners, aid, debt relief and trade.

Concern that NEPAD was setting itself up as an alternative to the AU led African leaders to emphasise at the Maputo AU Summit in July 2003 that NEPAD was a programme of the AU, as opposed to a separate initiative. When put together with the AU organs, the combined governing structure makes for an elaborate architecture (see figure 2). NEPAD's secretariat, based in Midrand, South Africa, is accountable to the NEPAD Steering Committee, which in turn reports to the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC). In turn, HSGIC, as decided in Maputo, is a sub-committee of

the Assembly of the African Union. Chaired by President Obasanjo, the HSGIC meets alongside each AU Summit.

There is considerable overlap between the AU and NEPAD's work programme, with most of the areas in which NEPAD is developing action plans¹³ resonating to a greater or lesser extent with the AU's Strategic Plan. And yet the AU Commission and NEPAD Secretariat are located in different African countries and work separately. There is also a widely-held perception among AU Commission staff that the international community is engaging with NEPAD when the key interlocutor should be the AU, resulting in confusion and a lack of coherence. Concerned at the lack of synergy between the two, African leaders decided in Maputo that after three years the NEPAD Secretariat should move to Addis Ababa and be integrated into the AU Commission. At the Banjul Summit in July 2006, a compromise agreement was reached that will allow the NEPAD Secretariat to remain in South Africa for the time being, amid fears that NEPAD will be swallowed up if the Secretariat is absorbed by the AU Commission. However, respondents to interviews conducted as part of this research suggest a merger is imminent.

Furthermore, criticisms by President Wade are leading to calls to "reposition NEPAD". In Khartoum in January 2006 leaders agreed that a joint AU/NEPAD brainstorming should take place in Dakar, Senegal to discuss the way forward. According to Dr. Rene Kouassi, Director of Economic Affairs at the AU Commission, "the idea of the Dakar meeting is to re-examine the way forward for NEPAD because some of us have the impression that NEPAD has strayed from its original path; there is a need to reposition it back to its original trajectory to permit it to play its role". In the meantime, Neville Gabriel of Southern Africa Trust notes "a definite realignment of authority, in the sense that the NEPAD Chief Executive now reports to the AU Chairperson, and the different sectoral leads in NEPAD have to integrate their work much more with the AU..."

¹³ Peace, Security, Democracy & Political Governance Initiatives; Economic & Corporate Governance; Bridging the Infrastructure Gap; Human Resource Development Initiative (in particular Education & Health); and Market Access Initiative.

1.3.2 African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)

Whatever the institutional rivalry, NEPAD is taking a clear lead with regard to the *African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)*, designed as a learning process to evaluate the effectiveness of economic, corporate, as well as political governance in African countries on a voluntary, non-adversarial basis. So far, Ghana and Rwanda have completed the peer review process, while a number of other countries (including South Africa and Kenya) are undergoing review. NEPAD's secretariat in Midrand includes a Deputy Chief Executive responsible for the APRM. Efforts have been made to ensure that civil society is part of the APRM process, although concerns remain as to the nature and extent of CSO involvement. Countries reviewed so far have involved CSOs in different ways, including as contractors to undertake consultations and write elements of country reports (see Chapter 2).

1.3.3 Regional Economic Communities (RECs)

The *Regional Economic Communities (RECs)*, envisaged as

the building blocks to regional integration under the 1991 Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community, tended to forge their own path in the OAU, secure in the knowledge they were much closer to the ground and had a more all-encompassing mandate that encapsulated economic and social development. Under the AU, however, strenuous efforts are underway to bring the RECs more fully into the continental fold, and a new AU protocol has been established and negotiated to this end, in the recognition that the RECs have more to show in terms of tangible progress towards integration than the AU itself. "Look at the progress that has been made at the level of [the Economic Community of West African States] ECOWAS", says Abdul-Raheem. "Freedom of movement, trade, ECOWAS Bank, traveller's cheques, and so on. And East Africa has undertaken the most advanced customs reforms and is now talking of political federation by 2013. So at the AU level therefore, anybody who wants to engage with Africa needs to have a sense of what is happening in the RECs".



*In the shade of a tree
community members
listen to advice on AIDS
awareness and prevention.*

photo: Deogratias Haule
Filikunjombe

Table 1: Regional Economic Communities in Africa Recognised by the AUSource: <http://www.africa-union.org>

REC	Member Countries
AMU: Union Du Maghreb Arabe / Arab Maghreb Union	5 Members: Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania
CEN-SAD: Community of Sahelo-Saharan States	23 Members: Benin, Burkina Faso, The Central Africa Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia
COMESA: Common Market for East and Southern African	20 members: Burundi, the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Mauritius, Madagascar, Rwanda, the Seychelles, Swaziland, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe
EAC: East African Community	5 members: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda Rwanda and Burundi joined in 2006
ECCAS: Economic Community of Central African States	11 members: Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Congo, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe
ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States	15 members: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo
IGAD: Inter-governmental Authority for Development	7 members: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda
SADC: Southern African Development Community	14 members: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe

The AU Commission holds twice yearly coordination meetings with the RECs in advance of the Assembly of the Union, and experts from the RECs are invited to technical meetings to provide early input into AU policy processes. The decision to make the rationalisation of the RECs the theme of the 7th Summit, held in Banjul in July 2006, cemented the importance now being attached to the sub-regional economic communities. Technical proposals for rationalisation of the RECs prepared by the AU Commission are under consideration by African leaders, with the RECs themselves due to play a pivotal role in the rationalisation process, if and when it takes on momentum.

1.3.4 United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB)

Historically, and since its inception in May 1963, the OAU (and subsequently the AU) has always worked closely with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), which came into existence five years earlier, in 1958. The division of labour has for the most part been the OAU providing political leadership at the continental level, and UNECA contributing via its technical capacity. Important African plans and declarations, including the Lagos Plan of Action (1981) and the Arusha Declaration on Popular Participation (1990) were generated through this partnership between the two Addis Ababa-based continental institutions. Several attempts have been made over the years to formalise the partnership. In the late 1990s, the OAU, UNECA and the African Development Bank (AfDB) held annual meetings at high level as well as technical level, with the chief executives issuing a joint statement on priorities for collaboration.

In 2003, UNECA agreed to hold its annual Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Development back-to-back with the AfDB's Annual Meetings, under a common theme and with a degree of coordination. Most recently, in February 2006, the leaders of the three

institutions (AU, AfDB and UNECA) agreed to strengthen the collaboration by setting up a Joint Secretariat. There is evidence of enhanced co-operation between these institutions, although there remains duplication (all three convene conferences of African Finance Ministers, for example). Both the AfDB and UNECA also work separately with NEPAD¹⁴.

1.4 Opportunity and Challenge

The establishment of the AU represents both opportunity and challenge. As opportunity, it demonstrates steady progress in Africa's quest for ownership of its own agenda. It constitutes a historic opportunity to revive Pan-Africanism and regionalism in the face of globalisation, and evidence is already emerging of a stronger, more coordinated African voice in the international arena. The articulation of a desire to build a people-centred Union constitutes the clearest statement yet that Africa has put autocratic rule behind it and is ready to proceed along a participatory, democratic and accountable trajectory. And the AU has already demonstrated leadership in its engagement with conflicts, signalling a new era.

However, many challenges remain. A fundamental problem is the proliferation of AU organs and initiatives, with the decision to develop Financial Institutions and the Union Government initiative providing further evidence that the AU is perhaps seeking to run before it can walk. Furthermore, many deem the AU's strategic vision to be excessively ambitious, amidst limited capacity resident in the AU Commission. What is more, the growing external expectation and demand for engagement by the donor countries, NGOs and other potential partners also imposes a sizeable transaction cost, in the process reducing the likelihood of progress.

"There is a human resource problem, there are material resource challenges, and thirdly also, there is too much enthusiasm by outsiders to engage with it, in a situation

¹⁴ In a meeting on 26 July 2006, UNECA and the NEPAD Secretariat agreed on a Framework for collaboration intended to lead to a Memorandum of Understanding.

where it is not ready”, says Abdul-Raheem. “Because we have a Peace and Security Council, there’s a sub-contracting all over Africa to do business... but the problem is that there’s no co-ordination. Everybody wants to have influence within the organisation... It is impossible”. Given that the AU project is very much a work in progress, given the myriad AU institutions that are in different stages of their development, and in light of another critical challenge – the disconnect between continental policy-making and national implementation – any institution wishing to

engage with the AU must necessarily be realistic about what is achievable and what is not. Questions must also be asked as to the extent that engagement with the continental project should focus solely on the AU Commission, as opposed to other AU organs and other institutions in the Pan-African policy-making landscape. The implications for civil society of these weaknesses in the AU’s institutional architecture are examined in the chapters that follow.

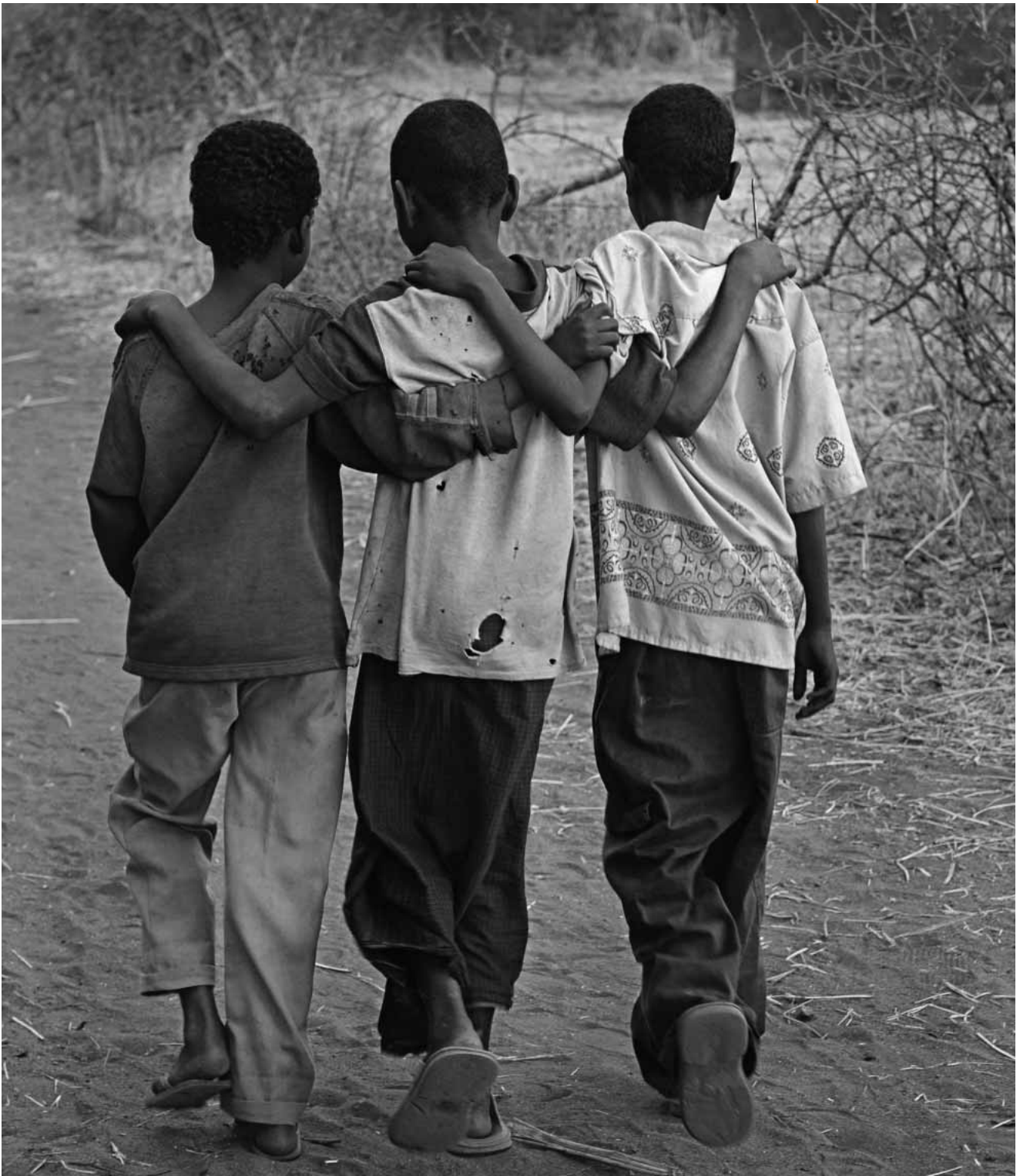
Community members and officials from World Vision discuss ways of helping an elderly couple whose house collapsed during heavy rain. Bukene, Tanzania.

photo:
Geoffrey Denye Kalebbo



In places prone to adverse weather conditions such as drought, there is need to mitigate against the effects. World Vision is at the forefront in many such places. Children from Nana, Horn of Africa.

photo: Rachel Wolff



chapter 2

Institutional opportunities for civil society engagement

2.1 Towards a People-centred Union

Optimism abounds as to the opportunities for civil society engagement around the AU. “The AU operates now with a unique style, with consultations at every level”, asserts Ayokunle Fagbemi, who has been engaging with the OAU and AU for several years. As an example, he cites the Abuja Summit on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in May 2006. Civil society was so active in shaping what eventually became the main document that “...by the time the document was reviewed, some days before the Summit was held, you had such a completely refined product that our Heads of States had no choice but to agree to it”.

Fagbemi also points to civil society engagement around the policy framework on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development being discussed at the AU Commission as yet another manifestation of the opportunities that abound. “The civil society input has been significant ... the framework reflects the reality and the wishes and aspirations of our people”.

For Jibrin Ibrahim, a former academic now leading a prominent sub-regional CSO based in Nigeria, what is clear is that “...a lot of the advocacy that has been going on has been pushing NEPAD and AU at the level of their principles towards more participatory, more inclusive, more rights-based approaches. And although there's very little at the level of implementation, the fact that the principles themselves have been accepted is very important. For us in civil society that's our point of entry, because we can say: well, you've adopted ABCD, so you need to implement it.”

The question then becomes: if it is useful to engage with the AU, as respondents have asserted, what are the relevant institutional entry points and where is the room

for manoeuvre? This chapter seeks to answer precisely this question, and in doing so to provide a critical assessment of the institutional opportunities for civil society engagement with the AU system.

2.2 The Road to ECOSOCC

Before looking at the specific spaces that exist for civil society engagement around the AU, it is important to look briefly at the evolution of relations between the OAU/AU and non-state actors and the background to the establishment of the Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC). Mirroring the near-absence of citizen participation in policy making in OAU member states, space for civil society participation in the organs and initiatives of the OAU was virtually non-existent. The OAU Charter itself made no reference to civil society (Houghton, 2005a). The late 1980s and early 1990s, marking the end of the Cold War, were seen by many as ushering in a renaissance of African civil society, and OAU decisions, declarations and resolutions – notably the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development (1990) – articulated the role of non-state actors in governmental decision-making (OAU, 2003)¹⁵. Nevertheless, it was not until the demise of the OAU and dawn of the AU that anything resembling official space for civil society began to open up.

In June 2001, a month after the Constitutive Act of the AU came into force, outgoing Secretary General Salim Ahmed Salim convened the first OAU-Civil Society Conference in Addis Ababa on the theme ‘Building Partnerships for Promoting Peace and Development in Africa’, to discuss ways of strengthening OAU/CSO relations. A number of important recommendations emanated from the conference, among them: the need for a follow-up mechanism to ensure dialogue between the OAU/AU and African civil society; the importance of the

¹⁵ Other OAU documents that underlined the popular participation requirement included the Declaration on the Political and Socio-economic Situation in Africa and Fundamental Changes Taking Place in the World (1990), the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (in particular Articles 90 and 91, which noted the need for a mechanism for consultation with African socio-economic organisations and association), the Grand Bay Declaration of the OAU Ministerial Conference on Human Rights, and the Sirte Declaration of 1999 (OAU 2003).

OAU/AU harnessing civil society's technical capacity to help deliver its programmes; and the need for an OAU/AU civil society focal point. Almost exactly a year later, shortly before the inaugural session of the AU, a second OAU-Civil Society conference took place, again in Addis Ababa, this time to flesh out the mechanisms and modalities for CSO engagement with the nascent AU.

A key outcome of the second conference was the establishment of a Working Group, to be made up of members of civil society and the OAU Secretariat, to develop the ECOSOCC statutes, which would spell out the composition, procedures for election and accreditation, and ECOSOCC structures. Another important objective for the Working Group was to come up with a plan for popularising ECOSOCC as an idea throughout Africa. The 20-member Group, which included 3 representatives from each sub-region of Africa, as well as sectoral experts and Diaspora representatives, was given two years from July 2002 to deliver on its mandate. The Group's draft, submitted to the AU Commission, failed to make it past the PRC and Council of Ministers, and was not considered, as had been expected, by the July 2003 Summit.

According to Charles Mutasa, a member of the Working Group, the draft sparked a number of concerns from AU policymakers. "One was ... they felt that civil society was going to have a big number of people unnecessarily represented in this ECOSOCC organ. We initially proposed 600 members of ECOSOCC, but this was felt to be too big and financially not sustainable for the AU. And also the issue of the emphasis on quality versus quantity was put across. A second was the issue of the Diaspora. 'What is this Diaspora and how many people should come from the Diaspora', they asked? The third issue was that a number of NGOs were saying to their governments that they had not heard about this document, and they needed time to reflect on it".

The Working Group's tenure was extended until the July 2004 Summit in Addis Ababa, where the statutes were then tabled before the Heads of State, who adopted them and gave orders that they should go ahead and implement

ECOSOCC, but only as an interim assembly. The concern remained that ECOSOCC existed only in the abstract, and needed to be popularised and grounded in African sub-regions and countries.

2.3 Mechanisms, Structures and Spaces – an Assessment and Critiques

2.3.1 The Interim ECOSOCC

As currently constituted, the Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) is an interim body, with its full functioning contingent on its popularisation in the different sub-regions and member states of the AU, and on the holding of elections. A five-person Interim Bureau, constituted in March 2005 and headed by a Presiding Officer and including four Deputy Presiding Officers nominated from different sub-regions, has the overall responsibility of operationalising ECOSOCC. There is also a Standing Committee with three members from each sub-region, which works closely with the Interim Bureau and is responsible for thematic clusters, fund-raising and the establishment of ECOSOCC chapters in each country. The design of ECOSOCC also provides for some 12 sectoral cluster committees, mirroring the AU Commission's work programme. The intention is that these cluster committees, to be populated by experts in the relevant areas, will be the vehicle for civil society members' input into AU policy.

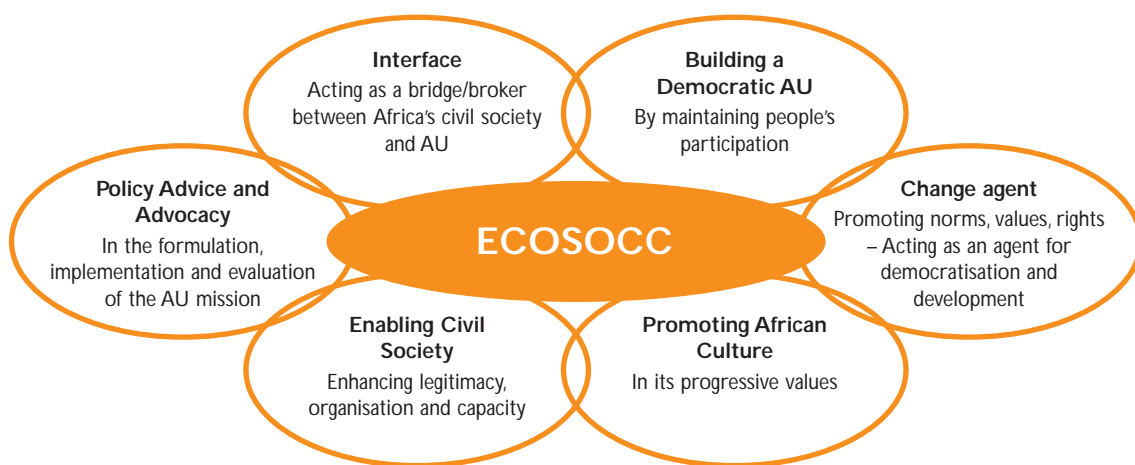
At a meeting in Nairobi, Kenya in June 2005, the Interim Bureau and Standing Committee developed a 2-year strategy (2005-2007), which spells out the steps to be taken to bring ECOSOCC to life. Charles Mutasa, a deputy presiding officer representing Southern Africa, reported that the interim Bureau, with its two-year mandate due to expire in March 2007, is at least 10 months behind

"There's a rapid opening up of space for CSO engagement on the official side. Correspondingly, when space is opened up, what we've found is that CSOs are unable to effectively occupy that space".

Neville Gabriel of the Southern Africa Trust

Figure 3: Key Roles of the Economic Social and Cultural Council

Adapted from AU Commission 2006



schedule, due to a lack of money to implement the US\$3.5 million strategy. "The problem was there were no resources to kick off the process. The resources are supposed to be provided by the AU, as ECOSOCC is an organ of the AU. Also, as civil society, we are also supposed to fund-raise and supplement AU resources, and by and large this has not been forthcoming".

The AU has now made US\$1 million available to the interim Bureau to begin implementing its strategy, and activities are now underway. So far consultations have been held and mechanisms and committees set up in 4 of the 5 sub-regions – Southern Africa, West Africa, Central Africa and East Africa. A key input for discussion in these consultations are drafts of a 'Code of Conduct and Ethics for African CSOs Accredited to the ECOSOCC' and 'Criteria for Accreditation and Observer Status to the AU' both developed by Working Group.

According to Mutasa, the plan is to "... undertake national popularisation, getting the national NGOs to convene meetings, sensitise people about ECOSOCC and the AU, and elect their own representatives that are supposed to lead them in the process. And once that is done, we will

move to another stage, where the countries will have to choose two members who will be part of the 150 members of ECOSOCC".

As highlighted in Chapter 1, an important dimension of ECOSOCC's role as an AU organ is that it is, and will remain, advisory. It will make proposals and submit recommendations to the various AU bodies, with no certainty that the views of civil society will be taken into account in the final analysis. According to Mutasa, this is because the role of ECOSOCC, and the role of civil society at large, is not to make policy, only to influence it. "The most we can do is influence the direction of policymaking, to seek policy changes through lobbying and advocacy. I don't see how anyone would think we should really be doing more than that. We seek to influence the policymakers; we don't seek to make policy ourselves. Otherwise what would be the role of the Pan-African Parliament? What is the role of the Heads of State?"

For Mutasa, ECOSOCC provides a co-ordinated way of influencing AU policy, and constitutes an important window. "We should not look to ECOSOCC as the panacea to all our ills, but as an opportunity. What we do with that

opportunity, and what the outcome is, is something else. But the point is there is a window, which we are considering using. And if it doesn't work we close it and do something else".

Fagbemi, who is involved in popularising ECOSOCC in Nigeria, argues that the litmus test of inclusiveness is at the national level. In each AU member state, he points out, civil society will elect two representatives to take the national agenda to the continental level as ECOSOCC general assembly members. That, in his view, is ECOSOCC's strength as an accountable institution. "All of us are so excited about the photo finish. The AU-ECOSOCC Assembly meeting in Addis is the photo finish. But the real place where you have to engage is at the regional level, at the national level...".

Even before it fully takes shape, ECOSOCC has attracted criticism from civil society organisations who believe it is neither representative of non-state actors, nor transparent in the way it has been established and representatives selected. One view is that the election of Nobel Laureate Professor Wangari Maathai as Presiding Officer while she was a serving Minister in the Kenyan Government constitutes a violation of the spirit of the Constitutive Act.

"ECOSOCC is supposed to be an independent civil society forum", says Abdul-Raheem. "And yet what happens? The AU bureaucrats wanted high visibility, somebody that was more amenable to their own control and agenda and acceptable and recognisable to the Heads of State. We wanted someone independent of governments but unfortunately the AU bureaucrats won so the whole process leading to the formation of the ECOSOCC was engineered, controlled and managed at every stage – even the elaborate consultative process".

Ultimately, argues Abdul-Raheem, inter-governmental institutions such as the AU Commission have difficulties dealing with non-governmental forces. "The dynamism of civil society, its complexities, contradictory role and sometimes chaos, that's what makes civil society civil society. But this is not predictable to bureaucrats. We may

have the African Union, but the OAU culture is still very much in place, and civil society is still seen as the enemy."

Gabriel argues that ECOSOCC is a very important development, "something we must promote and a space we must consolidate". Beyond that, however, "we need to be saying: 'How do we ensure it has more impact, besides having CSO people who are in the 'in-club'?'".

Another view is that while ECOSOCC can play an important role, its advisory status limits it to research and public information about AU developments. "Since ECOSOCC is not a lobby group, you cannot push human rights issues through it", says Nobuntu Mbelle, a legislative activist who works for a coalition of legislative lobbyists advocating for an effective African Court on Human and People's Rights. "It's limiting. In fact, as much as it is a good idea, what the AU has actually done – inadvertently perhaps, or perhaps by design, I don't know – is limited the role, the ability for NGOs to work within the system".

This, argues Mbelle, is because the ECOSOCC process operates on the presumption that national and sub-regional level consultations are open, transparent and fully inclusive, and that those elected to ECOSOCC truly represent civil society in their countries. Given that many of the NGOs prominent in African countries are more likely to be pro-government, independent civil society actors working on policy, political and human rights-related issues may not find their way into those two that are chosen. "You may find that you've got more of the youth and the developmental type of organisations, which perhaps don't deal with contentious issues – for example, access to anti-retrovirals", says Mbelle.

Civil society activists also point to the AU's failure to organise and hold AU-Civil Society Forums in Sirte, Libya in June 2005 and in Khartoum, Sudan in January 2006, as a manifestation of the weakness of relying on official mechanisms such as ECOSOCC. Where such forums have taken place, such as in Banjul in July 2006, they have constituted important opportunities for CSO networking and advocacy (for further perspectives and analysis on

this issue, see section on the AU/CSO Pre-Summit Forum). From the evidence, it is clear that as the main official channel for civil society engagement with the AU system, it will take some time before the problems highlighted will be resolved so that ECOSOCC is fully functional. In the meantime, as long as the process of formation is ongoing there is a degree of room for CSOs to influence the shape, form and membership of the substantive ECOSOCC.

2.3.2 The AU Africa Citizens Directorate (CIDO)

The role of CIDO is to broker and facilitate CSO interaction with the AU Commission and other organs of the AU system. The idea of a civil society focal point within the AU was first mooted at the inaugural OAU-Civil Society conference in June 2001, and a Civil Society Unit was soon established in the Bureau of the Chairperson of the new AU Commission. Initially, it was named the CSSDCA Unit, after the Nigeria-led Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa (a framework adopted by the then OAU), which many credit as being among the first to recognise the important role of citizen participation. Working closely with the Directorates, the Unit organised parallel civil society activities alongside AU Ministerial meetings in 2002 and 2003, which enriched the official meetings.

The Civil Society Unit has recently been upgraded to a full Directorate, and renamed the African Citizens Directorate (CIDO). Recruitment for new staff is underway. According to its Head, Jinmi Adisa, the expansion of the AU civil society function attests to the critical importance of the role of non-state actors in constructing an African Union. CIDO develops AU policy on civil society, is actively involved in the process of incubating the substantive ECOSOCC, and seeks to broker partnership between NGOs wanting to collaborate with the different AU Directorates. As its title suggests, CIDO considers the African Diaspora a key constituency. The Directorate was involved in organising the 2nd Conference of Intellectuals from Africa and the Diaspora, held in Bahia, Brazil in July 2006. It also planned the Africa-South America Summit,

that took place in Abuja, Nigeria in December 2006. Together with the Peace and Security Directorate, CIDO is pioneering a policy framework that will create further space for civil society input into the development of AU policies at technical level. If the pilot is successful, says Adisa, the approach will be institutionalised across the AU Commission

Experienced civil society actors have varying views about the efficacy of the civil society focal point and the value-added of CIDO. "In successful institutions the role of the civil society unit has been to leave NGOs to deal directly with the substantive departments, and to document, profile and flagship the collaboration as needed", says Irungu Houghton of Oxfam GB. "But they should not under any circumstances try to be a gatekeeper. Because from gatekeepers after a while you get a classic management response: 'I can't cope with all these demands, and therefore I'm going to start prioritising'. So people start feeling excluded, marginalised, and so on. Whereas if you looked at the entire spread of the organisation and you said each department must set its own objectives, then you're much more influential".

Life has been transformed by the installation of a borehole water pump in Gbun-Gbun Village, Ghana.

photo: Jon Warren



The official AU response to fears that CIDO is stage-managing the development of ECOSOCC in particular and AU-civil society relations in general, is that CIDO is run by civil servants who ultimately have no power in determining ECOSOCC's future direction. Furthermore, say officials, NGOs are free to go directly to AU Directorates and are not obliged to pass through CIDO. Evidence gathered in the course of preparing this paper suggests that CIDO, whether intentionally or otherwise, is playing a distinctly interventionist role in the establishment and evolution of ECOSOCC. Adisa admits as much, emphasising however that CIDO's role in helping incubate an important institution, is a positive one which should not be seen as being in any way political or untoward. Whatever the case, CIDO remains an influential gateway and a potential first port of call for CSOs seeking to engage with the various AU institutions (although Houghton's comments on the gate keeping mentality of institutional CSO focal points may be cautionary in this regard).

2.3.3 Bilateral Engagement with AU Directorates

By and large, the most successful examples of collaboration with the AU have been issue-driven, resulting from direct approaches by civil society to the relevant Directorate in the AU Commission. To a greater or lesser extent all the Directorates invite civil society representatives as observers to different meetings – including expert level meetings, Ministerials and pre-Summit Forum events. Trade Director Nadir Merah reports routinely inviting civil society representatives to meetings organised by the Trade and Industry Directorate – whether they be externally oriented to World Trade Organisation (WTO) issues, for example, or internally focused on, say, the plan to develop an African Commodities Exchange.

“Our role is to advocate to our governments”, says Yetunde Teriba, Acting Director of the AU Directorate for Women, Gender and Development. “The most effective way we have found to get the message across has been



Community members drawing a portrait of their community mapping out prominent landmarks. Mpohor Wassa East, Ghana.

photo: Faustina Boakye

to partner with NGOs working on gender issues". The Directorate focuses on getting norms and standards enshrined as AU policy. However, given its weak capacity and lack of a presence in African countries, it relies heavily on civil society organisations with greater reach and a stronger resource base to ensure the domestication and implementation of these norms and standards.

The most widely cited success story to date is the collaboration between Solidarity for African Women's Rights Coalition (SOAWR) and the Gender Directorate, which took ratifications of the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa from 1 to 15 in less than 2 years (see Chapter 4 for more detail on this initiative). "The Gender Directorate could choose to operate like the other Directorates who have tokenistic participation in consultations", says Houghton of Oxfam GB, a member the SOAWR coalition. "The difference with the Gender Directorate is it recognised the Commission's lack of capacity and was willing to work with others as equal partners".

Aside from advocating jointly, another strategy Oxfam GB employs to build AU confidence is to try and project the AU alongside civil society organisations. "So simple things, which are symbolic only, like having on the AU website a co-hosted event, is extremely important", explains Houghton. "In that sense the Gender Directorate has probably done more to bring in civil society in a constructive manner than several of the other Directorates. And the question for us now is, how do we take this experience, document it and very consciously push it through the other Directorates?"

However, argues Teriba, the Gender Directorate does not simply cede space to civil society to conduct advocacy on its behalf. Rather, it works on the basis of a division of labour that is symbiotic. Without the AU Commission's access to national policymakers – based on its central role in drafting norms and standards, and on its ability to

convene these policymakers in sectoral meetings – it would be difficult for civil society to engage at country level. An example is the efforts the Gender Directorate has undertaken to push national policymakers to implement the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa¹⁶. "We're glad that the Gender Directorate of the AU has actually engaged the Ministries of Gender to come up with an implementation framework for the Declaration on Gender Equality", says Caroline Osero-Ageng'o of Equality Now, which serves as the secretariat for the SOAWR coalition.

The Gender Directorate example shows that CSO-AU Commission collaboration is possible, despite the institutional constraints. To a greater or lesser extent collaboration happens with most of the Directorates around thematic issues, particularly where the AU Commission sees a role for CSOs in amplifying its advocacy message or substituting for its lack of power to implement. However, one major cause for concern emanating from the research is that well-resourced and highly-motivated CSOs run the risk of overwhelming the weak AU bureaucracy and promoting their own agendas in the name of collaboration. The perception is that this phenomenon can have negative, as well as positive, consequences – positive in the sense of bolstering weak AU capacity, and negative in the sense that CSOs may occupy too much space and end up setting, rather than supporting, AU agendas.

2.3.4 The AU-CSO Pre-Summit Forum

Of increasing importance as a space for civil society engagement are the events that take place in the week or so before the AU Summit meetings begin in earnest. One regular event is the AU-Civil Society Forum, a two-day meeting organised by the AU Commission's CIDO, with the aim of rallying civil society around the AU mission. The idea is to use the theme of the Summit as an opportunity to engage civil society on the issues at hand. As such, at the Banjul Pre-Summit Forum, participants

¹⁶ Issued by Heads of State in July 2004.

listened to briefings from AU Commission staff on progress in the discussions on rationalisation of the RECs. The meeting also constituted an opportunity for CIDO to provide an update on the state of AU-civil society collaboration, including progress with ECOSOCC.

In Banjul, the best-attended and most substantive AU Commission-organised activities were those on gender, attended by a large community of civil society experts and activists looking at how to advance the implementation of the AU commitments on gender. “The adoption of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality is the tool we are using to have our concerns taken into account in the AU”, explained Femmes Africa Solidarité President, Marie Louise Baricako. “The pre-Summit forums are crucial to taking the Declaration to country level. We are planning a two-day meeting here in Banjul to agree on how to campaign... to disseminate that Declaration so that the women in the countries are aware of it, and then to devise some tools for monitoring and evaluation so that we can also be watching that this Declaration is implemented in the countries”.

For Thelma Ekiyor of the Cape Town-based Centre for Conflict Resolution, the pre-Summit forum is a place where different views and processes meet, and can have a domino effect. “It’s about trying to make the AU more of an African institution... You have women who work at grassroots level as well as policymakers, academics as well as practitioners, in one forum, exchanging ideas on how to bring gender into the AU’s core work. I think it is a worthwhile process”, says Ekiyor. The pre-Summit is also a place where civil society organisations and NGOs who have active partnerships with AU Directorates come to network, take stock and advance their collaboration.

“We have to look at where we’ve come from,” adds Ekiyor. “It is progress, it never used to happen like this. We never had these processes or these opportunities to meet before Summits. And although the Heads of State don’t attribute the policies they decide to develop to any organisation, we do know that we have some leverage. It

may be give and take, it’s not the best system – we all realise that – but we have to acknowledge that we’ve come a very long way. It’s better than it’s been in the last few years and it can only get better”.

“The pre-Summit forum is important because you have to use the regional instruments and international ones, to provide a framework for the women to articulate their demands,” says Comfort Eshiet of Alliances for Africa. “So that is basically why we are here... updating what you have, to be able to impact on women, keeping them updated on the new structures in the AU, the frameworks they can also use in making their demands, so that they don’t make their demands in isolation”.

“When we come to fora like this, there’s that danger of coming up with declarations which we go home and forget and make the next one in six months”, says Osero-Ageng’o. “But the Summit and the pre-Summit forum help in the sense that... we tease out what’s key in those declarations we make at the NGO forum level, and we then use these at country level with the country partners”.

A number of participants polled in the course of this research process also expressed concerns about the process. One concern was that the AU-Civil Society Pre-Summit Forum was “packed with some of the usual suspects”, implying that participation was carefully selected to exclude those likely to be critical. Another was that there was poor co-ordination, with events being held in remote locations and the AU Commission failing to provide sufficiently clear information in good time, with the result that the impact of pre-Summit events was dispersed. Yet another concern was that – as in previous Summits – the host government was able to prevent meetings it considered critical from taking place – as in Banjul, with the banning of a meeting organised by Article 19 on media freedom.

In the view of one veteran Pan-Africanist who has attended many OAU and AU Summits, AU efforts to organise the pre-Summit are endangering rather than enhancing the participation of non-state actors, leading to more and

Timing and Profile: Key to influencing the AU process

"It took me 2 years to understand that if you wanted to get something approved in a Summit you needed to work at least 6 months, maybe even a year before. And then you'd have to walk it through the Commission, Addis-based ambassadors, then all the structures – PRC, Council of Ministers, etc. There are two cycles at play in Summits. The first cycle is a policy influencing cycle, so if you want to get stuff approved or text into the final resolutions, there's that cycle. There's also cycle of public opinion shaping. So if you want to do media work to influence the way in which the public perceives what is happening in a Summit, that's a different cycle. There's one on the inside and one on the outside, and it takes a lot of resources to do both effectively. For example, the rules of procedure for the Summit are being revised as we speak. I don't think any NGO is either aware of this or has submitted memoranda to propose changes, including ourselves".

Irungu Houghton, Oxfam GB.

more strident civil society criticism and conflict with the AU. "That is the problem with invited space!" says Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem. "When we did not have this formality, we'd get the teacher's union or the women's union to host us and we'd be there... The tendency now has been to organise this pre-Summit well in advance of the Summit, even before the ambassadors meet... So that you make your noise get out of town before the Ministers and the Heads of States come – because very few will have the resources to remain. Either that or you're brought to engage on a limited agenda of the AU".

In response to these criticisms, ECOSOCC officials say CSOs run the risk of fetishising the Summit, at the expense of other important spaces for engagement. "The Summit is just a one-off thing," insists Mutasa, "so why should everyone zero in only on it? And in any event, in

our relations with the AU we have come from very far. It has not been an event, it has been a process. Just to have civil society here at the Summit is not a coincidence by itself. It's taken people time to understand and appreciate its relevance".

What has clearly emerged is that there is no direct correlation between CSOs taking part in the pre-Summit process and their positions being reflected in Summit declarations. However, as Houghton and Mutasa have emphasised, the Summit constitutes only one event, and not the be-all and end-all of the AU process. As such, influencing policy outcomes of AU Summits requires patient strategy spanning several months, if not years. The pre-Summit forum should therefore be seen as a work in progress, and a space that will become increasingly relevant as CSOs organise themselves in such a way as to maximise the opportunities at hand. It is to this end that the Open Society AfriMAP initiative, Oxfam GB and AFRODAD commissioned collaborative research to better understand the processes and linkages between national and continental decision-making processes related to the six-monthly AU Summits and related ministerial meetings.

2.3.5 CSO Mechanisms in the Regional Economic Communities

This report has highlighted the increasingly influential role the RECs are playing in the building of an African Union. What is also becoming clear is that to differing degrees the RECs have recognised the value-added that civil society can bring to the delivery of their mandates, and have put in place mechanisms and created spaces for engagement with NGOs and civil society networks. These mechanisms either take the form of pre-Summit forums, civil society standing assemblies or parliaments, with the most active of these to be found in ECOWAS, The Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the East African Community (EAC).

The West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) markets itself as the umbrella body for civil society engagement in West Africa. It was established jointly by the ECOWAS

Secretariat and civil society in 2003 to serve as a structured interface between civil society, ECOWAS and member states, to allow civil society to provide systematic input into crucial decision-making processes at the sub-regional level. “Before the establishment of WACSOF, the engagement of civil society in processes at the level of ECOWAS, at the level of member states, was rather *ad hoc and a la carte*,” explains WACSOF Secretary-General Richard Konteh. “So now it’s a way of saying let us make that engagement more structured. And in line with the calls from NEPAD, the APRM processes for civil society involvement, this just responds to that need at the sub-regional level”.

Of interest is that it was collaboration between an international NGO (International Alert) and a sub-regional African NGO based in Nigeria (The Centre for Democracy and Development) that sowed the seeds for the birth of WACSOF. In 2001, the two NGOs initiated contact with ECOWAS. Two years later a first consultative meeting was held that set up an ad hoc committee, which then developed the WACSOF charter that was formally adopted and WACSOF launched in December 2003.

WACSOF follows and monitors all ECOWAS activities, is present in all the Community’s major meetings and follows its processes closely. An important space for engagement is the annual WACSOF Forum, held alongside the annual ECOWAS Summit. Four have been held so far, each bringing together 150 civil society representatives from across the sub-region.¹⁷

WACSOF operates on an issues basis, and has established a number of thematic groups, including on Peace and Security, Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance, Health, Social Development, Trade and HIV and AIDS. Thematic consultations are held prior to each WACSOF Forum, with a communiqué issued at the end of each meeting to make recommendations, through the Council of Ministers, to the Heads of State.

WACSOF drew its inspiration largely from ECOSOCC, and this is reflected in the fact that many of the statutes in the WACSOF Charter resemble the ECOSOCC statutes. A significant difference, however, is structural: while ECOSOCC is an advisory organ of the AU, WACSOF is not an organ of ECOWAS. “It’s an independent civil society body, but with a structured and institutionalised relationship with ECOWAS that allows for WACSOF’s engagement on issues of relevance, while maintaining its independence”, explains Konteh. “It’s because of the criticisms of ECOSOCC as being close to government that, for us in West Africa, we refused to become an organ. We do recognise the need for us to work together, but we realise that on some issues we could differ. And when that happens, let us differ respectfully, recognising that we have different mandates and constituencies”.

Another crucial difference is that while ECOWAS contributes generously to WACSOF’s programme budget, including providing funds towards the annual forum, WACSOF’s establishment was primarily funded by donors. “ECOWAS has been very collaborative in our setting up, and in enabling civil society to organise ourselves. But the funding for our set up, per se, was provided primarily by DANIDA, and now DFID is also interested. They are our two main donors for now, but we’re trying to diversify to include the EU, Canadian CIDA and other bodies that are interested in supporting our work. And we’re also hoping that we can expand and formalise the level of support from ECOWAS for our work”, adds Konteh.

What is missing in the civil society institutional architecture are concrete ways of linking continental mechanisms and spaces to those at the sub-regional level. Nevertheless, ECOSOCC has recognised WACSOF’s capacity and potential, and recently requested the Forum during the West Africa ECOSOCC consultations, to warehouse¹⁸ the process. Konteh believes WACSOF – which works with the national umbrellas in each West

¹⁷ The 4th Forum was held 15-17 December 2006 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

¹⁸ Warehousing here is used to mean, “document and act as a repository for”. ECOSOCC asked WACSOF to document and act as a repository for the West Africa consultation process.

African country – is the logical choice to become the West African ECOSOCC. However, “that is up to ECOSOCC to decide. Sure, we’d be more than willing to even host the secretariat for ECOSOCC in West Africa, because we believe that we have to input into the AU ECOSOCC process from the sub-regional level. And we also hope that the other RECs can draw lessons from the WACSOF experience to help inform how they also engage at the sub-regional levels... we know that no other sub-region has taken the initiative that WACSOF has in West Africa”.

2.3.6 The African Commission on Human and People’s Rights CSO Observer Mechanism

In May 1999, at its 25th ordinary session, the ACHPR passed a resolution on criteria for giving CSOs and NGOs observer status at the Commission. Although access to Commission sessions was allowed only for opening and closing sessions, the criteria include a caveat: observers could be invited to closed sessions at the discretion of the chair, on issues of interest to them.

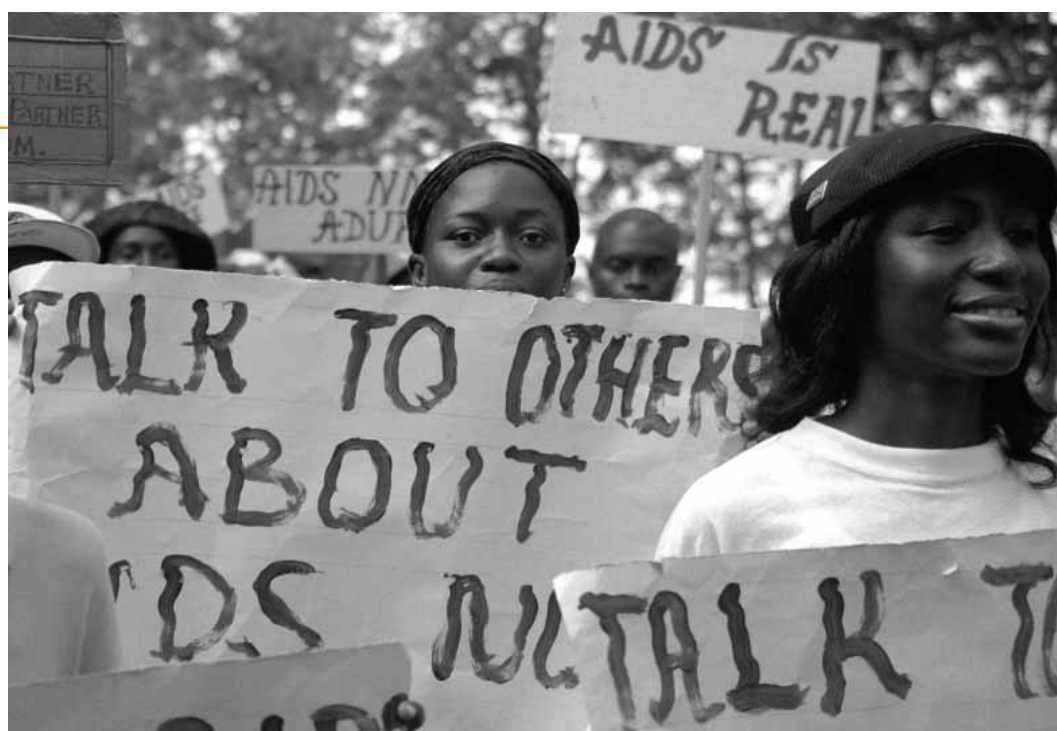
Three other caveats made the ACHPR criteria groundbreaking at the time:

- the chair could give observers the floor to respond to questions directed at them by participants;
- observers could be requested by the chair to make a statement to the Commission session on issues of concern; and
- observers could pro-actively request to have an issue of concern included in the meeting agenda.

The criteria were also innovative in the sense that, in addition to these rights of access, they gave the CSO and NGO observers responsibilities. Each accredited observer is required to present an activity report to the Commission every two years. Observers are also expected to “establish close relations of co-operation” with the ACHPR and engage with it on an ongoing basis. Currently, 342 organisations have observer status with the ACHPR, albeit with some participating more actively than others in the Commission’s deliberations.

Nurses and students celebrate World AIDS Day by carrying placards to promote AIDS awareness and prevention. Agogo, Ghana.

photo: Jennifer Mankatah, Kofi Obimpeh



Coming as they did in 1999, when the OAU was only beginning to wake up to the importance of popular participation, the ACHPR criteria were a decade ahead of their time. Even today, the closed sessions of AU meetings, from the PRC to Council of Ministers to the Summit itself, remain closed to civil society and many other organisations. Many feel the AU should learn from the ACHPR experience. “The [ACHPR] has been very open to NGOs, and even individuals – because it’s not only NGOs or civil society that can bring complaints to the Commission, even individuals can take a case”, reports legislative activist Mbelle. “If one can transpose that system to the AU level that would be good. The minimum should just be the ability to secure accreditation, but beyond that you should be able to engage with the various organs”.

“I think what [the AU] seems to misunderstand”, adds Mbelle, “is that when you allow people to engage with you and criticise you, in effect they’re actually strengthening you. You need people to say, ‘look, there are problems here’. And it’s not pushing and criticising for the sake of criticism: people have an interest in the project”. She points to the fact that for the first time since its inception, as a result of sustained lobbying from observers, the ACHPR now publishes reports on its website.

Fiona Adolu, a legal officer at the ACHPR, believes that to learn valuable lessons and avoid duplication of effort, the AU’s ECOSOCC and CIDO need to work much more closely with the ACHPR. “Why don’t we consolidate some

of these AU institutions and strengthen them to carry out their mandates properly? ECOSOCC might be one way of arriving at that convergence, hopefully. But they have to work with the ACHPR and at the moment I’m not too sure I have seen that happen”.

2.3.7 NEPAD, the African Peer Review Mechanism and Civil Society

After a series of consultations, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) Secretariat set up an Office of Gender and Civil Society Organisations in 2004. With regard to civil society, the role of the office is similar to that of the AU’s CIDO – to serve as a focal point for requests for collaboration with the NEPAD secretariat; to put in place and ensure implementation of NEPAD civil society policies; to mainstream civil society involvement in NEPAD processes; and to share best practices.

The most visible activity associated with the Office to date has been the December 2005 launch of the NEPAD CSO Think Tank, an ad hoc mechanism intended to prepare civil society organisations for participation in the NEPAD process, including peer review¹⁹. Another role is to build bridges between the NEPAD Secretariat, the AU Commission, the RECs, and civil society organisations both inside and outside of ECOSOCC. The Think Tank organises itself along thematic clusters, and African civil society is represented by sub-region. The All Africa Conference of Churches, for example, serves in the Faith-Based Organisations Cluster and represents Southern Africa in the Think Tank.

¹⁹ The Think Tank’s TORs read as follows: 1. Mobilise and ensure effective participation of CSOs in NEPAD initiatives and regional, sub-regional and national levels; 2. Create a conducive environment at the REC level for CSO involvement, coordination, capacity building and participation in NEPAD and REC issues; 3. Determining CSOs’ various niches, identify their roles in different NEPAD processes, including the regional economic regimes; 4. Work complementarily with CSOs implementing programmes around NEPAD priority sectors and win their support in order to use their networking capabilities to implement and advocate NEPAD at the grassroots level; 5. Ensure all CSO Think Tank initiatives are gender mainstreamed to meet the AU gender party principle; 6. Better understand CSOs and enhance their capacity to support and participate in NEPAD implementation; 7. Strengthen CSOs’ understanding of integration process at regional and different sub-regional levels, within the context of ECOSOCC; 8. Popularise NEPAD and improve relations between CSOs, governments and the private sector; 9. Build the capacity of CSOs to effectively participate in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of NEPAD; 10. Process and step down knowledge on new ideas rolling out of the NEPAD Secretariat action plans such as African Peer Review Mechanisms to national level; 11. Develop a framework that can identify best practices from CSOs that can be up-scaled and replicated by NEPAD.

According to NEPAD, given that it is smaller and more focused on leveraging expertise, the Think Tank is complimentary to ECOSOCC, and avoids the pitfalls of CSO/NGOs having to be aligned to government to stand a chance of being eligible for membership. Nevertheless, the Think Tank has more or less fizzled out since its inception, prompting questions from civil society actors, concerned that NEPAD is only paying lip service to civil society policy engagement. “The current NEPAD CSO initiative is limited, in that it’s not reaching CSOs in the way that it should, it’s not engaging the way that it should,” says the Southern Africa Trust’s Gabriel. “But there is alternative thinking in the Secretariat, at the top and in other places, saying we need to be there where CSOs are, we need to be talking about the issues and really focusing on what difference it is going to make”.

Ultimately, adds Gabriel, the problem is that NEPAD “... is still stuck at a fairly high level and needs to link up much more strongly with the regional official processes and regional CSO activity and at the national level”. Like the AU Commission, the NEPAD Secretariat clearly has its work cut out to convince civil society of its relevance as a target of engagement.

2.3.8 Proposals to Create Joint CSO Hubs

Recognising the importance of being close to the AU, frustrated by their inability to keep a handle on the burgeoning AU agenda, and concerned that a proliferation of individual agency advocacy positions planned for Addis Ababa would overburden the already weak AU Commission, a group of leading NGOs mooted the idea, in 2004, of a civil society facility to be based in Addis Ababa, to service civil society’s information and advocacy needs collectively. The idea was to create a facility along the lines of the Bretton Woods Project in the UK, a completely independent body, with a steering committee with a rotational tenure, initially funded by the major sponsors, with a view to its funding base becoming independent over time. The idea, initiated by Pambazuka, Centre for Democracy and Development, Oxfam GB and ActionAid has not yet been implemented, but remains a live prospect.

In South Africa, largely because of the perceived inadequacy of existing civil society mechanisms, the Southern Africa Trust began a 6-12 month research and consultative process towards the establishment of a CSO focal point, or hub, for the APRM, NEPAD and PAP, all located in or around the Midrand locality in between Johannesburg and Pretoria. The proposed objectives are:

- to provide a CSO focal point for liaison between the civil society units of the NEPAD, APRM and PAP secretariats;
- establish and build working relations between CSOs and NEPAD/PAP/APRM personalities;
- facilitate awareness raising on NEPAD, APRM and PAP to CSOs;
- facilitate access to information by CSOs on NEPAD, APRM and PAP towards more effective engagement in policy dialogue and processes around the three institutions; and
- enhance linkages between and among CSOS on APRM, PAP and NEPAD issues.

“We think physical proximity is an important aspect of this kind of work, and knowing the individual people in each of these secretariats is critical”, explains Gabriel. Proposed partners in the initiative include INGOs, African civil society networks, SADC’s Council of NGOs and Parliamentary Forum, and the secretariats of the target institutions.

Table 2: Mechanisms, Structures and Spaces

Mechanisms/ Structures/ Spaces	Utility
Interim ECOSOCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AU's official mechanism for CSO engagement • Role is advisory • Statutes make INGO membership difficult • Still a work in progress
AU Citizens Directorate (CIDO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated AU Commission office for CSO-AU partnership • Strong focus on harnessing Diaspora • Currently being expanded • Concern over 'gate-keeping'
AU Directorates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope exists for direct collaboration • All Directorates welcome collaboration with CSOs • Capacity strong in pockets, weak overall
AU-CSO Pre-Summit Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively new innovation • Potentially important for influencing AU Summit • Currently incoherent, no clear strategy
WACSOFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent of ECOWAS but closely associated with it • Proximity to countries makes it potentially important • Parallel process to ECOWAS Summits, issues declarations • Selected by AU to warehouse ECOSOCC West Africa consultative process
ACHPR CSO Observer Mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-standing model • CSO observers have rights but also responsibilities • AU Commission appears not to have learned from it; resulting lack of coherence with ECOSOCC
NEPAD Civil Society Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consciously more technocratic • Not yet fully effective • Concern over 'gate-keeping'
APRM – role of CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO engagement enshrined in APRM principles • Country processes provide major opportunity • Concern over 'pre-selection' of CSOs in-country
Joint CSO Hubs (proposed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals for hubs in Addis Ababa and Midrand • Concept varies from knowledge hub to advocacy hub • Consultation process currently on-going

chapter 3

Modes of engagement and tensions in CSO-AU relations

3.1 Different Ways of Engaging

Civil society employs different modes of engaging with the AU, and engagement can be proactive or reactive. “You can engage with them when they are drafting protocols, so you’re taking initiative in helping them to write policies and set up their own mechanisms and structures. Or you can engage with them after they’ve written the policies, and say ‘you’re not holding your countries to account’,” explains World Vision Africa Advocacy Adviser Amboka Wameyo.

3.1.1 Provision of Technical Input

As Wameyo suggests, one important modality is to provide technical input to strengthen and deepen AU thinking. This tends to happen almost exclusively via invitations by the different Directorates to selected CSO/NGO representatives to attend expert group meetings and other technical level gatherings. As specific policy processes evolve, civil society experts may find themselves attending Ministerial meetings as observers, where, although they have no official platform to speak, they can influence the policy process in the corridors or in bilateral meetings. In such cases, civil society can advance its own agenda.

According to Ekiyor, CSOs constantly need to ask the question as to whether collaborating with the AU at the technical level circumscribes their ability to put pressure on it when it’s not perceived to be working. “In my own organisation”, she asserts, “we critique the AU’s work a lot, in all our meetings, but it hasn’t hindered our partnerships with them so far – and actually the things we’ve criticised them on, they’ve taken up”. As such, it is largely a question of the credibility of the specific CSO working with the AU. Research institutions, for example, must remain objective or tarnish their reputations. Another key factor is funding, with resources that are independent from the AU guaranteeing a greater degree of autonomy.

3.1.2 Proxy Advocate

All too often, however, the role of civil society is less to provide expert input than to prepare to advocate on the

AU’s behalf. “On debt issues we have worked with civil society, particularly with some NGOs to mobilize African and international opinion to support our position on debt cancellation”, says René Kouassi, Director of Economic Affairs at the AU Commission, noting the presence of prominent international NGOs at AU meetings. Here, the AU sees NGOs as key advocacy allies, and seeks to leverage the space occupied particularly by international NGOs and issues-based African networks, such as the African Forum on Debt and Development (AFRODAD) and the Africa Trade Network (ATN).

3.1.3 Partnering in Implementation

A third modality is for civil society organisations to work as implementation partners with relevant AU Directorates, leveraging their advocacy skills and programmatic strengths in African countries to help implement AU norms and standards. “Even though they engage in the regional processes and come up with excellent regional instruments, excellent international instruments which they ratify at every point, they do that for PR purposes”, says Osero-Ageng’o. “But when it comes to implementation it doesn’t trickle to the ground. So to bring an end to this ‘resolutionism’, our advocacy at this level involves pressurising the governments to move beyond simply ratifying documents, and to have them actually domesticate them under the bicameral system, or for the unicameral system to get them to actually get down to implementing once they have signed the instrument”.

3.1.4 Consulting or Contracting

A fourth modality is consulting or contracting. “Part of the problem with the AU is a lack of capacity”, explains Godwin Odo, a programme officer of the MacArthur Foundation in Nigeria. “The AU may not have the resources to recruit the quality of researchers they would want. Some NGOs think this is their area of specialisation – if you want something on international justice you can name 5 NGO people who can sit down and come up with the best possible document. If you want something on women’s rights it’s the same. There’s this high level of capacity within the NGO sector”.

Figure 4: Modes of CSO Engagement with the African Union

Modes of CSO Engagement with the AU

- **Technocrat:** Providing technical input to deepen AU Commission thinking
- **Proxy Advocate:** Advocating on behalf of the AU Commission
- **Implementer:** Working as an AU Commission implementation partner
- **Contractor:** Providing consultancy/contractual services to the AU Commission

The fear among African activists is that because of the lack of capacity, civil society experts end up writing the policy. “You can actually have a Pan-African meeting of Western NGOs without actually missing a single country,” complains Abdul-Raheem. “And they have the money, the resources, they can prepare their papers, they can fly anybody in, they have consultants. And yet the AU is not in a position to engage, really”.

3.2 Blurred Line, Crisis of Expectations, Tensions

Some analysts of the new Pan-Africanism argue in favour of a “new participatory paradigm” which in their view necessitates “a critical form of engagement”²⁰. This implies a mutual respect between governmental and inter-governmental on the one hand, and civil society on the other. The extent to which such a mutual respect exist between AU and CSO actors depends on which side of the fence particular organisations sit – inside or outside.

Houghton identifies two groups, one on the inside and the other on the outside. The first is what he calls the “insider NGO group”, made up of CSO representatives that have been closely involved in the ECOSOCC process and have a clearer sense of the spaces that exist around ECOSOCC to engage the AU. “This group is part of the structure”, says Houghton. Nevertheless, he adds, “there’s still tremendous confusion at a national level about what

an ECOSOCC representative is supposed to do. So what you have is this huge association membership framework, which is probably spending 80% of its positive energy on what I’d call constitutional and rule-based procedures, and less than 10-15% discussing what they want the AU to do. And in many ways it can offer a distraction from a grounded policy engagement with the AU”.

The second category is the “outside NGO community”, made up largely of “...Pan-Africanists, passionate about issues of justice”. The difficulty for this group, argues Houghton, is that “... [there] isn’t a clear enough entry point for them to engage with the AU. And they are becoming more and more frustrated with the seemingly arbitrary and ad hoc way in which civil society participation is being organised”. This frustration has reached such a point that efforts are now underway to autonomously organise around Summits.

Even though a typology can be discerned, civil society engagement with the AU typically happens along a blurred line, resulting, in the words of Houghton, in “...a form of dependency, with CSOs relying on the AU to invite them into ‘appropriate spaces’”. An emblematic example of this is the inauguration of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) in March 2004, when CSO representation was almost exclusively on the basis of AU invitations. Inevitably this has led to frustration, and the emergence of conflictual, adversarial lobbying alongside collaboration.

²⁰ Landsberg and McKay 2005.

While the refusal of Libya (June 2005) and Sudan (January 2006) to allow the pre-Summit CSO Forum to go ahead (see Chapter 2) is described by one senior AU official as “an internal organisational problem”, civil society organisations see governmental intolerance as reflecting a major concern: the perceived attempt by AU member states, organs and bureaucrats to limit their participation in what is supposed to be a people-centred Union. “Despite the important role of civil society at the level of the AU, the AU hasn’t respected what civil society is doing,” says Odo who is also a human rights lawyer. “You acknowledge on one part that civil society has been good, you respect the work they do. But on the other hand they are not given the kind of recognition and protection that civil society requires to actually function”.

According to Houghton, such concerns that the AU is only serious about participation on paper have led to a “crisis of expectation between those on the inside of the Commission and those outside of the Commission in terms of what would be desirable sets of relationships around the AU”. Two manifestations of this crisis have emerged. First, civil society activists are proposing that alternative pre-Summit forums be held entirely independently of the AU African Citizens Directorate (CIDO) or of ECOSOCC. Second, in the run-up to the Banjul Summit, a strong sign-on letter was circulated, protesting the exclusion of civil society from Tripoli and Khartoum and urging the AU to desist from closing space for engagement.

The response of Adisa, head of CIDO, is that civil society must stop being adversarial and recognise that building an African Union is an incremental process. “Instead of just making noise these CSOs should realise that we’re not going to move from a state-led to a people-centred project overnight. That is just the reality of the matter. So what would be more constructive at this time would be for CSOs to accept the space that exists, and build on it.

It’s not that the space is not there. It is. But there is a lack of creativity as to how to best use it.”

In defence of civil society, Ekiyor argues that healthy relationships are core to the AU’s effectiveness, and civil society is committed to the task of building long-term collaboration. “We have evolved from when it was an antagonistic relationship between CSOs and governments”, she asserts. “Now, most CSOs worth their salt actually are looking at how to collaborate with these institutions. I think of it as: what other institutions do we have? If we... let the AU, ECOWAS, IGAD, SADC... become dilapidated, we actually don’t have any other institution through which we can get the voices of the people heard”.

3.3 Dichotomy between International and African CSOs?

International NGOs are the market leaders in policy advocacy at Pan-African level, and were the first to reorganise themselves to ensure coherence between their Africa and global advocacy strategies²¹. In some cases, internal discussion over the need to undertake Pan-African advocacy led to the allocation of increased resources and the building of a Pan-Africa advocacy network²². The result is that today, many thematic partnerships with AU Directorates have either been initiated by or directly involve INGOs in some shape or form. At AU Summits, INGOs are among the most visible and active civil society representatives, taking part in and even organising pre-Summit forum activities, organising press conferences, and lobbying delegates.

Understandably, this has raised concerns that INGOs are not authentically African and may be infiltrating AU spaces with “non-African” ideas. This concern underlies the effective exclusion of INGOs from ECOSOCC membership. While the definition of civil society organisations in Article 3 of the ECOSOCC statutes leaves room for “NGOs, CBOs and voluntary

²¹ ActionAid 2004.

²² Interviews with Brian Kagoro (ActionAid) and Irungu Houghton (Oxfam GB).

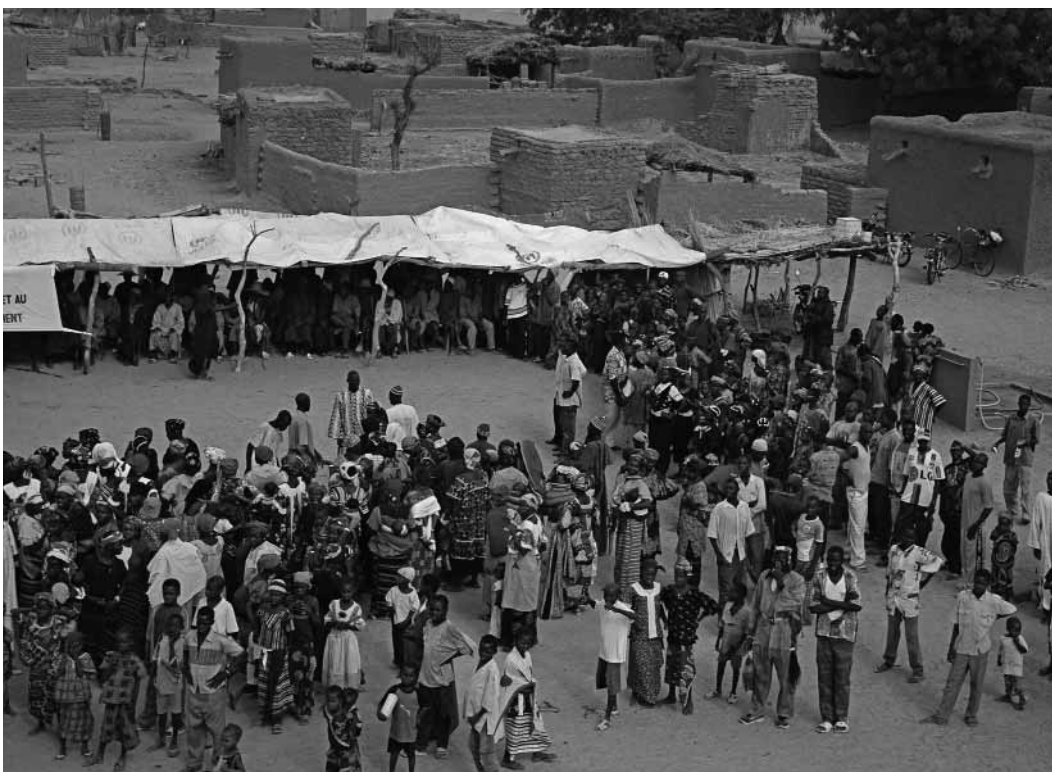
organisations”, Article 6 stipulates strict eligibility criteria that may pose problems for international civil society organisations wanting to engage via ECOSOCC. Mutasa, a deputy presiding officer of the interim ECOSOCC, concedes that the issue is contentious and that it influenced the drafting of the statutes. “Many people feel that organisations relating directly with the AU should be African; regional in orientation and governance”, he explains. “And of course there has been this issue of INGOs overriding these small, moneyless NGOs in Africa, and that is something that people have brought forward and said: ‘No, this is our Union, we don’t want international NGOs to take a lead. They can support us, but they cannot really be the ones interacting with our Union in this way’.”

Ayo Aderinwale, also a deputy presiding officer of the interim ECOSOCC representing West Africa, is even blunter about the issue. “For me there’s no dilemma. Let’s face it, how can you have an African ECOSOCC peopled

by [INGOs]? This is also the problem with the civil society movement in Africa. Close to 99% of the time our agendas are donor-designed, donor-determined and donor-driven. Hardly would you find us pursuing agendas based on our own realities and decisions”.

In Aderinwale’s view, the membership criteria in the ECOSOCC statutes were designed to enable professional bodies, chambers of commerce, manufacturers associations, and community-based organisations (CBOs). “These organisations may not be very good in advocacy, and they are not your usual noise makers”, he says. “But they have to deal with real issues and they are demand driven. They, more than any other organisation, deserve to be in ECOSOCC, and that’s the target here. They are much more authentic. What we want is the authentic voice of the African people”.

Abdul-Raheem agrees that the intent behind the statutes was to privilege “... the old civil society, the real civil



Community members in a village celebrate the installation of a water supply system. Temena, Mali.

photo: Scott Lout

society: trade unions, women's groups, youth groups, and professional groups... things that are usually lumped together as 'private sector', you know... lawyer's associations, students, youth and all that". Because trade unions are in retreat in many African countries, argues Abdul-Raheem, they are no longer able to engage as effectively, and the space has been ceded to NGOs, raising questions of representativity and legitimacy.

Even though many INGOs have recently "Africanised" by decentralising and employing more Africans in the region, this does not make them African, emphasises Abdul-Raheem. El Ghassim Wane, Head of the Conflict Management Division at the AU, shares this view: "One thing is to employ Africans to bring to the fore African issues. Another is to empower Africans and African NGOs to do part of the work. Capacity building and ownership are supposed to be key to development today".

WACSOF's approach is more inclusive, and it allows INGOs to become fully-fledged members of the network as long as they have a strong African presence. The alternative is associate membership, open to any NGO, be it local or international. Ultimately, says WACSOF Secretary-General Konteh, it does not make sense to dichotomise between international and African civil society, since insider and outsider pressure are more often than not complementary. "So even in terms of our advocacy strategy, we believe we can partner with [INGOs], where we do advocacy at the national or sub-regional level, and then they do advocacy at the international level complementary to what we are doing. They can leverage what we are doing and amplify it, and that way we can get more impact". Konteh advocates working in coalitions as the best way of leveraging the respective strengths of South and North.

Equality Now's Osero-Ageng'o agrees, dismissing the INGO-African NGO phenomenon as "a classic strategy that is used to scatter even the work of women's organisations. When you go to the national level... in Kenya and Uganda, I know for a fact that every time that we take on an issue of women's rights we're told: 'oh, you

elitist women – who gives you the moral authority to speak on behalf of the woman back home?' Yet the woman back home has no wherewithal to take up a matter and push it to its logical conclusion"

Mbelle believes that it is not up to the AU to determine who is authentic and who is not. Rather, it is up to African NGOs and civil society organisations to start becoming more assertive in their relations with Northern NGOs and CSOs.

In their defence, INGOs put forward a number of arguments. One is that it is possible to have multiple identities, as manifested by the fact that most INGOs working in Africa are registered as NGOs in all the countries they work in, thereby ensuring local accountability. Another is that the experience that INGOs have accumulated in working at service delivery and humanitarian level with the poor gives them the right to engage. "Any NGO that has presence on the ground and has governance structures that are local cannot be deemed to be international and external", says Wilfred Mlay, Africa Vice President of World Vision. "If we divide on the basis of just whether [an NGO] is indigenous or not indigenous, we will be marginalising a lot of the community work that is already on the ground. We will impoverish ourselves".

Wameyo argues the point even more forcefully: "Why is it that at the national level there's legitimate space for these so-called INGOs resulting from the legitimate work they do in the country? If you're legitimately working in a particular country and you know the situation in that country, why can't you be legitimate at the Africa level?"

A third argument mounted by INGOs in their defence is that they routinely seek to build capacity by working in coalitions and alliances with local NGOs and CSOs in Africa – rather than going it alone. A fourth argument has it that African civil society is weak, and that in any event, while many do a tremendous job, a number of indigenous NGOs are less accountable to their constituents and funders than INGOs.

GCAP – teething pains in the building of a movement

The Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) is emblematic of the promise and tensions within coalitions bringing together disparate international and national civil society organisations. GCAP constitutes a diverse group, in terms of ideology, policy focus, sectoral focus and organisational strategy.

GCAP initially began as a result of a meeting in Maputo in 2003 organised by the Millennium Campaign. However, at GCAP's founding meeting in Johannesburg in September 2004, strong representation emerged from Asia, Latin America, Europe and the Americas. However, the group agreed to issue a common one-page statement, the Johannesburg Policy Platform, which highlighted a common position on 4 themes – governance, debt, aid and trade. GCAP came into its own in 2005, the year of Africa, by mobilising successfully on specific days, harnessing unifying symbols, strategically using the media, associating itself with concerts, rallies and other high-profile events. In Africa, 26 countries recorded the presence of GCAP in 2005. Despite this high visibility, one key weakness identified by GCAP members was the lack of national policy engagement and inclusive campaigning at national level.

By the time of the GCAP March 2006 Lebanon meeting, what had started out with 20 people in Maputo and 50 people in Johannesburg became a gathering of 150 people in Beirut, of which 100 were representatives of national coalitions. 25 of these were national coalitions from African countries, signifying the depth and strength of the African presence within GCAP. Ten of the major policy revisions to the Johannesburg Policy Platform proposed by Africa were adopted in the Beirut Platform of Action. This is the policy platform that now guides GCAP internationally, and includes controversial things like, for example, debt repudiation, a focus on domestic debt as opposed to just external debt, focus on repatriation of stolen assets and funding, focus on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) – these are all Southern-based demands.

However, despite the current definitions of which CSOs can be part of ECOSOCC, Mutasa says the issue of INGO involvement is still up for discussion. "I know this is an issue that is going to confront us... it has confronted us before, and it has been thrown out, first because initially, most of these organisations were being run from London and so on... but now that they have begun to reorient themselves and be really African, it raises questions of how we as NGOs, and even the AU are going to handle that".

chapter 4

Key thematic issues for CSO advocacy

4.1 Speaking with One Voice

The African Union's 2004-2007 Strategic Plan constitutes an ambitious shopping list of programmatic activities. In line with Konaré's vision, the AU Commission has also made a conscious and concerted effort to centralise management and leadership of initiatives previously led by other secretariats or institutions. NEPAD is emblematic of this trend, with a degree of centralised coordination in this case arguably needed. However, there are a number of other examples, and it is not always clear whether on all themes the AU Commission is the best actor to lead. While on paper it speaks of leading only in areas of its core competence, in reality it wants Africa to "speak with one voice" and sees itself as the African voice in the international community. In practice, however, the AU Commission cannot engage on every issue with the same dynamism, intensity or impact. This inevitably means that there are themes in which the AU is strong, and others in which it is barely competent.

With 2007 the year the AU Commission will develop its second Strategic Plan, there is likely to be pressure from member states as well as from other quarters – including civil society – for the Commission to draw lessons from its first five years and narrow its focus. This elaboration of a new Strategic Plan constitutes potentially the single most important opportunity to influence the AU programmatically. Furthermore, if Chairperson Konaré does not seek re-election, the likelihood is that whoever takes over may opt for a less ambitious work programme.

Landsberg and McKay (2005) identify a number of themes – what they call Africa's "big issues" – at the heart of the new Pan-Africanism:

- Reducing poverty;
- A new trade regime that is both free and just;
- Unemployment and illiteracy;
- Promoting human rights and democratic governance;
- Social development (including addressing HIV/AIDS),
- Ending wars and conflicts;

- Promoting peace-building;
- Fostering regional integration and cooperation; and
- Seeking a 'new' partnership with the outside world, notably the industrialised powers.

The AU Commission engages on each and every one of these themes, to varying degrees. As highlighted earlier in this publication, NEPAD engages on a smaller number of themes. On the basis of the research conducted, this chapter identifies and discusses issues that are considered priority thematic areas by the AU, and on which civil society organisations have engaged, are currently engaging, or are planning to engage. This review is not exhaustive. Instead, is selective, highlighting a cross-section of themes and flagging key advocacy opportunities likely to arise in the next two years (see also Annex A). In doing so, the chapter highlights and draws lessons from successful advocacy campaigns around the AU.

4.2 Economic Justice

The evolution of the Africa-G8 and World Trade Organisation (WTO) agendas have led to a flurry of activity among African CSOs and their international counterparts, and their engagement in different regional and global forums to campaign on economic justice. The recognition is widespread that tackling the roots of poverty requires engagement with the multilateral system, towards a more level playing field for Southern countries. Developing and articulating African positions on aid, trade and debt are therefore at the core of the AU Commission's advocacy role. In the coming two years, one way of ensuring that the African policy space is used to the maximum in terms of global impact, will be for civil society to engage with the AU towards robust, nuanced and achievable African positions. The search for alternative paths to development, manifested by the growing rapprochement between Africa and China and plans for an African commodities stock market, will also provide CSOs with much food for thought in terms of how they engage.

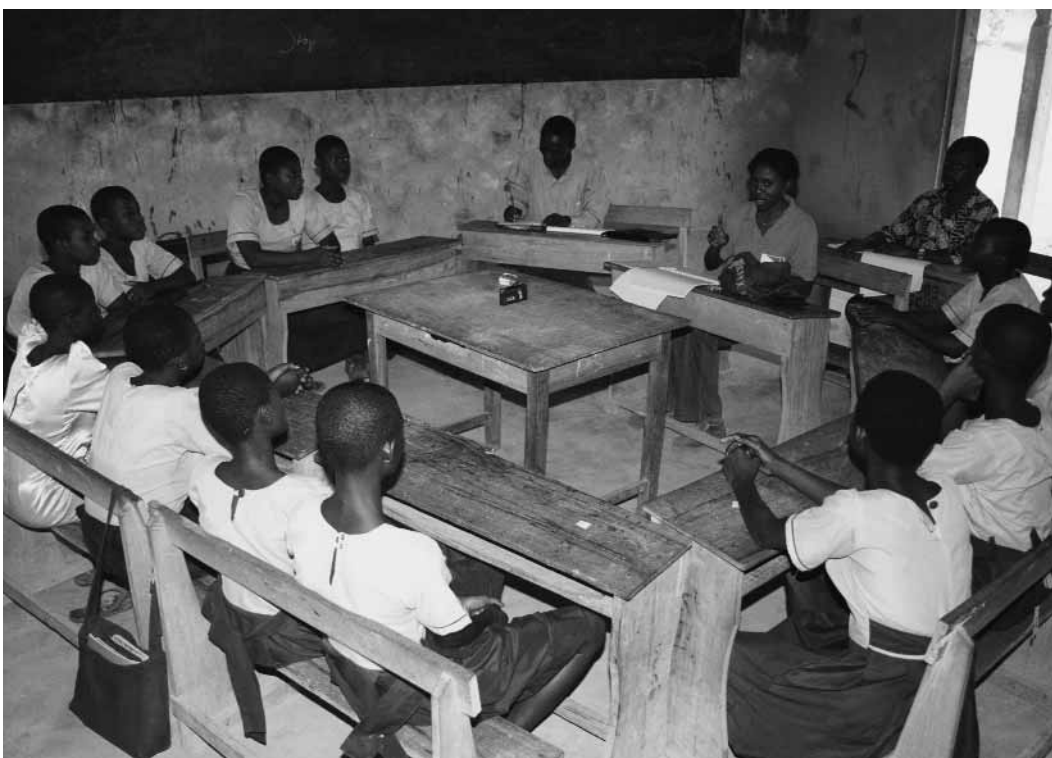
On aid, the generic AU position is that to scale up efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),

developed nations need to make good on their Gleneagles 2005 commitment to deliver more and better aid. In addition to the call for increased aid volumes, the emphasis is increasingly on aid quality. The Africa Ministerial Conference on Financing for Development held in Abuja, Nigeria in May 2006, again called for the aid architecture to be more effective, by aligning itself with national development plans. The key message is for aid to be untied and for technical assistance to be reformed.

A key space for engagement is the High-Level Forum on Joint Progress Towards Aid Effectiveness, which brings together developing and developed country finance ministers, aid agency heads and CSO experts. The second High-Level Forum, which took place in Paris from 28 February-2 March 2005, ended with the adoption of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, which spells out the mutual commitment of both Africa and its development partners to a more accountable aid relationship. The third high-level forum is due to take place in Ghana in 2008. On

the aid quality issue, UNECA and the AfDB possess enough technical expertise to backstop the AU Commission on what is a very technocratic agenda. However, a number of African and international NGOs are campaigning on aid quality and this will be a fruitful area of collaboration with the AU in the coming years. ActionAid and other INGOs have already developed detailed, nuanced positions on aid which the AU says are critical in supporting its advocacy in the North. One such position is that the Africa Partnership Forum (APF), set up by the G8 and NEPAD as the vehicle for following through the G8 Commitments, needs to be made a more effective mechanism for mutual accountability.

On debt, African campaigners have long maintained that the lion's share of debt owed by African nations is illegitimate, with the All-Africa Conference of Churches dubbing it "a new form of slavery, as vicious as the slave trade". Today, the official AU position post-Gleneagles is that all multilateral debt should be cancelled for all



A discussion group is used to measure transformational development within a community. Anyinofi, Ghana.

photo: Kofi Odoom

African countries. The AU wants the G8's Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) – benefiting 18 countries categorised as Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) – to cover all of Africa's multilateral debt. The AU has initiated research to establish the impact of the MDRI on the economies of the 14 African HIPCs. Also, a piece of analytical work is pending that could provide room for engagement with civil society.

The AU has worked closely with CSOs to mobilise African as well as international support for its debt cancellation position. However, there are two sides to the coin. While the focus to date has been on demanding blanket cancellation, little attention has been focused on the African side – what do countries do with the resources freed up by their debt being cancelled? The debt cancellation agenda provides civil society in Africa with an opportunity to advocate for more effective use of debt, and aid, by African countries. In the meantime, if there is no move by creditor nations and the multilateral system to cancel all of Africa's debt, an increasing number of CSOs will step up the campaign for debt repudiation – whereby African countries are being urged to declare their debt as illegitimate, stop servicing it and set it aside.

Trade is clearly the economic justice theme in which the AU has registered the most progress in coordinating an African strategy. Since it replaced the OAU, the AU has convened four Conferences of African Ministers of Trade, with significant civil society participation each time. In the run-up to the 6th WTO Hong Kong Ministerial in December 2005, the AU and civil society organisations worked closely together in developing positions and preparing for Hong Kong. Subsequently, both expressed major disappointment with the Hong Kong outcomes. The main emphasis in 2006 was on two sets of issues:

- On the WTO agenda, and in anticipation of the end of April deadline for Agriculture and Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) in the negotiations, the 4th Conference of African Trade Ministers, meeting in Nairobi in April 2006, issued the Nairobi Ministerial Declaration on the Doha Work Programme, that

amounts to an African Position aimed at guiding African negotiators in the Geneva process. It contains guidance on all the key issues for Africa, including market access, bananas and cotton. In it, Ministers declare that competition, commodities, aid for trade, services, and trade facilitation are key issues to be addressed in the Doha Round. On NAMA, the Ministers express their concern that “the modalities in NAMA may lead to the de-industrialisation of African countries if their concerns ... are not adequately addressed in the negotiations”. They also reiterated their call for “transparent and inclusive” negotiations, and warned developed countries to desist from putting pressure on African countries to comply with their demands.

- The second issue is the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) currently under negotiation between Africa and the European Union (EU). Civil society has been campaigning on this issue for some time, in the context of the Cotonou Agreement the successor to the Lomé Agreement between the EU and African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) countries. NGOs have long rejected EPAs as inimical to African interests. The AU has subsequently led African negotiations with the EU on EPAs, which were discussed in several forums during the Banjul Summit in July 2006, particularly among the RECs, with whom the EU is negotiating blanket sub-regional agreements. The AU position is spelled out in the Nairobi Declaration on Economic Partnership Agreements, issued in April 2006. Essentially, the AU insists that EPAs should constitute tools for the economic development of Africa, and expresses its profound disappointment with the EU position. In welcoming the evaluations of EPAs in 2006, the Ministers urge that the review “... be inclusive and consultative with all stakeholders, including civil society and parliamentarians and conducted at national, regional and continental and ACP levels...”. This provides further spaces for civil society to work hand in hand with the AU in the coming years.

4.3 Gender

The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, issued by Heads of State in July 2004, and Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, adopted in July 2003 constitute the main instruments being harnessed by gender-focused CSOs. The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa reflects their success in lobbying for gender parity in all AU organs, and lays out an agenda towards gender equality in Africa.

The most effective case of partnership between CSOs and the AU to date may well be the campaign by SOAWR, a coalition of 25 NGOs, towards the coming into force of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.

The Charter is considered ground-breaking by the human rights community, as it spells out a wide range of social and economic rights for African women, including calling for the legal prohibition of female genital mutilation. In July 2004, only Comoros had ratified the Protocol. The SOAWR campaign's objective was to put pressure on African governments to ratify the Charter and lead to its coming into force. This would then create momentum for laws and policies to be enacted within countries, and provide in-country CSOs with the basis to push further for the rights spelled out in the Charter. SOAWR worked jointly with the AU Gender Directorate to identify the problem and develop a joint advocacy and lobbying strategy.

The strategy itself, combining the creation of a sense of outrage with constructive engagement, involved face to face lobbying of the AU Commission and Permanent Representatives based in Addis Ababa, an open petition to Heads of State (with signatures gathered by pen, e-mail, web and text messaging), 'naming and shaming' red cards, and a joint conference with the AU in September 2005. As a direct result of the campaign, and with Togo the 15th country to ratify, the Protocol came into force in November 2005.

The campaign is emblematic for several reasons. First, its success can be attributed to the symbiosis between civil society and an AU Commission Directorate, demonstrating that successful partnership with the AU requires a common interest. "If you look at it from a service point of view, the service we've given the Gender Directorate is that they moved from one ratification to 15 in record-breaking time", says Irungu Houghton of Oxfam GB, a member of SOAWR. "And it's great for us because it was part of the AU that bought into that vision".

Further in hindsight, the SOAWR coalition benefited from other pre-conditions that made the political environment ideal for campaigning on women's rights; FEMNET and Equality Now, both key players in the Coalition, had experience of working on the Protocol. They, and a number of other members in the Coalition, had strong legal and policy analysis backgrounds and had already cultivated effective national networks. The Information Technology expertise provided by another member, FAHAMU, led to the novel experience of IT supported advocacy.

The SOAWR led campaign was multi-phased and did not end with the coming into force of the Protocol. SOAWR is now pushing the more than 35 AU member states that have not yet ratified the Protocol to do so. And it is entering the 'domestication' phase of its work by taking the campaign to country level.

4.4 Governance

A highlight of the AU July 2006 Summit Banjul, The Gambia, was the controversy over the draft African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. The draft Charter – presented to the Summit by Foreign Ministers after a painstaking technical process that culminated in a Ministerial meeting some two months before the Summit to further develop the text – was rejected by Heads of State in Banjul. The bone of contention was a clause that sought to outlaw the practice of leaders amending constitutions to extend their rule – an issue that has spurred civil society campaigns in a number of African countries in recent years. The

contentious clause threatened to sanction countries whose leaders violated the spirit and letter of their constitutions to extend their rule indefinitely. The draft was sent back to Ministerial level, and was on the agenda at the January 2007 Summit in Addis Ababa, constituting an important advocacy issue for civil society.

Aside from the draft Charter, Africa's governance agenda is largely being stewarded outside of the AU Commission. With the APRM well underway, opportunities will continue to abound for civil society participation as official stakeholders, contractors and shadow peer reviewers. As at July 2006, 23 countries²³ had signed up to the APRM, with the Ghana review conducted at the 4th NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) in Khartoum in January 2006. The Rwanda review took place only in Banjul, after delays due to disagreements between the Government and the Panel of APRM Eminent Persons over the content of the draft Country Review Report. Next up for review is South Africa, which has completed its self-assessment report and received an APRM Country Review Mission in July 2006. Kenya is also lined up for review, having completed its self-assessment report in 2006. Algeria is in the process of preparing its self-assessment report after completing stakeholder consultations. In Nigeria, the self-assessment process is underway after initial delays.

The APRM explicitly markets itself as a broad-based participatory process, providing significant room for civil society participation along with other stakeholder groups. Experience has however been mixed, with some CSOs reporting a tendency by governments to prefer to involve "state-friendly" NGOs in the country processes. The African Governance Monitoring and Advocacy Project (AfriMAP) views the APRM process as an opportunity to hold governments accountable to their commitments. However, Deputy Director Ozias Tungwarara cautions

that the mechanism is being "seriously undermined by the deference to an archaic notion of national sovereignty, where states are still very reluctant to call a spade a spade in terms of their deficits". For this reason, and because of the bureaucratic nature of the peer review process, AfriMAP has changed tack:

"Initially AfriMAP, was conceived as a shadow reporting exercise to the APRM," explains Tungwarara. "So the intention was to actually develop a parallel process through which civil society could do its own monitoring alongside APRM". However, the project has evolved, primarily because the APRM has proved to be a cumbersome process. As a result, AfriMAP now focuses on monitoring African governments' compliance with commitments in three sectors – access to justice and rule of law; political participation; and effective public service delivery. On that basis, AfriMAP plans to develop instruments, including a comprehensive questionnaire, which CSOs can use to assess their government's compliance.

Despite the teething problems, the APRM constitutes an unprecedented opportunity for civil society to engage creatively and register an impact in the coming years. Like many continental initiatives it is extremely ambitious. The APRM's integrity also depends to a large extent on whether it remains an African-owned and led process. There are concerns among African actors that undue interest from the international community may render it a self-conditionality mechanism administered by Africa to secure more aid, rather than as a real instrument for internal improvement. However, the fact that it is grounded in countries makes it incumbent on CSOs, whether national or continental, to see how best they can engage with it to ensure more robust outcomes. Beyond the outcomes of the peer review per se, the key is to see the APRM as an entry point for a sustained dialogue on key governance issues.

²³ In order of accession, the 23 countries that have signed up for peer review are: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Cameroon, Gabon, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda, Egypt, Benin, Malawi, Lesotho, Tanzania, Angola, and Sierra Leone.

For more details on the APRM, visit <http://www.nepad.org>

4.5 HIV and AIDS

Beginning with the 2001 Abuja Summit on HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and other Related Infectious Diseases, which identified priorities for fighting HIV and AIDS, the past few years have seen heightened high-level engagement around the pandemic, with civil society maintaining the momentum in terms of advocacy, and the AU Commission working to ensuring engagement by Africa's leadership. In 2006, the main target for advocacy on HIV and AIDS was the UN General Assembly Special Session on AIDS (UNGASS). In Khartoum in January 2006 Heads of State identified the need to develop a common African position for UNGASS, and this position constituted a key outcome of the Special Summit on HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (ATM) held in Abuja in May that year.

The African Common Position lists a number of targets to be met by 2010 – including:

- the reduction of HIV prevalence in young people between 15 and 24 years by at least 25% in all African countries;
- a commitment to protect and support 5 million AIDS orphans and ensure that 80% of orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) have access to basic services;
- access by at least 80% of pregnant women to Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission, and treatment for HIV-positive women and children; and
- access to antiretroviral and other HIV and AIDS treatment for at least 80% of those in need, particularly children.

For these and other targets to be met, the Common Position laid out specific actions to be taken at country, regional and continental levels in Africa. A number of CSOs campaigning around UNGASS made use of the African Common Position.

Another important call to action was the *'Brazzaville Commitment on Scaling Up Towards Universal Access to HIV*

and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support in Africa by 2010', which included a detailed set of action points in a number of key areas. The Brazzaville Commitment influenced the report prepared by the Global Steering Committee for UNGASS. A number of INGOs, including ActionAid, Christian Aid and Oxfam International, now consider HIV and AIDS as an advocacy priority, and this is likely to lead to increase engagement with the AU and other institutions in the coming years.

4.6 Human Rights and Justice

The African Charter on Human Rights (1981) is considered the most progressive piece of human rights legislation in all the world's regions, because of its emphasis on economic and social rights. A key institutional outcome of the Charter is the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), which receives complaints from state and non-state parties on human rights abuses and violations. As discussed in Chapter 1, an active civil society community has developed around the African Commission. Attention is now focusing on the African Court on Human and People's Rights, established under the OAU, and the African Court of Justice, mandated by the Constitutive Act as an AU organ. The AU has recognised that the two courts need to merge, but it is only thanks to a combination of civil society pressure through campaigning, and the submission of technical proposals, that led to African leaders signing off in Banjul on the proposal for a single legal instrument to merge the two courts.

The Coalition for an Effective African Court on Human and People's Rights²⁴, which conducted the lobbying and is now following the merger closely, constitutes another strong case of how CSOs are influencing continental policy. Established in 2003 and funded by the MacArthur Foundation, Open Society and other donors, the Coalition is campaigning for full ratification of the new instrument on the merged courts; a credible, effective and independent

²⁴ For more on the Coalition, visit www.africancourtcoalition.org

Why Continental Norms Matter: SERAC Vs Federal Government of Nigeria

“Continental norms are important. The problem has always been with implementation, with doing something with the tools that we’ve always had available to us. In 1996 the Social and Economic Rights Action Centre (SERAC) presented a communication before the ACHPR alleging massive violations of the rights of the Ogoni people. We followed it up very aggressively – for 5 to 6 years we were on the track of the Commission, pushing for them to make a decision. They did so belatedly in 2001, and issued what turned out to be a spectacular ruling which in many ways still stands as probably the most articulate quasi-judicial pronouncement on the validity and applicability of economic and social rights to the African people issued to date by any inter-governmental body anywhere else in the world. That decision – even though the process was so difficult and the history so chequered – proved to be the most useful decision, used not just in Nigeria but also in other countries in the world. Locally, this was the basis on which the struggle in the Niger Delta took on a new legitimacy, in terms of a legal face. The decision emboldened the activists”.

Felix Morka, Executive Director, SERAC

court; ensuring a transparent process for the nomination and election of judges of the highest repute; ensuring gender balance and civil society participation; and providing technical support on accessing the Court.

A number of key features make the Coalition a model for continental advocacy.

- First, it does not happen in a vacuum, but builds on pioneering work in the 1990s by legal and human rights CSOs who successfully campaigned for observer status at the African Commission.
- Second, the Coalition is run by three CSOs on a decentralised model, and is made up of strong national membership, enabling multi-pronged influencing of governments, regional economic communities and continental institutions and mechanisms, including the African Union (AU).
- Third, the Coalition generates accurate, timely and relevant information, disseminated via a newsletter and the internet.
- Fourth, the Coalition invests significant energy in face-to-face influencing, by engaging and networking with African Court judges, Ministers of Justice and civil servants, staff at the African Commission, other civil society actors, and so on.

4.7 Peace and Security

Significant progress has been registered in ending some of Africa’s conflicts, including in Burundi, the Central African Republic, Comoros, Mauritania, and South Sudan. The spectre of conflict continues to be among Africa’s biggest challenges, with war and civil strife continuing to affect the livelihoods of people in and around the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote D’Ivoire, Sudan, Uganda, Somalia, the Ethiopia/Eritrea border, the Chad/Sudan border, and the Niger Delta in Nigeria, among others. As the human security implications of these conflicts has hit home, and in the past two or three years, civil society has begun to engage with the AU more consistently, bolstering its capacity as needed.

CSOs successfully campaigned, in advance of the Khartoum Summit, to prevent Sudan ascending to the AU Presidency. The campaign was part of a sustained engagement by civil society on the situation in Darfur. Although the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in January 2005 between North and South Sudan has remained relatively stable, the situation in Darfur (the subject of another pact, the May 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement, or DPA) has deteriorated. The fighting is exacting a high toll on Darfur’s long-suffering population and jeopardising

NGO operations in the region²⁵. After announcing at the Banjul Summit that the AU Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) would pull out of Darfur at the end of September, the AU later extended its mandate until at least the end of 2006. AMIS was created by the PSC in October 2004 to prevent the killing of civilians. The proposal to replace AMIS with a bigger, better-equipped UN force is being resisted strenuously by the Government of Sudan.

NGOs are already heavily engaged in Darfur, largely in humanitarian work and service provision. Although human rights CSOs have done much to highlight the responsibility of the combatants to protect women, children and other vulnerable civilians, additional engagement is needed in this area. The situation in Somalia – where violence escalated in 2006 – and in other countries warrants sustained engagement by civil society. Along with the ACHPR, the PSC and its subsidiary organs – notably the Panel of the Wise – provide an important opportunity to galvanise the AU membership into taking effective leadership in dealing with Africa's conflicts. The pilot post-conflict framework process also provides opportunities at the more technical

level to influence and help shape AU Commission policy across the board. AU initiatives on child soldiers, small arms landmines also offer room for partnership.

A number of conclusions can be drawn from this analysis. First, despite capacity constraints and the all-embracing nature of its programmes, the AU Commission is providing leadership on some of the key issues of importance to Africa – in particular trade, peace and security, and HIV and AIDS. The example of the SOAWR campaign, demonstrates that AU-CSO symbiosis is possible, around a mutually reinforcing agenda. The Coalition example shows that technocratic advocacy can also yield fruit in bringing to the AU Commission's attention issues it had not taken into account in developing policy. Overall, what has clearly emerged is that CSOs can significantly add value to the Commission's own advocacy role and to the agenda of other Pan-African bodies, as long as the partnership is strategic and issue-specific. Often, it is initiatives led by CSOs that determine whether or not the AU is visible on a given issue.



Nutritional education is provided for mothers and child carers with advice on providing balanced diets for children to help prevent malnutrition. Beni, Eastern Congo.

photo: Horeb Bulambo

²⁵ Darfur: New violence threatens world's largest aid response. Press release issued by Concern, Goal, International Rescue Committee, Norwegian Refugee Council, Oxfam and World Vision, 15 December 2006.

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 Values²⁶ 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

²⁶ 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 Child²⁷, 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

²⁷ 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-region²⁸. 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)²⁹, 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

²⁸ Notes from meeting between EALA and World Vision March 2006 and May 2006.

²⁹ 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
AU Commission: Bureau of the Chairperson	High-level engagement on HIV/AIDS-OVCs, general WV/AU collaboration
AU Commission: Social Affairs Directorate	High-level, technical-level engagement on Child Rights
AU Commission: Economic Affairs Directorate	High-level, technical-level engagement on Economic Justice (Aid, Debt)
AU Commission: Trade and Industry Directorate	High-level, technical-level engagement on Economic Justice (Trade)
AU Commission: Peace and Security Directorate	High-level, technical-level engagement on Peace and Security
AU Commission: African Citizens Directorate (CIDO)	Technical-level engagement on WV/AU civil society collaboration
AU Organ: Peace and Security Council	Lobbying on African conflicts
AU Organs: ACHPR, African Court	Lobbying on abuses of Child Rights, possible channel to PRC
AU Organ: Pan-African Parliament	Lobbying on all key themes
NEPAD/APRM Secretariat	Engagement on APRM, Economic Justice (esp. mutual accountability)
UN Economic Commission for Africa	High-level, technical-level engagement on SGPRs, APRM, APF/Mutual accountability, HIV/AIDS and Governance, Poverty research
African Development Bank	High-level, technical-level engagement on HIV/AIDS, APF/Mutual accountability
ECOWAS Secretariat	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 Summits³⁰. 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.

³⁰ 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



annex A

Catalogue, Key Advocacy Opportunities, 2007-2008

Issues	Opportunities
Child Survival, Protection and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day of the African Child (16 June) • AU Commission Mid-term Review of the Common African Position (Declaration and Plan of Action) on Children (2006, Social Affairs Directorate) • UN Special Session on Children (New York, 2007)
Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU Council Review of progress against EU Strategic Partnership with Africa, including aid volume targets (December 2006) • G8 Summit, Germany (2007) • PRSP and MDG Plenary (2007) • Africa-EU Summit, Portugal (2007) • High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, Ghana (2008) • Africa Partnership Forum
Trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of the Doha Round (after the mid-term WTO elections in early 2007) • Review of EPAs (2006, ongoing)
Africa-Asia relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Africa-China Summit (2007) • Tokyo International Conference on African Development IV (2008)
Peace and Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSC meetings (minimum of twice a month, at Permanent Representative, Ministerial or Heads of State level) • Panel of the Wise (when inaugurated)
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of AU Strategic Plan 2008-2012 (2007) • World Social Forum, Nairobi (January 2007)

annex B

List of Respondents

Name	Designation and Organisation
1 Dr. Tajudeen ABDUL-RAHEEM	Deputy Director, UN Millennium Campaign, Nairobi, Kenya.
2 Dr. Adekeye ADEBAJO	Executive Director, Centre for Conflict Resolution, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa.
3 Mr. Ayo ADERINWALE	Executive Director, African Leadership Forum (ALF), Ota, Nigeria.
4 Dr. Jinmi ADISA	Principal Coordinator, Civil Society and Diaspora Organisations, Bureau of the Chairperson, African Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
5 Ms. Fiona ADOLU	Legal Officer, African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), Banjul, The Gambia.
6 Mr. Che AJULU	Researcher, Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD), Midrand, South Africa.
7 Mr. Olu AROWOBUSOYE	Director of Humanitarian Affairs, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Secretariat, Abuja, Nigeria.
8 Ms. Caroline ASERO-AGENG'O	Africa Programme Officer, Equality Now, Nairobi, Kenya.
9 Ms. Jane BACKHURST	Director, World Vision EU Liaison Office, Brussels, Belgium.
10 Ms. Marie-Louise BARICAKO	President, Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
11 Ms. Elizabeth BYARUHANGA	Fundraising and Reporting Coordinator, Southern Africa Trust, Midrand, South Africa.
12 Dr. Jakkie CILLIERS	Executive Director, Institute for Strategic Studies (ISS), Tshwane (Pretoria), South Africa.
13 Mr. Ibrahima DIOUF	Child Protection Officer, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Secretariat, Abuja, Nigeria.
14 Ms. Thelma EKİYOR	Senior Manager: Conflict Intervention and Peace building Support Project, Cape Town, South Africa.
15 Ms. Diana ELTAHAWY	Programme Officer, CIVICUS, Johannesburg, South Africa.
16 Ms. Comfort Bassey ESHIET	Programme Officer, Alliances for Africa, Lagos, Nigeria.
17 Mr. Ayokunle FAGBEMI	Executive Director, Centre for Peace building and Socio-Economic Resources Development (CePSERD), Abuja, Nigeria.
18 Mr. Neville GABRIEL	Executive Director, Southern Africa Trust, Midrand, South Africa.
19 Mr. Mamadou GUEYE	Civil Society Focal Point and Coordinator – Education, Culture and Drug Control Unit, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Secretariat, Abuja, Nigeria.
20 Mr. Steve GRUZD	Programme Manager, NEPAD and Governance Project, South African Institute for International Affairs, Johannesburg, South Africa.
21 Mr. Yusuf HASSAN	Senior Officer, UN-OCHA and Pan-Africa Expert, Nairobi, Kenya.

Name	Designation and Organisation
22 Mr. Ross HERBERT	Africa Research Fellow and Head of NEPAD and Governance Project, South African Institute for International Affairs, Johannesburg, South Africa.
23 Mr. Irungu HOUGHTON	Pan-Africa Policy Adviser, Oxfam GB, Nairobi, Kenya.
24 Dr. Jibrin IBRAHIM	Director, Centre for Democracy and Development, Abuja, Nigeria.
25 Mr. Na'eem JEENAH	Head, Access to Information Programme, Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI), Johannesburg, South Africa.
26 Mr. Brian KAGORO	Policy and Advocacy Manager – Africa, Action Aid International Africa, Nairobi, Kenya.
27 Dr. Richard KONTEH	General Secretary, West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF), Abuja, Nigeria.
28 Dr. Rene N. KOUASSI	Director for Economic Affairs, Economic Affairs Directorate, AU Commission.
29 Ms. Rudo KWARAMBA	Director, Advocacy, Communications and Education, WV UK, Milton Keynes.
30 Ms. Tenagne LEMMA	National Director, World Vision Ethiopia, Addis Ababa.
31 Dr. Garth LE PERE	Executive Director, Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD), Midrand, South Africa.
32 Mr. Hassen LORGAT	Manager, Campaigns and Communications, South African NGO Coalition (SANGOCO), Johannesburg, South Africa.
33 Dr. Victor MADZIAKAPITA	Regional Director, Ministry Quality, World Vision Africa, Nairobi, Kenya.
34 Mr. Jacob MATI	Programme Officer, Civil Society Index, CIVICUS, Johannesburg, South Africa.
35 Ms. Nobuntu MBELLE	Co-ordinator, Coalition for an African Court on Human and People's Rights, Johannesburg, South Africa.
36 Mr. Nadir MERAH	Director, Trade Division, Trade and Industry Directorate.
37 Prof. Wilfred MLAY	Vice President, World Vision Africa, Nairobi, Kenya.
38 Mr. Felix MORKA	Executive Director, Social and Economic Rights Action Centre (SERAC), Lagos, Nigeria.
39 Ms. Sylvia MUDASIA-MWICHULI	Communications Coordinator – Africa, UN Millennium Campaign, Nairobi, Kenya.
40 Ms. Litha MUSYIMI-OGANA	Advisor: Gender and CSOs, NEPAD Secretariat, Midrand, South Africa.

Name	Designation and Organisation
41 Mr. Charles MUTASA	Executive Director, AFRODAD, Harare, Zimbabwe/ Deputy Presiding Officer, ECOSOCC.
42 Mr. Tawanda MUTASAH	Executive Director, Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA), Johannesburg, South Africa.
43 Mr. Kumi NAIDOO	Secretary General, CIVICUS, Johannesburg, South Africa.
44 Dr. Francis NGUENDI IKOME	Senior Researcher, Africa and Southern Africa, Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD), Midrand, South Africa.
45 Ms. Martha NEWSOME	Africa HIV/AIDS Director, Southern Africa Regional Office, World Vision International, Gauteng, South Africa.
46 Ms. Chibogu OBINWA	Programme Officer, BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights, Lagos, Nigeria.
47 Mr. Godwin ODO	Programme Officer (Africa), MacArthur Foundation, Abuja, Nigeria.
48 Dr. Funmi OLONISAKIN	Director, Conflict, Security and Development Group, King's College, University of London, UK.
49 Dr. Timothy OTHIENO	Senior Researcher, Africa and Southern Africa Programme, Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD), Midrand, South Africa.
50 Ms. Sadequa RAHIM	Programme Officer, Child Protection, Social Affairs Directorate, AU Commission.
51 Dr. Nhamo SAMASUWO	Programme Director, Multilateral Programme, Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD), Midrand, South Africa.
52 Ms. Theo SOWA	Independent African Child Rights Expert, London, UK/Accra, Ghana.
53 Mr. Hassan Adebayo SUNMONU	Secretary General, Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU), Accra, Ghana.
54 Dr. Fletcher TEMBO	Senior Economic Justice Policy Adviser, WV UK, Milton Keynes.
55 Ms. Yetunde TERIBA	Acting Director, Gender, Women and Development Directorate, AU Commission.
56 Ms. Ozias TUNGWARARA	Deputy Director, AfriMAP, Open Society Institute, Johannesburg, South Africa.
57 Mr. Brendan VICKERS	Senior Researcher, Multilateral Trade, Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD), Midrand, South Africa.
58 Ms. Amboka WAMEYO	Regional Advocacy Adviser, World Vision Africa, Arusha, Tanzania.
59 Mr. El Ghassim WANE	Head, Conflict Management Division, Peace and Security Directorate, AU Commission.

annex C

World Vision's Core Values

We are Christian ...

We are committed to the poor ...

We value people ...

We are stewards ...

We are partners ...

We are responsive ...

Our Commitment

We recognise that values cannot be legislated; they must be lived. No document can substitute for the attitudes, decisions and actions that make up the fabric of our life and work.

Therefore, we covenant with each other, before God, to do our utmost individually and as corporate entities within the World Vision Partnership to uphold these Core Values, to honour them in our decisions, to express them in our relationships and to act consistently with them wherever World Vision is at work.

Children at Chiwoko Basic School enjoy lessons in one of the classrooms funded by World Vision. Makungwa ADP, Zambia.

photo: Andrea Dearborn



annex D

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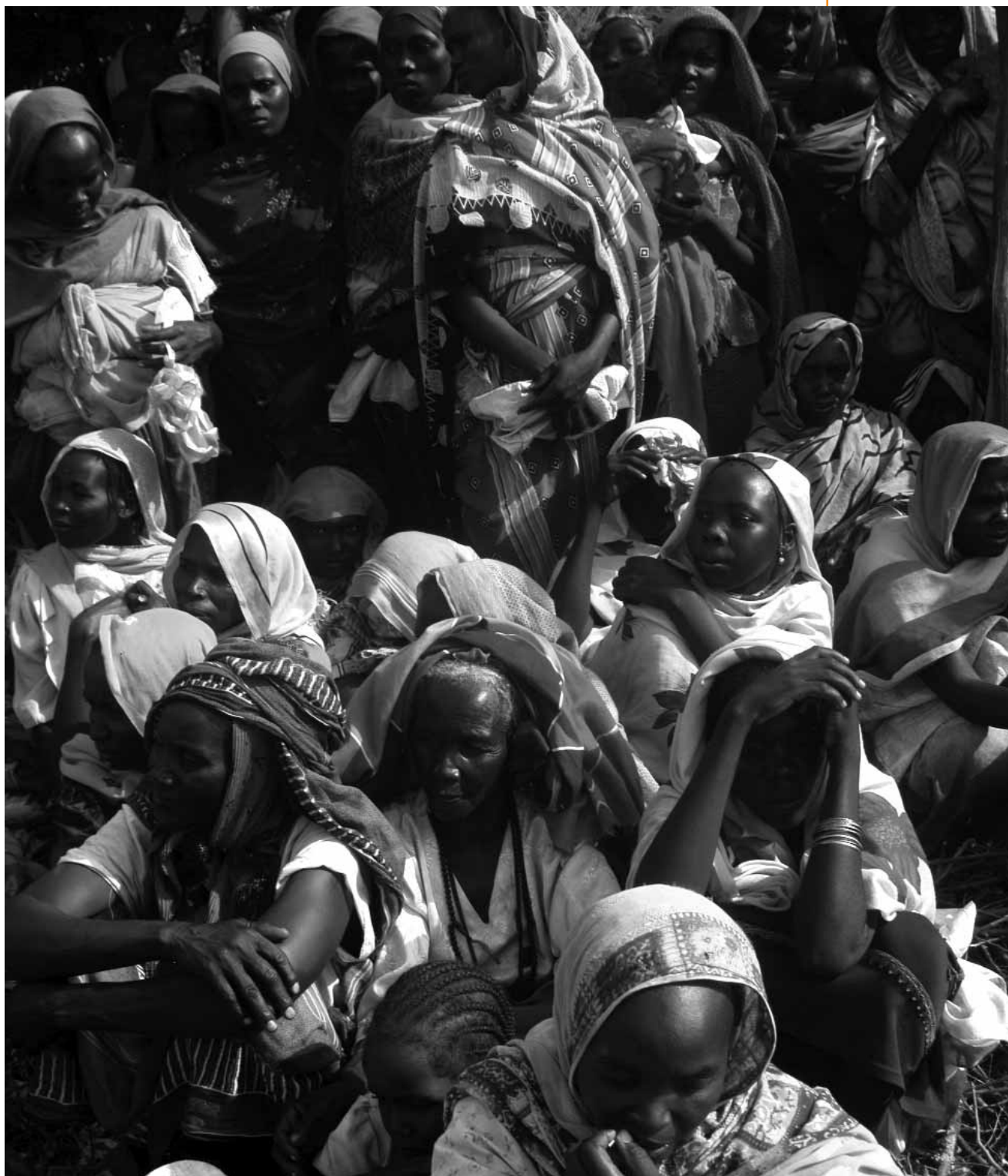
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Crowds of women waiting for the distribution of food relief at a camp for internally displaced people in Darfur, Southern Sudan.

photo: John Kisimir





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