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South Africa's foreign aid agency to be launched in April 2012

The controversy surrounding South Africa’s recent R2.4bn (±US$296m) loan to Swaziland has highlighted the country’s rather opaque and underestimated development assistance initiatives. By April next year, after many delays, SA will launch its own development assistance agency. The South African Development Partnership Agency (SADPA) will be styled along the lines of the American agency USAid, and is intended to establish SA as an ‘aid donor’ or rather a development partner. The agency will be based in the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), and will focus on initiating, facilitating, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating development cooperation, leaving DIRCO to deal with the political aspects.


Lyndsey Duff, a researcher in development diplomacy at the Institute for Global Dialogue in Pretoria, raises some concerns, though. SA may need to focus more on its engagement and opening up discussion on cooperation and assistance matters until SADPA is launched so as to ‘prepare’ the public for the implications of its endeavours. A number of substantive issues also remain surrounding SADPA’s potential modus operandi.

Firstly, DIRCO has emphasised that SADPA will largely service the African continent, in line with the long-stated SA foreign policy goal of promoting an ‘African Agenda’. Many African states already view South Africa’s activities on the continent with great suspicion due to its regional hegemony. Openly stating that SA intentions are not entirely altruistic will do it no favours in trying to bolster relations with other African states. These relationships are vital to achieving foreign policy goals.

Secondly, as an established recipient of donor aid itself, South Africa will need to consider carefully how to fund SADPA. Although DIRCO is hoping for private donations, the bill will largely be footed by the taxpayer. Government often reiterates how SA foreign policy is premised upon national policy – it is an extension of what government intends to do domestically. In that case, SADPA faces the serious challenge of not being taken seriously in the development assistance realm. DIRCO will need to be vigilant about communicating to the general public the advantages of a strategic foreign policy the likes of which SADPA will espouse, especially in light of local service-delivery challenges. Criticism might mirror that currently found in the UK, where London is accused of prioritising funds for overseas development when to many, domestic issues ought to take precedence.

Thirdly, government must ensure that SADPA has sufficient capacity to meet its various goals on the continent. South Africa is all too familiar with the damaging effects of restricted capacity, and it must do all in its power to see that this does not diminish its efficacy. Not only will failed development assistance initiatives spark criticism at home, but SA’s international neighbours will question its competency at providing and distributing assistance.

Designing pro-poor scalable and sustainable humanitarian products

A panel discussion titled “Form and Function: Designing for Humanity,” was held on September 21 at the Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting. It addressed how design can contribute to sustainable initiatives that are ‘scalable’, or easily adapted by large audiences -- including the poor -- around the world? The group of experts assembled represented varied disciplines, ranging from biomimicry (Janine Benyus, president of The Biomimicry Institute) to industrial design and branding (Yves Behar, founder and chief designer of fuseproject) to South Asian politics (Mohammed Waheed, the vice president of the Republic of the Maldives). Start-up culture was represented by Jessica O. Matthews, co-founder and CEO of Uncharted Play, which has invented a toy called the Soccket, a soccer ball that harnesses enough energy when kicked around to keep an LED light lit for 24 hours or to charge a cell phone.

Jocelyn Wyatt, co-lead and executive director of IDEO.org, moderated the panel, prompting each participant to address both theoretical and real design challenges, from imagining how to achieve the Maldives’ goal of becoming a carbon-neutral nation by 2020, to how to decide what durability trade-offs must be made to achieve low-cost products. Below follows a list of design strategies offered by the panelists, which could prove insightful for corporations, entrepreneurs, government agencies, NGOs, and designers alike:

- When designing for the poor, treat them as customers and not charity or aid recipients. Don’t decide what people
need or want. They decide through marketplace... [you will] get direct signals."

- When introducing new sustainable, humanitarian products to communities, it’s important to understand how to integrate them into cultures -- will it be through schools, parents, community centers? **Try to use or refer to designs that people will already be familiar with, and use technology that already exists for faster production.**
- **Use rewards or awards to generate interest.** The Maldives are providing government incentives, tax reductions, and financing to introduce solar panels...and also providing environmental awards to [tourist] resorts that pay attention to sustainability.
- **Consider how a socially responsible product will achieve the most widespread, large-scale audience possible as you start creating it -- in other words, add scalability into the design.**
- **Ask whether it’s more appropriate for a product to be designed as durable than as ephemeral.** Sustainability is something that can be built in.


**Rethinking Development in an Age of Scarcity and Uncertainty - New Values, Voices and Alliances for Increased Resilience: DSA-EADI Conference**

The Development Studies Association (DSA) and European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI) held a joint conference which took place in York, UK on 19-22 September 2011. Its aim was to 'generate ideas on new narratives and new universals for a changing world'. The basic rationale for the conference is outlined well here and here. Roughly - lots of interlinked crisis and a need to think how to build adaptive institutions, ideas, and political coalitions. In short – global shocks in economics, food security and fuel prices, together with chronic stressors relating to demographic pressure, climate change and resource scarcity – a 'perfect storm' of problems – are combining to produce complex, shifting configurations of vulnerability as experienced by households and communities. Understanding these complexities and vulnerabilities in global development, and navigating global volatility for resilience-building purposes, is not straightforward.

Source: Comprehensive information about the conference can be found here [http://www.eadi.org/gc2011](http://www.eadi.org/gc2011) whilst a conference blog containing reports can be found here [http://headsupfordevelopment.tumblr.com/](http://headsupfordevelopment.tumblr.com/)

One of the conference press releases featured the work of Andy Sumner and Sabina Alkire (mentioned in previous editions of the Southern African Horizon Scan). This states that the international community is failing the world’s poorest because they are looking in the wrong places and using the wrong measurements to assess poverty. Discussions at the meeting revealed that major policies to tackle the combined assault of the global financial crises, the food and fuel crisis and climate change are still based on outmoded measurements and approaches which do not reflect the world in which we now live.

Research by Dr Andy Sumner of the Institute of Development Studies has found that three-quarters of the world’s poorest people live in middle-income rather than ‘developing’ countries. This and other research discussed at the event underlines the need for a major rethink. "This new picture of where the world’s poorest live is important to these discussions because it challenges how we view world poverty and its causes. We used to think aid was the answer to poverty but if many countries are no longer officially ‘poor’ then the allocation of aid needs an urgent global review,” said Dr Sumner.

Not only is the international community looking in the wrong place, but it is also asking the wrong questions about poverty. Sabina Alkire, author of the UN’s multi-dimensional development index argued for a fundamental change in the way we measure poverty. “Measuring income alone is not enough; we need to consider a range of different deprivations experienced by people at the same time such as malnutrition, violence, lack of education or jobs. Only then can we have an overall view of poverty.”

It also emerged from the conference that more researchers and policy makers are starting to take complexity seriously (see here and here for recent engagement on the topic). According to Andy Sumner embracing non-linearity, multiple interaction and dynamic processes of change could be the key to building resilience in a complex and volatile world. His work, together with Rich Mallet at ODI (and published by UNDP’s International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth in Brasilia) represents one attempt to make sense of this problem. They reviewed the inter-disciplinary literature on vulnerability and found that existing...
It is a transition that will be exceedingly complex: over the next several years, we are likely to see new hybrid institutions that blend NGO and the health ministry into new service arrangements. Negotiating to that point will be very difficult. There are five key steps that the United States can take, in close partnership with South Africa, to reduce these risks and raise the prospects of success.

1. **Get the facts out.** There is considerable frustration within the South African government over the lack of transparency by the United States in accounting for its total PEPFAR investment and how the money is currently spent. Clearly mapping U.S. flows, and sharing data, are essential next steps.

2. **Strengthen the US-South African negotiating teams.** The United States has not had a coherent, senior-level team at the table. A similar criticism can be levelled at the South African government. A high-level, structured planning and negotiation process should be accelerated at both the capital and provincial levels. Very careful sustained action at the provincial levels and below is needed to tailor plans to the variable demands across different local areas.

3. **Outline a five year plan.** The sooner the United States explicitly spells out the concrete budgetary targets for an orderly five year transition and phase-down, the easier it will be to begin implementation planning in earnest. In the midst of the current U.S. budget environment, it will be critical also to cultivate bipartisan support within the U.S. Congress.

4. **Have an effective communications strategy.** Both the United States and South Africa have to communicate better to key audiences in both countries why and how this transition is to unfold. In the absence of an effective communications strategy, the field will almost certainly be dominated by tension and noise.

5. **Elevate prevention as a strategic priority.** Despite promising movement on male medical circumcision and prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, prevention efforts are lagging far behind in South Africa. The U.S. needs to step up its prevention efforts, recognizing that many areas of South Africa are still facing a dire emergency with rates of new HIV infections outpacing patients placed on treatment. The United States should consciously and systematically build prevention into the 5-year transition
strategy, and commit itself to breaking the arc of new infections. The U.S. historic engagement in South Africa to combat HIV/AIDS has become the central dimension of the U.S.-South Africa bilateral relationship. It has been on-going for almost a decade, generated significant results, and should be a source of considerable pride among Americans and South Africans. Under the Zuma and Obama administration, the relationship is undergoing promising, fundamental changes that require a new, updated vision that can carry forward progress in smart, predictable ways over the next five years and beyond. Source: http://csis.org/publication/united-states-and-south-africa-have-no-choice-re-order-their-hiv/aids-relationship-how-ca

ECONOMIC ISSUES

Renminbi may replace dollar in Sino-African trade
In a sign of China’s growing influence as Africa’s largest trading partner and investor, Standard Bank estimated that up to 40%, or US$100bn, of China’s trade would be denominated in renminbi by 2015. This amounted to more than the total Sino-African trade last year, the bank’s Beijing-based economist Jeremy Stevens said after a research paper to this effect was released recently. “In addition, at least US$10bn of Chinese investment in Africa will be denominated in renminbi over the same period,” he said. “The change, which will be gradual, is symptomatic of a more multi polar world,” he said.

The dollar has traditionally been the historical benchmark currency used by African companies trading or doing business with foreign partners, including China. Mr Stevens said that China would start the renminbi internationalisation programme by targeting African partners which are destinations for sizeable Chinese exports, regional heavyweights and countries which had mature financial markets — “first Nigeria and SA, then Kenya, and afterwards Angola and Ghana”.

Source: http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/Content.asp?id=151958 The report is not publically available, but can be requested by e-mailing Tanja@hichert.co.za

Mapping Africa’s financial inclusion for the poor
There are high concentrations of financial service providers in East and West Africa, but significant gaps in Central and parts of Southern Africa, says the MIX report on the financial inclusion in Africa. In partnership with the MasterCard Foundation, MIX (Microfinance Information Exchange) has launched the Africa Map for Financial Inclusion for the Poor. The map aggregates data from surveys conducted on an expansive list of 23,000 African financial providers.

According to the report’s findings, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have the largest gaps between populations living in poverty and those with access to financial services - 80 million in Nigeria and 48 million in the Congo. In Nigeria, the gap exists despite the distribution of hundreds of microfinance providers across the country. The situation in the Congo is similar, with data on almost 200 credit unions and several dozen NGOs in the sample.

Conversely, Cape Verde and Kenya are the only markets in which the number of accounts exceeds the population living below the national poverty line (since an individual can have more than one account). For Kenya, this is in part due to the outreach of mobile banking, which has only recently been linked with savings or credit services. The report highlights that the financial institutions targeting the poor manage over 71 million accounts across sub-Saharan Africa. The sector has a reach that covers 44 million deposit accounts and 20 million loans.

The vast majority of the institutions are small credit unions. They serve the most in the aggregate, although most are small and many sectors have little or no presence from this model. Most sectors have a diverse set of providers, covering a range of institutions offering different products - no single model dominates overall. Savings products are mostly offered through networks of thousands of cooperatives that reach 18 million people, but also through savings banks, commercial banks, postal savings banks, regulated MFIs and informal savings groups, each of which provide between 4 to 6 million more accounts. Most credit comes from banks and specialized microfinance institutions. While the number of mobile banking projects remains small, their reach is broad and this sector covers more than 18 million people. 12.6 million of these are reached through Safaricom’s M-Pesa product, with another five million via Vodacom and MTN products. Beyond these three, outreach is limited.

**Sub-Saharan Africa might feel Europe, US pinch**

Sub-Saharan Africa is poised to maintain its economic expansion in the near term, but faltering US or European recovery could threaten exports, aid and capital flows, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said on 20 September. In its latest World Economic Outlook update, the fund outlined the spill over risks for the region of any further deterioration of the global economic environment, although it had so far escaped any significant effects from the slowdown. Reflecting these risks, the IMF revised a few notches downwards its real GDP growth forecast for sub-Saharan Africa for this year, putting it at 5.2% compared to 5.5% predicted in June. The region’s GDP in 2012 was forecast to expand 5.8%, slightly down from the 5.9% seen in June.


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**Small signs of positive change in dealing with Africa’s resource curse**

**A shortened opinion piece Dr Sipho Moyo, Africa director of the ONE Foundation. She previously worked at the African Development Bank for 12 years.**

The “resource curse” is one of the most persistent and debilitating clichés about African countries blessed with deposits of oil, gas and valuable minerals. Across the continent natural resources that should have yielded development booms have too often merely enriched a small elite without benefiting ordinary citizens.

Yet there are chinks of optimism in the global campaign to make the industry more transparent and therefore more accountable to citizens’ needs. A coalition of civil society organisations -- including the ONE campaign -- under the banner "publish what you pay" has been pushing a new type of transparency law aimed at making companies disclose far more information about their operations than is currently required. If adopted globally, the movement has the potential to be as game-changing in the fight against corruption as vaccinations have been in preventing disease.

The first big step came last July in the United States, when the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform Act was passed. An amendment (1504) in the act will force all oil, gas and mining companies listed in the United States to publish all the payments they make to governments, broken down to the level of individual projects. Soon, data will start flowing on gas in Nigeria, oil in Angola and mining in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Of course, not all extractive companies operating in Africa are US-listed. In fact, many of the key mining companies in the region are based in South Africa. European stock exchanges also host major players, including Tullow Oil, which has made several substantial oil finds in East and West Africa, and Anglo-American, which needs no introduction. European Commission president José Manuel Barroso recently in the country, has indicated his determination that the EU at least match the American law and commissioners Andris Piebalgs and Michel Barnier have both shown leadership in making it clear that such laws are vital for development.

On the South African side Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan was present at a major conference on extractives transparency in March and is looking closely at the issue. Indications are that the EU will propose its version of the law early next month, with France and the United Kingdom urging its swift adoption. South Africa also needs to speed up its process, both in terms of domestic transparency and in empowering citizens in other African countries where Johannesburg-listed companies are operating.

For Africa as a whole, the transparency momentum has come at the right time. In 2008 exports of oil, gas and minerals from the continent were worth roughly nine times the value of international aid ($393-billion compared with $44-billion) and more than 10 times the value of exports of agricultural produce ($37.9-billion).


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**For a worthwhile read about the causes of the ‘resource curse’ in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) see a new article, The Paradox of Plenty: The Political and Developmental Implications of Natural Resources in Sub-Saharan Africa by Ibi Brown. The paper examines the underlying causes of the natural resource curse and briefly explores why most SSA countries become embroiled in its costly and negative practices. The possible causes of the natural resource curse can be categorized into two types of factors: economic and institutional. The economic explanation of the negative effects of natural resource dependence on growth is termed the “Dutch disease,” referring to the decline of other tradable sectors resulting from the boom in the natural resources sector. This surge tends to draw capital and labour away from manufacturing, resulting in the rise of manufacturing costs and reducing export-led growth in the long run. The resource curse is also dependent on the type of natural resources a country is endowed with.**
**Zambia’s new president warns Chinese investors**

Zambia’s newly-elected President Michael Sata has warned Chinese investors to respect the country’s labour laws. “Your investment should benefit Zambia and your people need to adhere to local laws,” Sata told Chinese ambassador Zhou Yuxiao, who paid a visit to the new president at State House on 24 September. Sata, who was elected on 23 September, is known for his tough stand against the influx of Chinese investment into the country, particularly in the mining sector, which he says does not benefit the locals.

China has invested an estimated US$6.1bn into the southern African nation since 2007, equivalent to more than one third of gross domestic product last year. Chinese banks and markets have opened on Lusaka’s streets, but poor Zambians accuse Chinese companies of importing their own workers and mistreating the locals they do employ. (This was reported in the November 2010 edition of the Southern African Scan.) In 2010, two Chinese mine managers were charged with attempted murder for shooting at 11 Zambian workers who protested about poor pay and work conditions.

**POLITICAL ISSUES**


For a descriptive account of the election see [here](http://www.timeslive.co.za/africa/2011/09/25/joy-after-poll-goes-to-the-wire)

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**Anti-government youth rallies in Angola**

Angolan authorities arrested 24 people at an anti-government youth rally in the capital Luanda on 24 September during which several protesters, journalists and police officers were injured, according to media reports. The rally, organised by a youth movement without the support of any of the main opposition parties, called for the resignation of President José Eduardo dos Santos, who has held power in oil-rich Angola for over 32 years.


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**Countries with point source resources that are extracted from narrow and select natural resources tend to manifest much higher levels of corruption and stagnant growth rates than countries with less concentrated or diffuse resources, such as agriculture, fisheries and livestock. Countries in SSA with rich endowments in oil, precious metals, diamonds and other minerals are notorious for their bad institutions, bleak growth rates and dismal development outcomes. On the other hand, countries with more diffuse resources tend to exhibit a more inclusive and cooperative environment with less corruption and more stable growth rates.**

See here to download the paper [http://www.africaportal.org/articles/2011/09/19/political-issues-natural-resources-sub-sa](http://www.africaportal.org/articles/2011/09/19/political-issues-natural-resources-sub-sa)

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**Michael Sata, who could be regarded as a populist, will struggle to deliver quickly on his economic promises to the young and unemployed voters who propelled him to power without upsetting foreign investors in Africa’s biggest copper producer. Any drastic fiscal changes could rattle foreign investors, whose anxiety after this week’s election upset is compounded by a lack of knowledge about what Sata stands for beyond the campaign rhetoric that swayed thousands of young, urban Zambians to vote for him. In Zambia, the mining sector has been a key driver behind rising gross domestic product growth, which reached 7.6% last year. But the macroeconomic performance has done little to alleviate poverty in a nation where more than half the population lives below the poverty line. The jitters are caused partly because Mr. Sata, 74, and his Patriotic Front are relatively unknown quantities. Mr. Banda’s - the previous president who stepped down - Movement for MultiParty Democracy has governed since one-party rule ended 20 years ago. During that period, the MMD was credited with opening up the country to foreign investment. Bottom-line: Expectations are high amongst the young and poor, and delivery may be downright difficult, if not impossible, given the trade-offs and structural constraints in Zambia. This will be an interesting case to watch.**


For some interesting observations on Zambia’s election, including the question as to why Banda and Sata, who actually belong to the nationalist period that swept Africa in the 1960s, should be the ones battling to lead Zambia in the 21st century.

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The Guardian (this event was barely covered by Angolan press) delivers the interesting observation that Dos Santos has now become the main cause of the volatility Angola is currently experiencing. After years of gutting Angola’s institutions to take power for...
himself, Dos Santos has deprived the country of well-tested mechanisms to deal with the growing demands of its people and with external shocks. Not only that but he has also failed to appoint successors within the institutions he created and controls, setting up the stage for potentially destructive succession struggles. Recent reports suggest that Dos Santos may nominate the chief executive of the oil company Sonangol as his successor but there is no clear indication that Dos Santos will actually make the nomination.

SOCIAL ISSUES

Too Poor to Care? The Salience of Aids in Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa is the part of the world that is most severely affected by HIV/AIDS. Yet, surveys of attitudes to AIDS across African countries show that most people do not attach great importance to the issue. Given the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS, this appears paradoxical. This paper argues that the salience of AIDS is low in Africa because many people are too poor to consider the disease important. This means that AIDS is crowded out by other issues – such as poverty, hunger, and unemployment – that have more immediate consequences for people’s lives. The hypothesis that poverty affects the salience of AIDS is tested using data from the Afrobarometer. Given that individuals are surveyed in different countries, the paper uses multilevel regressions to estimate the impact of poverty and material living conditions on AIDS salience. At both the individual and country level, the results show that poverty and material living conditions have significant effects on the likelihood that individuals consider AIDS a salient political issue. These results clearly support the idea that poverty is a constraint on the importance people attach to AIDS.


Live Magazine aims to uplift and become authentic voice of the youth

A new free magazine to be published in November with a print run of 50 000 will aim become the authentic voice of South African youth, as well as a powerful youth engagement and communications channel for hundreds of thousands of disadvantaged young. The quarterly magazine will be produced entirely by young people for young people working in conjunction with media professionals.

Live Magazine SA will be an attempt to replicate London-based Live Magazine which is part of Livity, a ground-breaking UK social enterprise since 2002. Journalist and web editor Gavin Weale developed the Live magazine project which every year helps hundreds of contributors – from ex-offenders to undergraduates – into employment or back into education, as well as publishing credible, peer-led content that both entertains and educates its readers. In 2010 the magazine launched its digital platform and starting distributing London-wide, taking advertising for the first time, with the aim of becoming fully self-sustaining. Gavin’s main interest now lies in replicating Live in the developing world, with a publishing model that can meet the brand objectives of advertisers, whilst producing life-changing social impact for its readers and contributors. With funding from the Shuttleworth Foundation (a South African social innovation agency) Weale has relocated to South Africa to research, develop and launch the replication of the Live magazine model within South African townships.

Source: http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/sep/12/gavin-weale-live-magazine

Local context, leadership and social movement key to education reform - measurable improvement possible in as little as six years.

According to the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) South Africa does not exhibit an appropriate sense of urgency with respect to the country’s crisis in education. Despite high government expenditure (5-6 per cent of GDP) and very poor outcomes in terms of student performances, the severity of the situation is not sufficiently recognised. In April 2011, CDE hosted a round table of international experts from four countries where significant schooling reforms have been implemented in recent years: Brazil, Ghana, the US and India. The Round Table is summarised in a new CDE report – Schooling Reform is Possible: Lessons for South Africa from international experience.

Key insights from the round table include: International experiences of schooling reform are varied, but a number of common factors emerged from the presentations.

- Schooling reform is difficult. And yet, with the right leadership and approach, education systems can make significant gains from almost any starting point. Measurable improvement can be achieved in as little as six years.
Success requires a sustained focus on key variables. While minimum levels of funding and resources are essential, funds and resources are not enough in themselves to transform a schooling system. Many countries spend more money but achieve too little; other countries have less to spend and outperform those with bigger budgets. The quality of teaching and teachers is a central determinant of student performance. Teacher quality cannot be reduced to formal qualifications, which often have little impact on student results.

- School leadership, notably by principals, plays a key role, especially in motivating teachers and creating a culture of learning.
- Sustained schooling reform requires a new approach to the teaching profession. Society needs to value the importance of teachers more highly, and teachers need to see themselves as professionals and behave accordingly. Incentive-based pay is essential.
- There are groups and interests outside of government – especially parents and others in civil society – who have an interest in schooling reform and who can be mobilised in support of good school leadership, good teaching, and improved student performance.
- Strategy and mechanisms of implementation are more important and urgent than endless policy development. The fundamentals of schooling reform are well known. The challenge is to take account of local context – politics, unions, economics – and devise an effective approach that will deliver results.


The report states that virtually everywhere in the world, these insights or guidelines offer hope for turning around in under-performing education systems. What is required is a strategy that places school leadership and effective, professional teaching at the heart of educational reform. The performance of school managers and teachers, in turn, should be judged in terms of improved learner performance. At the launch of the report CDE executive director Ann Bernstein called for a "new social compact" that will rally wide-ranging groups behind a common goal of reforming the public education sector. Social participation played a vital role in helping Brazil implement reform policies, according to Brazil’s former education minister Paulo Renato Souza. A programme called 'Wake up, Brazil, it’s time for school', launched by erstwhile president Fernando Cardozo mobilised all segments of society to help transform education.

Time for schools to be marked

In an interesting related development, a former Department of Education director general, Duncan Hindle, has been the driving force behind a website called The School Inspector which aims to get parents and the community involved in monitoring compliance and ensuring accountability of schools as the state is lacking in this capacity. "...teachers are absent without good reason, some arrive late or leave early, and others are perhaps at school but not in class. Funerals, council duties and union meetings provide convenient excuses, Fridays become "early closing" days and on paydays non-attendance is the norm in many schools. Pupils display similar traits and principals and parents are unable or unwilling to -exercise authority..."

The School Inspector system will work much like many popular websites that rate hotels, restaurants and other services. It will draw on any data that is available, such as matric pass rates or the results of the annual national assessments in primary schools, but will also look at more subjective elements such as values. The site provides three categories for public inputs: the quality of teaching, the effectiveness of school organisation and the promotion of constitutional principles and values -- and schools will be rated in all of these areas. The School Inspector will moderate all comments and scores and provide a fair assessment of the performance of the school in relation to its facilities and resources. See here for more details http://mg.co.za/article/2011-09-02-time-for-schools-to-be-marked

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Equality vital for sustainability

South Africa must reduce both poverty and wealth to create an equitable society that will have less of an impact on the environment. This is the view of Mike Ward, chief operating officer of the Wildlife and Environmental Society of South Africa, expressed recently at a joint climate change seminar with the National Business Initiative in the build-up to COP 17, which will bring together world leaders and environmental activists in Durban in November. 'People in the top ten income percentiles use close to 60% of resources,' said Ward. 'And the top 20% use 80% of resources. One of the things we are
going to have to do in South Africa is improve standards of living. We can’t be the 20% using 80% of resources and say that everyone must reduce consumption,’ Ward said. ‘We need to look at poverty reduction and wealth reduction so we can have equity, which is vital to sustainability.’ However, he said fundamental rights would have to be honoured in the process.


**Spotlight on Antananarivo urban agriculture: 90% - 100% of vegetables and 15% - 25% of the rice it consumes is produced in the city.**

The capital city of Madagascar, Antananarivo now counts about 2 million inhabitants. Originally built on the top of a hill, the city then spread to neighbouring hills and their slopes before starting to cover the marshland in the valleys during recent decades. Local agriculture covers nearly 43% of the 425 km² or so of the urban region; although it is present today in the centre of the city, it has long occupied the most flood-prone low-lying areas, the nearby plain and peri-urban hills. It benefits from a tropical, high-altitude climate (1250-1400 m). The city benefits from a very broad diversity of production systems. The common features are rice-growing and/or market gardening, and the frequent presence of small livestock units. Market gardening predominates in the hills, alongside small livestock farms raising cattle. The growing of watercress has developed in low-lying areas within the city. Rice predominates on flood plains and other low-lying land. These production systems form part of the three main types of household occupations, whether these are devoted exclusively to agricultural activities and exploiting their products (direct sale) or land (brick-making), whether at least one member of the family has an external job or whether the farmer himself also has another job.


**South Africa has already designed and started to build the MeerKAT telescope – as a pathfinder to the SKA. The first seven dishes, KAT-7, are complete and have already produced its first pictures. MeerKAT is attracting great interest internationally – more than 500 international astronomers and 58 from Africa submitted proposals to do science with MeerKAT once it is complete. The technology being developed for MeerKAT is cutting-edge and the project is creating a large group of young scientists and engineers with world-class expertise in the technologies which will be crucial in the next 10 – 20 years, such as very fast computing, very fast data transport, large networks of sensors, software radios and imaging algorithms. Since 2005, the African SKA Human Capital Development Programme has awarded 293 grants for studies in astronomy and engineering from undergraduate to post-doctoral level, while also investing in training programmes for technicians. Astronomy courses are being taught as a result of the SKA Africa project in Kenya, Mozambique, Madagascar and Mauritius (which has had a radio telescope for many years) and are soon to start in other countries.**

**Update on ICT trends**

Internet usage in Africa grew by 2 527% between 2000 and 2011, compared with a world average of 480%, according to the ‘Africa Macro Insight and Strategy’ report published by Standard Bank. In terms of connectivity, Africa’s international bandwidth capacity has increased 120 times to over 10 Tb/s since 2008. The report states that new alterations of Africa’s macroeconomic vista have been as noticeable and inclusive as the growth of the continent’s information communications technology (ICT) sector.
Already, Africa’s base of the pyramid consumers spend US$4.4-billion a year on ICT.

In its report, (the third in a series of five which are not publically available yet, but should be in 3 months’ time) the focus is on trends driving Africa’s on-going economic and commercial reinvigoration. Standard Bank analyses how Africa is using technology to progress in developmental terms. The report highlights that the mobile telephony landscape in Africa has altered “seismically”. In 2000, there were 15 million mobile subscriptions in Africa, and by the end of 2010, there were over 500-million. It is expected that by 2015 there would be almost 800-million subscriptions. Over the next five years, East and Central Africa would see the highest mobile subscription growth rates in the world. Already, Nigeria is the world’s tenth-largest mobile market.

The report also highlights that more Africans are connecting to the Internet. Currently, there are about 120 million Internet users in Africa. Standard Bank notes that while penetration is relatively low, growth rates have been profound. Much of this growth has been attributed to elevated smart phone mobile penetration. However, the report maintains that Internet costs remain “exorbitantly high”, which is limiting uptake.

The report also emphasises that Africans are eagerly embracing social media. While overall subscriber numbers are comparatively small, Africa is one of Facebook’s fastest growing markets. There are currently around 32-million Facebook users in Africa, meaning that about 27% of African Internet users have Facebook profiles, compared to 18% of Internet users in Asia.

The report also states that new fibre-optic cables will raise connectivity. A range of mostly privately-funded cables set to land, or having already landed, on Africa’s east and west coasts, are set to dramatically alter connectivity. Provided that intra-regional backhaul networks are built, this would lower costs for a wide range of African Internet users.


According to the report evidence of the potential economic gains from greater ICT access is mounting. Information from the World Bank, states that for every 10 percentage points increase in broadband penetration, economic growth could lift by 0.73 percentage points in typical African economies. An additional 10 phones for every 100 people in a country could boost gross domestic product by 0.8 percentage points. However, optimism in the ability of ICT to raise productivity and growth should not disguise the substantial impediments remaining. While new submarine cables are likely to alter the cost and speed of broadband connections, the majority of Africans will remain unconnected should supportive backhaul networks not be created. Countries adopting pragmatic and investor-friendly policies in the ICT space will gain an edge.

NPCJam attracts the youth and is Africa’s biggest online discussion

The NPCJam (which is an online collaborative engagement about South Africa’s future - mentioned in the August 2011 Scan) takes place from 28 September to 1 October. At the time of publication it had attracted upwards of 9 300 logins and 7 800 posts with the majority of participation by young people between the ages of 19 – 29. It is thought to be Africa’s biggest online discussion.

On 11 November, the NPC (National Planning Commission) will release its vision statement and plan to the country, and the NPC Jam is part of the public participation process. The NPC Jam closes for participation on Saturday 1 October at 12:00, but will remain open on a read only basis for 30 days. (Register and read the posts and threads here www.collaborationjam.com/minijam3/npcjam ). Over that time the commission will distil ideas and slot these into the discussions they have as they move from the diagnostic to the planning phase. “It is very important that we demonstrate that the ideas that came from jamming were considered,” minister in the presidency Trevor Manuel said.

NPC Jam is not the only way in which the planning commission is accepting comment on the diagnostic document. The NPC is on Facebook and Twitter, and has opened up a fax line as well as a voicemail inbox. It has conducted town-hall meetings in the provinces and also accepts correspondence on the matter. NPC Jam itself was strongly marketed on university campuses throughout the country.

According to Gavin Pieterse, a governmental programmes executive at IBM, the NPC Jam was the first type of programme of its kind ever carried out in Africa or the Middle East. Similar projects have been carried out for other government entities in Europe and the United States.