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Topic: “Enhancing EU/G8/developed country support for democracy, good governance and sustained development in Africa”

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Three of the main findings of the three rounds of Afrobarometer surveys (1999-2005), capturing the views of over ordinary Africans in 12 countries (West, East and Southern; Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone Africa), supplemented with data from the 10 countries in Round 4 (for which data is available) clearly describe the nature of the problem of development in Africa today.

- Africans say they are dissatisfied with their own living conditions and have remained so since 1999 when the first round Afrobarometer surveys were conducted. In fact, 2008 Round 4 data on ten countries show that 46 percent of Africans still assess their living conditions as “bad” or “very bad” compared to those who say their living conditions are “fairly” or “very good” (28 percent) and neither good nor bad (25 percent).
- Lived poverty (shortages in basic human needs such as food, water and cash income) is extensive, and has also remained persistent. Again the 2008 data on ten countries show that clear majorities of Africans experienced shortages in cash income (75 percent), medical care (58 percent), food (52 percent) and water (50 percent).

Indeed, people saw personal living conditions decline in eight Afrobarometer countries and rise in only four countries in 2005. (On the upside, South Africa leads the way, moving from 15 percent to 47 percent satisfaction. By contrast, Nigeria and Uganda experienced drops in satisfaction of 23 and 19 percentage points respectively. Continuous declines were also evident in Ghana, Mali, and Malawi). In 2008, majorities in Senegal (66 percent), Benin (60 percent),

Tanzania (53 percent) and Uganda (52 percent) said their living conditions are bad or very bad.

- Nevertheless, Africans are optimistic about their personal future. While just 27 percent in 2005 and 28 percent in ten countries in 2008 were satisfied with their current living conditions respectively, 45 percent and 56 percent respectively expected those living conditions to get “better” or “much better” in the years ahead. (Full details of Afrobarometer findings can be found at www.afrobarometer.org)

The above statistics suggests an interesting crossroads in African development: Africans continue to suffer severe economic hardships. Nonetheless, popular optimism prevails. This represents both a challenge and an opportunity, which could be used (or capitalized upon) to relieve economic hardships and promote governance and human security.

The external environment for good governance, democracy and sustained development

Positive global developments/indicators

A number of developments in the external environment are conducive to Africa’s own internal development:

- Development partner/donor reports/initiatives (such as the UN Millennium Development Goals, the (Blair-UK) Africa Commission, and the Millennium Challenge Account demonstrate improved appreciation of the challenges of development in Africa. Most importantly, they propose bold measures for overcoming those challenges.
- There is increasing commitment to improving the quality of aid and development assistance through effective coordination (a la the Paris Declaration); using development assistance to support strategies formulated by developing country governments (rather than imposing donor/developed country preferences); efforts at coordinating development assistance to reduce duplication; and particularly passing a larger share of donor assistance through developed country general budget (general budget support - GBS). These new strategies could substantially reduce the transaction costs entailed in development assistance and enhance the prospects for local/recipient country ownership, absorption and utilization.

- Something of a consensus has emerged among donors/development partners on strategies emphasizing sustained human development in Africa. The old ideological arguments over growth versus equity have largely given way to a collective commitment to growth and poverty reduction.

The growing and sustained focus on governance

There is widespread consensus among development partners/donors, that good governance is intrinsically important for African social and economic development and even aid effectiveness.

- This new thinking is reflected in the EU-Africa Partnership on Democratic Governance and Human Rights aimed at supporting the efforts of African countries to achieve improvements in the areas of democracy and governance. (Governance issues of mutual interest, including human rights, the death penalty, children's rights, gender equality, local governance and on "situations of fragility" are to be subjected to dialogue at the global level and international fora.)
- Global concerns with energy security and energy access have reinforced the links between the energy future of Africa and Europe. This in turn has kindled developed country interest in African governance issues. Haunted by the scepter of Africa's "oil curse" (mis-governance and human insecurity prevailing in oil and other natural resource- rich countries in sub-Saharan Africa and surrounding countries) Western nations have embarked on new initiatives on energy security and good governance. A prime example is the **Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI)**¹. Thus the EITI features strongly in the EU's plans to promote transparency in the management of African natural resources through dialogue.
- Indeed, the EU and Africa have increasingly become aware of their mutual interests in addressing issues of environmental sustainability and climate change. They recognize that environmental degradation and climate change undermine sustainable development and represent threats to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Africa-EU cooperation now covers a vast number of interrelated areas and issues such as land degradation, desertification, the preservation of biodiversity, bio-safety issues including Genetically Modified Organisms or Food (GMOs), prevention of toxic waste dumping,

¹ The EITI was launched by then British Prime Minister Tony Blair at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002. See Youngs R (2007) Europe's External Energy Policy: Between Geopolitics and the Market CEPS Working Document No. 278/November 2007

environmentally sound waste management, sustainable use and management of natural resources including forest, fish stocks and integrated water management, weather observation and early warning systems to improve disaster risk management. The strategy is reinforced by both the Basel Convention on the Control of Trans-boundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal of 1989 and the EU Waste Shipment Regulation, which establishes procedures for transporting waste within, into and out of the EU.

- The EU is also a vigorous advocate of the NEPAD policy framework and the implementation of the good governance benchmarks under the APRM (African Peer Review Mechanism) initiative).
- EU Election observation missions have been active in the DRC, Uganda, and Zambia, Ghana etc.
- The EU is also seeking to enhance cooperation in the fight against corruption under the UN Convention on Anti- Corruption, the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption and other relevant instruments. The EU has also expressed commitment to cooperation in the context of international initiatives against the illicit trade in natural resources, such as the Kimberley process and the Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT).

Positive developments from the African side

New perspectives and attitudes to meeting the challenges of development and human security in Africa have emerged among African leaders/governments/regional and sub-regional bodies:

- (a) They are placing greater emphasis on macro-economic stability as key to economic development; and (b) they have increasingly embraced the principles and practices of democracy, good political, economic, social and corporate governance as well as peaceful management of conflicts as the most viable approach to sustained human development. This positive change in orientation is reflected in the growing acceptance of the ballot box as the only legitimate means by which political power may be taken; the **African Peer Review Mechanism of the New Partnership for African Development**, and a commitment to the poverty reduction strategies.
- It is also instructive that discussions on proposals for a new ‘**EITI plus**’, with strong lead by the World Bank, have picked up in Africa. The proposals, seeking to expand the focus of the existing EITI on auditing

government income accruing from oil and gas resources to also cover the manner in which that income is spent, have been taken up by the Nigerian Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (NEITI).

Negative developments and indicators in the external environment

However, there are also, negative signs in the international and African environment that threaten the prospects for the realization of the lofty goals of improving governance, democracy and achieving sustained development. There is also growing evidence that the above mentioned changes in attitudes and approaches to addressing African governance and development issues may be superficial. This is likely to be aggravated by the recent financial meltdown that has hit Western economies and accompanying banking sector bail-outs.

- As widely expected the global financial crisis is inducing fundamental shifts in global balance of power and threatening to infect the liberal political values that lie at the heart of European foreign policy. There is real concern that the global financial crisis will undermine the principal tenets of Western-sponsored global liberalism and encourage a retrenchment in EU diplomacy².
- Developed country donor compliance with agreements to harmonize development assistance is only partial at best. The participation of most bilateral donors in country level aid harmonization processes is partial at best. Many continue to stick to traditional approaches of targeting their assistance to specific projects.
- The promotion of broad-based and wide-ranging people-centered partnership is a key tenet of EU –Africa strategy. EU and Africa state and inter-state actors are supposed to be empowering non-state actors and creating conditions to enable them to play active roles in development, democracy building, conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction processes. A wide spectrum of non-traditional actors from civil society (including women, youth, and professional groups and the Diaspora as well representatives of the private sector and academia) were to be actively involved in EU-Africa transactions. But these ideals have hardly been translated into concrete actions. Practical working arrangements and appropriate financing mechanisms have yet to be developed to enable the active involvement and interaction of non-governmental actors. Civil society groups in Africa remain highly skeptical of this aspect of EU-Africa partnership.

² Youngs R. The Financial Crisis and EU Foreign Policy - Fride: By 16/11/2008

- Developed country/G8 promises to significantly raise levels of development assistance have not matched actual levels development assistance. At any rate, most of the world leaders who inspired the grand promises such as Tony Blair have left the stage.
- Quite revealingly, levels of development assistance targeted at governance reforms belie the rhetorical commitment to the promotion of good governance in Africa. EU commitment to governance appears in reality to be more rhetorical than substantive. Worst still, the governance agenda tends to be defined loosely enough to cover most items in existing development assistance portfolios. An amount of 2.7 billion Euros is allocated to African countries that put forward Governance Action Plans under the Africa-EU Partnership on Democratic Governance and Human Rights from the European Development Fund for the period 2008-2013. In contrast, the EU earmarked 5.6 billion Euros to facilitate EU-Africa partnership on infrastructure to secure interconnectivity for the African continent and its different regions. Again, the EU pledged an amount of 2 billion Euros a year to African regional organizations that have signed the Interim Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) to support the building of roads, pipelines and other infrastructure connecting regional markets under the EU Partnership on Trade, Regional Integration and Infrastructure starting from 2010.
- African consumers are increasingly demanding from EU markets used motor cars and electronic products (such as refrigerators, mobile phones, and flat screen TVs and super-fast computers. Unfortunately, neither EU nor African countries have mounted credible efforts to regulate the trade in these products, many of which are obsolete and often laden with toxic chemicals (like lead, mercury and brominated flame retardants) as well as energy inefficient. Rather than being safely recycled, these e-waste from the EU continue to be dumped in African countries with extremely poor regulatory frameworks and inadequate product standard and safety checks such as Ghana, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Egypt, etc. Indeed, EU member states such as UK and Germany who are overwhelmed by E-waste flout EU Waste Shipment Regulation and the EU ban on the shipment of hazardous waste from EU countries to non-OECD countries.
- EU and other Western partners are justifiably concerned that non-democratic producer states may be enjoying greater international leverage and using the increased oil and gas revenues to divert pressures for reform³. But it is also true that the EU has been recalibrating and

³ Ibid (2008)

tinkering with its own established governance benchmarks in the scramble for energy, even from autocratic and non-reforming African states. The EU appears reluctant to push hard on democratic governance and human rights in oil rich and poverty-ridden states such as Angola, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Sudan and to a lesser degree Nigeria. Moreover, EU initiatives on good governance in oil rich countries like Nigeria are beset with enforcement challenges. It is also instructive that few European countries, (Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom) have been willing to support the new Nigerian Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative.

Negative developments and indicators on the African side:

There are strong indications that African governments' commitment to the new pro-growth/poverty reduction and good governance agenda is weak and/or weakening over time. Despite the formal embrace of poverty reduction strategies, budgetary allocations in many African countries hardly confirm a clear shift in priority towards pro-poor sectors of health and education; national defense, sundry security items, and white elephant and other economically and socially unproductive sectors (such as large presidential staff) continue to take precedence over crucial sectors such as agriculture.

- Soaring oil and other raw commodity prices as well as growing competition among global players such as China, India and Brazil to secure access to vital African resources may have enhanced the prospects for growth and prosperity in sub-Saharan Africa.⁴ But principle guiding Africa's open dalliance with China, which may be crudely summed as "*the devil you don't know is better than the devil you know*", is rather naïve and short sighted.
- The much vaunted EITI is faced with enforcement and capacity challenges. While the process is still largely voluntary, the current EITI does not go far enough. It only focuses on auditing government income from oil and gas resources (and not on the manner in which that income is spent). Besides, civil societies have not been allowed to monitor the EITI process in most acceding countries. These challenges underpin the World Bank's call for the EITI-Plus initiative (which Nigeria is already

⁴ Kohnert, Dirk (2008) EU-African Economic Relations: Continuing Dominance, Traded for Aid? GIGA - German Institute of Global and Area Studies / Institute of African Affairs 03. July 2008 Online at <http://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/9434/> MPRA Paper No. 9434, posted 03. July 2008 / 16:10

implementing). While some seventeen Africa countries⁵ have either committed to, or are now actively engaging with EITI by signing up to have their implementation independently validated once every two years, only six (Cameroon, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritania, and Nigeria) have produced fully audited reports so far.

- The APRM represents an intellectually credible agenda on the part of African leaders to promote human development through good governance. However, the implementation has been slow and weak. In nearly seven years since its inception, only nine countries have been peer reviewed (though 29 countries have acceded to it and are therefore available for peer review). Curiously, countries like Nigeria and Senegal whose leaders were among the originators of NEPAD/APRM have not progressed very far with their reviews. In addition, quality and integrity of the assessment processes and outcomes is highly uneven among countries. Moreover, African leaders, regional and sub-regional bodies have been ambiguous in their attitudes and reactions to other African governments, leaders and “brother” presidents who perpetrate egregious acts of mis-governance and exacerbate national and sub-regional human insecurity.

The way forward/recommendations

- To begin with, the EU needs to deepen appreciation of how the broad politics of energy across different regions rebounds on European energy interests in complex ways. It must deepen its realization that backing ‘friendly autocrats’ rarely optimizes *energy security in its broadest concept*. It also requires policy-makers to question their tendency to consider only a narrow range of governance issues directly within the energy sphere⁶. The EU must move the energy governance framework beyond the narrow ‘market versus geopolitics’ perspectives. It must extend its focus on technocratic norms in energy governance to embrace a more holistic focus on the broader political governance of energy producing states.

⁵ Nigeria, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritania, Sao Tome, Congo Rep (Brazzaville), Democratic Republic of the Congo (Kinshasa), Niger, Cote D’Ivoire, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Sierra Leone,

⁶Youngs (2007) Europe’s External Energy Policy: Between Geopolitics and the Market CEPS Working Document No. 278/November 2007

- Similarly, African leaders and policy makers need to deepen their appreciation of how energy security and sustainable environment are tied to human security and development.
- Development partners/EU/G8 countries must follow through on their pledge to double aid to Africa, though that is looking less likely in the wake of the global financial crisis. Most importantly, the rhetorical commitment to “**good governance**” must be reflected in the percentage of EU assistance to Africa dedicated to supporting political governance, democracy and human rights and democracy reforms.
- Commitment to and compliance with the Paris Declaration must be strengthened, the application of general budget support (GBS) approaches must be expanded in African countries that pass the minimum threshold for good governance. But it is also important that African nations benefiting from GBS reciprocate by significantly refining their internal budget process to enhance transparency and expand the involvement of and consultation with domestic non-state and private sector stakeholders. At any rate, the EU must expand and improve the quality of country level dialogue on GBS triggers and arrangements.
- EU partnership with Africa and support must be sharpened or rendered smarter. For example, NEPAD-APRM is a good initiative, at least in principle. However, it is crucial that EU and other DPs help to protect the integrity and quality of NEPAD-APRM from dilution, especially its original standards for good political, economic, social and corporate governance. The EU must help rescue the APRM country assessment process from control by the “cartel” of APRM continental structures and government/ruling party/state elites. As a minimum condition for supporting the APRM, the EU must ensure that the processes for selecting the APRM Group of Eminent Persons and the appointments to the APRM secretariat are transparent and meritocratic. It must also encourage and support the involvement of non-state, civil society and private sector actors in the assessment and monitoring of the implementation of the national action plans emanating from the country reviews. If possible, EU must provide technical support or help African nations to acquire the necessary capacity for undertaking technically proficient assessments. Moreover, EU/G8 may skew its assistance and direct foreign

- investment towards African countries successfully undergoing credible peer reviews.
- Similarly, Africa's sub-regional bodies such as Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) as well as the Pan African Parliament are emerging as important agencies in the implementation of the agenda for human security and good governance on the continent. EU/G8/development partners must enhance technical, material and political support to them in so far as their programs and actions are consistent with and/or compliment national and global efforts to promote good governance, peace, and human security in Africa. In this context, EU/G8/donor partners must enhance support to the ECOWAS peace-mediation and conflict management efforts in Guinea Bissau, Guinea and the Ivory Coast as well as ECOWAS efforts to create a monetary union in the sub-region, and perhaps, an AU peace-keeping in Darfur and Somalia.
 - Similarly, the EU/G8/developed country partners must expand and deepen the involvement of African sub-regional bodies (e.g., ECOWAS and SADC) in the negotiations between EU and the ACP countries on the Economic Partnership Agreements. This will help to reduce the extreme power asymmetry between EU and their African state partners and improve the chances of the African partners to improve their bargaining position.
 - EU/donor support for African governance reforms must be tangibly reflected in the levels of assistance to governance sector reforms. Developed country governments and CSOs/NGOs must lobby multilateral development agencies such as World Bank, African Development Bank, and the Economic Commission for Africa to maintain the focus on governance agenda and expand opportunities for NGO/CSO participation, consultation and collaboration.
 - EU state and non-state actors must deepen and concretize support for and engagement with African think tanks and advocacy NGO/civil society, especially in the areas of funding, building of analytical/technical capacity, collaborative research and advocacy and protection from predatory NGO regulation by the state (such as the one recently promulgated in Ethiopia).
 - The EU/G8 must scale up its engagement with the African private sector. EU and Africa should work together to support the work of existing African business networks to promote, disseminate and

exchange best practices in governance and corporate social responsibility (CSR) with respect to import of energy efficient and environmentally safe consumer items to Africa. The EU and African governments should *work together to promote and support business-led partnerships with governments* to reduce corruption.

- The trend in Africa-China economic relations will continue to grow. The question therefore is how the G8 may constructively engage the issue. The African approach to bilateral relations may be naïve, but G8/EU/developed country concerns with the growing economic relations between China and Africa are also largely driven by narrow self-interests and zero-sum perspectives. EU/developed nations should explore means of helping Africa to *develop more constructive relations with China*. One way to this may be to help Africa to build/strengthen national and regional capacity to research, analyze and build comprehensive data bases (on the history, language, culture, economy, politics etc) of the new countries/powers with which they are now engaged. EU/G8 must help Africa deal with China from a base of knowledge rather than unrealistic assumptions.