

Africa Update Monday 27th 2013:

Summary Report of Proceedings

Background

The Australian National University held a one day Africa Update Monday 27 May 2013 at the Finkel Theatre at The Australian National University (ANU). The session was akin to similar updates hosted over the years, on countries such as Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and China. The event was the first on Africa and built on three African past seminars events held at the ANU in 2010, 2011 and 2012, as part of events to mark Africa Day 25 May.

2. The Update was co-hosted by Crawford School of Public Policy, the Australia Africa Business Council (ACT Chapter) and the African Heads of Mission in Canberra. In addition to these the planning committee included representatives of AUSAID, ANU and the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID). The event was sponsored by AUSAID, ANU and Crawford School of Public Policy.

Highlight of Proceedings:

Opening Remarks of the Dean of African Group

3. The Dean of the African Group, His Excellency, Mr Molosiwa Selepeng, the High Commissioner of Botswana set the tone for the event in his opening address. He welcomed the idea of upgrading usual routine Seminars on Australia-Africa relations to the level of the "Africa Update", along the lines of updates traditionally done for China, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea. He averred this was an apt move especially as the world celebrates 50th anniversary of the founding of Africa's premier continental organisation the Organisation of African Unity, which has since metamorphosed to African Union.

4. High Commissioner Selepeng also said the occasion was an opportunity to review growing Australia- African ties. He therefore called on participants at the event to take stock of challenges, and achievements and also network and come up with appropriate recommendations. He assured the audience that African countries were ready to be more engaged with the rest of the world and enjoined the Australia government, Australian companies and institutions to work closely with Africa as the African renaissance gathers momentum, as reflected in significant economic growth and development as well as flow of Foreign Direct investment to the continent in recent years.

Panel 1 Discussions: Australia's relations with Africa

5. The Panel was moderated by He Dr Hassan El-Laithy the Ambassador of Egypt. Discussions focused on Australia's diplomatic relations, development assistance to Africa, Australian NGO programmes and role of Australian Business Organisations. Statements were heard from Mr Andrew Barnes, Director of the Southern and Central Africa Branch in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Ms Lisa Rauter of Africa Branch of Australian Agency for International Development (AusAid), Marc Purceli CEO Australian Council for international Development as well as Roger de Robillard President of Australia-Africa Business Council New South Wales Chapter.

6. The lead discussants drew attention to various events across Australia, to celebrate 50 years of African Unity and Australia-Africa relations. This included seminars in Melbourne by La Trobe University, the events in Western Australia etc. The following observations emerged from the deliberations:

- **Growing Australia-Africa Diplomatic Ties:** The Australia-Africa Initiative was a reflection of the remarkable shift in foreign policy posture by Australia to pay more attention to Africa. This paradigm has been reflected in increased diplomatic presence of Australia in Africa by opening of more diplomatic Missions which stood at 9, with Senegal scheduled for opening before the end of the year.
- **Recognition of Strategic Importance of Africa:** The foreign policy shift and attention to Africa was borne out of realisation by Australia of the strategic and growing importance of Africa in world Affairs; This was evidenced by support of the African group which helped Australia to secure a non-permanent seat in the security Council during elections into the Council at the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.
- **The African Renaissance and presence of Australian Companies:** It was acknowledged that there has been a continuing spread of democracy of across Africa. This development has engendered good governance and sound economic policies, growth and development and has attracted Australian companies to many African countries. Consequently, today, there were about 300 Australian companies in 42 African countries involved in about 650 projects, with total investment estimated to be US\$50billion (fifty billion dollars); most of the companies were engaged in Mining and efforts were being made to widen their scope and scale of operations.

- **AUSAID programmes and increasing support for Africa:** In line with increasing attention to Africa, Australia's Development Assistance to Africa, particularly through Ausaid has increased substantially in the past five years and has grown to about \$400 million
- **Areas of Focus of AusAID assistance:** Ausaid development assistance was focused on achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; peace and security, sustainable development; water micro-finance and gender empowerment; capacity building of the public sector;
- Training in the field of mining and mining administration was also identified as very prominent in the scheme. It was also however agreed that efforts must be made to widen the area of cooperation to include other sectors such as Agriculture.
- AusAID assistance to Africa was delivered in form of its scholarship award and Australian Leadership Award to students from various African countries to study in Australian Universities and thus helping to enhance capacity building and human resources in the public sector; the small grants direct finance has was also helping to address poverty alleviation and health care.
- **Challenges to current momentum:** Notably, participants at the session observed that there appeared to be challenges in the horizon regarding Australia-Africa ties. This was reflected by the strategic decision of Australia to pay more attention to Asia as encapsulated in the "**Australia in the Asian Century Report**". The White Paper of the Report had mapped out a Road Map for more attention to Asia in the between now and 2025. This posture reinforced Australia's perception of its presence in Asia as its natural region and perceived to be of more economic value to Australia in view of its ties and economic ties with major powers such as China India, Indonesia etc.
- Australia's renewed commitment to Asia should not be allowed to divert attention from its increasing engagement with Africa and there was need to pay attention to declarations by some members of the current opposition Coalition who have hinted at possible policy shift to focus more on its immediate neighbour, namely the Asian and Pacific Region, if it won the September 2014 elections;
- It was thus agreed that Australia-Africa ties should be seen as long term, and efforts must be made to sustain the momentum.

- The role of Australian NGO and Business organisations, such as Australia-Africa Business Council, in helping to sustain the momentum and prevent a diversion was also emphasised during this panel discussion and subsequent discussions by the audience.

Panel 2: Trade and aid in Africa and Organisations working with Africa.

7. The session which deliberated on trade and aid in Africa was moderated by Dr Connell and Professor Helen Wares. The session examined the future of Australian Aid to Africa, Resources companies, Economic Development and Corporate Social Responsibility with the example of the activities of an Australian company, Centamin in the Egyptian Mining Sector. The session also reviewed Australian humanitarian aid to Africa, activities of the Australia Africa Universities Network (AAUN) as well as African Studies Association of Australia and the Pacific (AFSAAP). Representatives from respective institutions who made presentations include Professor Stephen Howes of the ANU, Ambassador Ann Harap former Australian High Commissioner to South Africa, Dr Brian Fisher of BaEconmoics; and ANU Adjunct Professor and Director of Centamin Professor Bob Bowker. Others were Dr Matthew Durban of Austrade, Helen Horn, Director Humanitarian Partnership Agreement and Dr Alec Thornton Vice president, African Studies Association of Australia and the Pacific. Highlights of the discussions include the following:

- Increasing Trade and aid: The increasing trade with Africa should be continued since it was in the interest of the two parties to do so, and current focus on mining should be supplemented with investment in other sectors such as Agriculture'
- Trade ties could be greatly expanded with the use of Honorary Consuls by both sides in areas where there was no diplomatic presence;
- The African partnership Facility established by Australia to boost trade should be made more effective;
- Activities and Training programmes of the International Mining for Development Centre (IM4DC) located at the University of Western Australia Perth was acknowledged as helping to create the pool of African experts in the field of Mining and Mining Administration and has trained over 400 officials from 32 African countries. The IM4DC should be supported in all areas of manpower development including Women in Mining Initiative.

- The creation of an Alumni Association of former recipients of Ausaid scholarship awards was a strategic move which should be supported to help create a network of Honorary Aussies across Africa.
- Africa should continue to provide the conducive environment to attract Australian investor venture capital, and the attention of the Australian Stock exchange (ASX), which could be a veritable source of funding for projects in Africa.
- Exchange of more visits at Governmental and Parliamentary levels would help to boost ties and should be encouraged.
- Despite the progress that had been made in Africa, there was still need for humanitarian aid, and Australian Organisations should continue to provide development aid directly and support international humanitarian organisations such as OXFAM, World Vision OCHA, The International Red-cross, etc to deliver aid to needy African countries and vulnerable sections of the population, particularly women and children;
- The need for capacity building of local national emergency agencies to cope with humanitarian emergencies was also stressed and the Humanitarian Partnership Agreement (HPA) with its gender perspectives was a useful framework in this regard. The local National Emergency Agencies should also be encouraged to respond to early warning to prevent problems escalating into humanitarian disasters.

Strategies to enhance full harnessing of Africa's Resources

8. It was widely acknowledged that Africa had 30% of world's resources waiting to be tapped, consequently the prospects of an increased flow of FDI to Africa beyond present levels were very high. However, to achieve the desired goals, steps must be taken to overcome the attendant challenges and problems. Action must be taken along the following lines:

- Infrastructure deficit and lack of skilled labour: Steps must be taken to improve infrastructure in African countries, particularly in the energy and transport sectors. Likewise, there was need to create a pool of skilled labour through vocational and technical education ;

- Tackling Problem of Corruption: Since many countries in Africa were still ranked high on the Corruption index of Transparency International, the issue of corruption should be tackled;
- Addressing the security architecture of states for more effective Law and Order and avoidance of civil disruption and violence;
- Reduction of Resources Nationalism and reduction of impediments to foreign investments and prompt granting of permits and facilitating access to mining licences.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

9. The discussion on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) of Australian mining companies operating in Africa was against the background of the activities of a company, CENTAMIN Pty Ltd which operated a modern gold mine in Egypt. The lead discussant Prof Bob Bowker, a non-executive Director of Cetamin revealed that the company currently mine 200,000 ounces of Gold in Egypt. Its CSR encapsulates support for local communities in the form of provision of opportunities for employment for young people.

Against the backdrop of the discussions and intervention from the floor, the following were identified as key elements of CSR which should guide the activities and operations of Australian mining companies in Africa:

- CSR was an important social license for companies to operate in the communities where they were located and operated; consequently CSR programmes should be incorporated into mining projects from the planning stage;
- In identifying and designing the Programme of Action under the CSR, there must be intensive consultation with the local community;
- CSR programmes should be sustainable and capacity of the local community should be enhanced for its sustainability;
- Adequate employment for members of the immediate communities
- Provision of opportunities to supply goods and services to the mining project;

- Mainstreaming gender empowerment programmes into CSR programmes.
- Provision of welfare facilities such as education and health care facilities;

Activities of The Australian-Africa Network of Universities (AAUN)

10. The activities of the Australian African Universities Network (AAUN) were presented at the meeting. The AAUN which came into being in 2011 was a group of leading universities in Australia and Africa connecting researchers and academics through institutional partnerships. Membership was open to Australian and African Universities. The network was based on a Collaborative Agreement among the member Universities led by a Steering Group representing a set of seven Australian universities active in Africa and seven African member Universities. Under the Agreement, one university served as lead partner and hosted a small secretariat. The Steering Group had two co-chairs. Currently, they are Professor John Hearn on the Australian side and Professor Cheryl de la Rey, Vice Chancellor of the University of Pretoria on the African side. The secretariat is responsible for the overall coordination of the network. The current lead University was the University of Sydney where a small secretariat is based. Areas of priorities included food security, mining and public sector reforms, public health and education and, consequently, its objectives included the following:

- serving as an intelligence and advisory portal for government institutions to corporate sector by providing innovative solutions through position papers with key academics, non-government organisations business and political representatives.
- developing capacity building and training in governance, public sector reforms education mining, agriculture and health;
- provide post training support for African scholars, including alumni network the opportunities for the organisation in the field of education and research in particular Africa

11. It was recognised that the activities of the AAUN were vital component of Australia-Africa Relations and membership of the network should be expanded to enable it meet its laudable objectives and impact on standard of living and well-being, particularly of the African continent.

African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific(AFSAAP)

12. The AFSAAP is a national network of academics students, consultants, diplomatic artists, community leaders and others who share mutual interests in the promotion of African Studies in the Australasia and the Pacific region. The organisation was founded in 1978. Inter-alia, the aim of AFSAAP was to promote research and teaching of African Studies in Australia and the Pacific; facilitate contact among scholars and students in the field of African studies through conferences, regional meetings and publication, serve as a professional body to promote African issues within governments and community, establish contact with African universities and scholars and contribute towards understanding of the Africa community at large.

13. It was revealed that against the background of its objectives the theme of the 36th AFSAAP Conference was *"Africa Renaissance and Australia."* The event would take place at the Murdoch University Perth from 27-29 November 2013. It was part of AFSAAP contribution to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the OAU and the theme of the Conference was inspired by the AU's theme of the Golden Jubilee celebration of Pan Africanism and the African Renaissance. Among others, the Conference would provide an opportunity for greater understanding of historical links and how the new momentum of the links with Africa could be sustained for the development of Africa's capacity to enable it control and harness the rich social and economic resources of the continent.

Panel 4: Millennium Development Goals/Post 2015 Development Agenda.

14. The event provided an opportunity to examine the African continent and the international efforts for the achievements of the Eight (8) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); namely eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, universal free primary education, promotion of gender equality and empowerment of Women, reduction of child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability and develop a global partnership for development.

15. Participants recalled the assessment and widely held opinion that since its adoption in 2000, generally, a lot of progress had been made on the MDGs. However progress had been uneven within regions and between regions. With regard to Africa, progress was slower than other regions of the developing world. It was therefore agreed that there was still much to be done by all stake holders including African countries, members of the International community including donor countries like Australia.

16. It was pointed out that while Australia's commitment and support for the MDGs focused on the Asia-Pacific Region, Africa had also received a lot of attention in recent years. Its assistance to African countries had therefore helped progress on all the MDGs. Its assistance was carried out through largely through AusAID programmes and support for NGOs and other volunteer agencies. Support for MDGs in Africa focused on reduction of extreme poverty, food security, sanitation, gender equality environmental sustainability and education. In this connection Australian aid programme had been doubled since 2005.

17. It was however indicated that the recent reduction of development aid budget might affect the commitment to the achievement of the MDGs, and Australia should not relent in its efforts in this regard. And indeed the achievement of the MDGs required more innovative efforts, increase flow of development aid and FDI. Australia should be ready to play a bigger role than it was presently doing.

Post 2015 Agenda

18. The exchange of views on the post-2015 Agenda was the in context of the question, "Millennium Development Goals and what Next"?. It provided the opportunity to discuss, albeit briefly, the recommendations in the report of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Agenda set up by the UN Secretary General. The Report titled, "**A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development**" set out a universal agenda to eradicate extreme poverty from the face of the earth by 2030 and deliver on the promise of sustainable development. The Report itself also called on the world to rally around a New Global Partnership. Its illustrative goals were the following: End poverty; Empower girls and women for gender equality; Provide quality education and long-life learning; Ensure healthy lives; Ensure food security and good nutrition. Others were Achievement of universal and sustainable energy; Creation of jobs; Sustainable management of natural resources assets; Ensure good governance and effective institutions; Ensure stable peaceful societies; Create a global enabling environment and Catalyse long term Finance.

19. Participants agreed that the new Global Partnership as encapsulated under the illustrative, "Goals and Targets" was essentially a continuum of the MGDs. While it would provide a guide countries to prioritise, it however remained to be seen whether they would subscribe or continue to be guided by the MDGs which would continue to be relevant after 2015.

Panel 4: Australian Entrepreneurship in Africa

20. Applying Wind power: Windlab Systems Pty Ltd. Dr Nathan Steggel the General Manager, Operations of Windlab Systems Pty Ltd made a presentation on

the operations of the company in the field of renewable energy in different parts of the world and Africa. The company was a major player in the field of global wind energy industry. It was established in 2003 as spin off of the research findings of Australian research organisation, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) on renewable energies. Windlab's major shareholders included two of Australia's leading venture capital firms, namely Innovation Capital and Lend Lease Ventures. Windlab's operations included portfolio of high quality wind farms producing over 6,500MW in Canada, the USA and South Africa. The successful commercial operations of Windlab in South Africa was cited as worthy of attention. It was expected to produce a total of 228 Megawatts and account for a fifth of the planned 1200 megawatts from wind energy.

21. According to the presentation, from its office in Canberra the company could do a preliminary assessment of a country and quickly locate a number of prospective projects to plan and develop wind energy sites. It was agreed that the operations of Windlab Pty Ltd was a practical demonstration of potentials of renewable energy and should be supported to assist in Africa's desire to widen its energy mix to include renewable energy.

22. Other Trends in Renewable Energies, the Dye Sol Example: Dr Geoffrey Munyeme of Dye Sol Australia, a clean tech company, focused on commercialising a third generation solar technology known as Dye Sol Cells. It was described as the use of revolutionary cell that had helped to achieve a conversion rate which would make use of solar cost effective against conventional power. It was described as a technology which could produce electricity using solar power more efficiently in low light conditions and could be used indoors and directly incorporated into building as part of roofing sheets. Dr. Munyeme's presentations underscored the potentials of the use of Dye Sol technology in Africa and possibilities of cooperation between the company and energy companies in Africa.

23. Vaccines Poultry and the Poor: Professor Robyn Alders of Sydney University, and Director KEEYAMA foundation made an interesting presentation on the potentials of livestock management and disease control programme to family poultry business and food security. As a well known veterinary scientist and livestock development and specialist researcher on control of Newcastle Disease in Chickens, and 23 years of working experience in Africa, she shared her experiences to demonstrate the potentials of poultry in providing smallholder farmers, mostly women, with a source of scarce animal protein and income. She drew attention to the fact that, 70%-80% of rural households in Southern and Eastern Africa raised poultry; and properly managed small poultry business could provide meat, eggs and high quality protein and cash income to purchase food and also support education of children.

Roundtable on small foundation and Social Enterprises in Africa

24. It was stressed that small foundations and social enterprises in Africa had a role to play in the development process in Africa, and efforts should be made to support the various small Australian foundations involved in projects and programmes in Africa.

Reflections and Prospects

25. The closing segment, "Reflections and Prospects," was essentially a summary of proceedings, observations and recommendations of Panellists and Participants. It was jointly presented by the Acting High Commissioner of Kenya Ms Yvonne Wamalawa, Dr David Lucas and the Rapporteur of the Update, the High Commissioner of Nigeria, Ambassador Ayo Olukanni. The following are the key points presented:

Importance of the Africa Update

- The Africa Update was a welcome Development and timely coming at a time of celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the OAU/AU across Australia. It was also a recognition by the ANU of the need to pay more attention to growing importance of Australia-Africa ties;

African Renaissance and Australia-Africa Relations

- There was an African renaissance which was reflected in the wide spread of democracy good governance and sound economic policies on the continent, which had spurred sustained economic growth and the quality of life in African countries. This trend should be supported by Australia's relations with countries on the continent.
- Against the background of the African Renaissance and the recognition of the geo-strategic importance of Africa, Australia's relation with Africa had undergone a positive, radical transformation and the momentum generated would be sustained, including through larger diplomatic presence in more African countries, the latest of which was Senegal;
- While Australia had given signals of a policy shift to pay more attention to its Asian neighbours, in order to reap from the Asian Century, the policy shift should not lead to a decline in attention to Africa which had been carefully nurtured to current levels.

- **Recognition of Strategic Importance of Africa:** The foreign policy shift and attention to Africa was borne out of the realisation by Australia of the strategic and growing importance of Africa in world Affairs. This was evidenced by support from the African group which helped Australia to secure a non-permanent seat in the Security Council during Council elections at the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Contribution of AusAID, Austrade and Australian Companies

- Operations of the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAid) had increased significantly now estimated to be about \$400 million a year, should be sustained, while Austrade presence should also be expanded to encourage Joint Ventures and FDI to Africa
- Ausaid development assistance was focused on achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; peace and security, sustainable development; water micro-finance and gender empowerment; capacity building of the public sector;
- **The African Renaissance and presence of Australian Companies:** It was acknowledged that with increasing democracy, sound economic policy and good governance economic growth and development of the African continent was also attracting Australian companies. Currently, there are about 300 companies in 41 countries with an estimated project estimated to be around \$50 billion
- **Enhancing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Africa's Resources sector:** Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) should be an important component part of operations of Australian mining companies operating in Africa in line with policy if mining for Development.
- **The activities of the Australian-Africa Network of Universities (AAUN) and African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific (AFSAAP)** should be supported for closer collaboration between Australian and African universities. This was to support capacity building and training in governance, public sector reforms education mining, agriculture and health; and provision of training support for African scholars, including alumni network the opportunities for the organisation in the field of education and research in particular Africa;

MDGs and Post 2015 Agenda

- Australian support for achievement of the MDGs was largely through its development Aid Programme support, largely carried out by Ausaid with focus on reduction of extreme poverty, food security, sanitation, gender equality environmental sustainability and education. This should be continued even in the post 2015 Agenda.

Promoting Renewable energy and potentials of Village Poultry

- Activities of Australian renewable energy companies, Dyesol and Windlab Pty Ltd had demonstrated the potentials of including use of renewable energy to meet energy needs of African countries.
- Support should continue for micro finance initiatives, such as Village poultry business which was a veritable source of protein, food security and gender empowerment for women in Africa.
- small foundations and social enterprises in Africa had an important role to play in the development process in Africa, and efforts should be made to support the various small Australian foundations involved in projects and programmes in Africa.

Conclusion

The holding of the Africa Update was hailed as welcome and timely initiative, to emulate updates on other regions, like China, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. Most, if not all participants presents called for a sequel, in the following years.

Rapporteur Africa Update

30th May 2013