

Poverty eradication and socially sustainable development



Poverty is a multidimensional social phenomenon that can be analytically divided into two main dimensions: income poverty, which is the lack of income necessary to satisfy basic needs; and human poverty which is the lack of human capabilities for example poor life expectancy, poor maternal health, illiteracy, poor nutritional levels, poor access to safe drinking water and perceptions of well-being (UNDP, 2003). However, at the most basic level, education and health are typical correlates of income poverty with the causality running either way.

There are several global initiatives focused on poverty eradication that African countries have pledged commitment to implement. Governments at the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1995, pledged to eradicate poverty through decisive national actions, which include implementing national anti-poverty plans and international cooperation. The Millennium Summit of 2000 adopted the MDGs as a powerful agenda for a global partnership to fight both income and human poverty, and set the income poverty eradication target of cutting extreme poverty by half by the year 2015. In the context of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Governments agreed to promote gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes, including those aimed at poverty eradication (ECA, 2004).

The JPOI states that eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, particularly for developing countries. The Plan recognizes that although each country has the primary responsibility for its own sustainable development and poverty eradication, the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized. The Plan calls for concrete actions and measures to eradicate poverty in Africa and to enable the countries achieve the goals of sustainable development. It endorses the internationally agreed poverty-related targets and reaffirms the MDG of halving, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than one dollar a day, those who suffer from hunger, and those without access to safe drinking water.

Additionally, the Plan calls for the establishment of world solidarity fund to eradicate poverty. At the national level, it calls for the empowerment of the people living in poverty through the delivery of health services, increasing food availability and affordability, increase access to sanitation, and promote full and equal participation in development. It enjoins the international community to support NEPAD, including its key objective of eradicating poverty. Furthermore, the Outcome Document of the 2005 UN World Summit resolved that countries with extreme poverty adopt and implement MDG-based PRSPs or MDG-based national development plans (ECA and AU, 2006).

3.1 Income poverty

The internationally agreed measure of income poverty is the proportion of people unable to earn an income level of approximately one dollar a day per person measured in Purchasing Power Parity. The reduction of income poverty in particular, and poverty eradication in general, is primarily dependent on the pace and character of economic growth— in short, a sustainable growth rate. Rapid and sustained growth increases incomes and generates resources necessary to deliver social services for the attainment of the MDGs. However, economic growth in Africa, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has been largely variable over time and highly dependent on primary commodity and of an enclave nature, example, oil, mineral or agricultural exports. The vulnerability of the major sources of economic growth in African economies to shocks, whether induced by terms of trade or weather, is a critical bottleneck to sustained growth and poverty reduction (UNCTAD 2004). Although Africa's recent growth performance has been quite impressive especially when placed in the context of the negative GDP growth trends in the late 1980's and early 1990s, it is still too low to achieve poverty eradication (refer to chapter 6).

3.1.1 Concrete actions taken and progress made

Regional initiatives

The AU concretely expressed its commitment to facilitating acceleration of progress towards the MDGs by African countries through a Common Position that was presented to its 2005 Summit, the G-8 Gleneagles Summit and the 2005 World Development Summit. The AU reiterated its commitment to bringing about poverty eradication and meeting all the MDGs at the 2006 Banjul Summit, and the 2007 Accra Summit. The AU convened an Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation that was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in September 2004, where a Plan of Action and Follow-up Mechanisms were adopted, calling upon Member States to place employment at the center of their economic and social policies. The Summit also agreed to include initiatives on employment creation and poverty alleviation as indicators in the APRM.

The United Nations system has been providing support to African countries and the AU on poverty on different aspects. The International Labor Organization (ILO) is assisting in the implementation of the outcomes of the Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation and has aligned their work plans with the outcomes and recommendations of the Ouagadougou Summit. ILO's document "The decent work agenda in Africa: 2007 – 2015" launched at the 11th African Regional Meeting in April 2007, details some of the activities that ILO is undertaking to assist the Africa region. At the national level, ILO is working with governments to advance poverty eradication through Decent Work Country Programmes. At the regional level ILO is working to strengthen the role of AU and RECs. UNDP in partnership with UN agencies, ECA and the Bretton Woods institutions, is providing support to 35 African countries¹ that have embarked on the process of preparing and implementing MDG-based national strategies and action plans.

ECA's 39th Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development Conference in May 2006 was on Meeting the challenge of employment in Africa. The ministerial statement reasserted the important role of employment in poverty reduction and stressed the need to incorporate employment objectives in national development and poverty reduction policies. ECA's 40th Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development Conference in April 2007, was on Accelerating Africa's growth and development to meet the MDGs: Emerging challenges and the way forward. The ministerial

1 Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo Brazzaville, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Uganda.

statement reiterated the importance of the MDGs in poverty eradication and highlighted the regional and national level actions required to achieve the MDGs. ECA through the African Learning Group on PRSPs/MDGs has facilitated capacity building and learning among member States. At the country level, ECA has also provided advisory services to Liberia, Ghana and Ethiopia to help policymakers design and implement MDG-based PRSPs. The African Development Bank (AfDB) has provided technical and financial support in scaling up investments for poverty eradication.

National actions

Countries have developed national development plans that incorporate poverty reduction strategies (PRS). Countries receiving debt relief and concessionary loans and grants from the World Bank and the IMF have been required to prepare Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) as from 1999. Since 2000, 32 African countries have developed a PRSP. Even non-HIPC countries such as Nigeria, Botswana, Egypt, Morocco and Zimbabwe have prepared national poverty reduction strategies. In some countries such as Nigeria and South Africa, sub-national jurisdictions prepared poverty reductions strategies.

Countries have also developed national development strategies and medium term expenditure frameworks that fully integrate the MDGs. This ensures inclusion of both income and human poverty into national development. According to the UN MDG Report 2007, 41 countries in Africa started preparing national development strategies aligned with the MDGs. In addition to their long-term visions, with clear goals and targets, such strategies are envisaged to create jobs and decent work, and provide those living in poverty with the necessary resources and skills to produce and participate in development.

Progress

A review of the impact of the implementation of PRSPs on poverty in recipient countries shows that the PRSP Framework has had an energizing effect on the efforts to reduce poverty and economic growth. The poverty focus of national development strategies have improved and growth has resumed on a sustainable basis in many countries. The incidence of poverty decreased in a number of countries. According to the United Nations Millennium Development report (2007), trends in the proportion of the population living on less than one dollar a day decreased from 46.8 percent in 1990, to 45.9 percent in 1999 and further to 41.1 percent in 2004. However, SSA is the region with the highest number people of living in income poverty. Although there has been some improvement in the poverty gap ratio (which measures the distance of the proportion of the population from the poverty line) from 19.5 percent in 1990 to 17.5 percent in 2004, SSA still has the highest poverty gap ratio in the world indicating that the poor in this region are the most economically disadvantaged (UN, 2007). The incidence of poverty in North African countries has remained constant at two percent for the same period.

The high levels of poverty are exacerbated in Africa by income inequality. SSA is the next region after Latin America and the Caribbean with the second highest level of inequality, where the poorest fifth of the people account for only 3.4 percent of national income (UN, 2007). Trends show that the level of income inequality in SSA has not improved over the period 1990 to 2004. Furthermore, in most of the countries, the incidence of poverty is higher in rural areas than in urban areas not only because the majority of people live in rural areas and due to the distribution of economic activity between rural and urban areas (ECA, 2005). In addition, the prevalence of poverty in Africa is not gender neutral. National level data show that poverty is more extreme among female-headed households than male-headed households.

Furthermore, the PRSP Framework and the MDG targets are having a positive effect on the mobilization of external resources for development. For example, the G-8 at its Gleneagles Summit agreed to cancel the debt

of 18 of the poorest countries in the World in 2006 of which 14 beneficiaries are African countries (ECA and AU, 2006).

3.1.2 Challenges and constraints

Despite Africa's tangible achievements on the economic growth front for the past five to six years, there is consensus that this positive economic performance has not yet had a demonstrably meaningful impact on poverty eradication. Furthermore, the progress in reducing poverty is complicated by highly skewed income distribution that limits the prospects for translating any gains from economic growth into shared prosperity and meaningful poverty reduction (ECA, 2007b). Although the existence of inequalities is recognized, concrete policies to reduce them remain absent. An analysis of 16 African countries by ECA showed that the response of poverty to growth is only half the response of poverty to income distribution, (i.e., countries are twice as likely to reduce poverty through income redistribution as they are through growth).

Most countries are faced with the challenge of growing their economies in a manner that creates good, rewarding jobs. Some countries that have recorded recent positive economic growth have been fuelled by capital-intensive sectors of the economy such as oil and gas, and mining. This growth concentrated in the extractive sectors has largely been jobless, unevenly distributed, and volatile (ECA and AU, 2007).

Other challenges include: political instability, which have been major factors in the region's weak capacity to generate jobs; climate change, which is increasing the vulnerability of African countries to natural disasters, threatening economic growth and development, thereby posing a major challenge to poverty eradication; HIV/AIDS, which is an important factor pushing individuals below the poverty line, arising from social and economic exclusion through stigma, and its devastating economic impacts; capacity constraints such as national capacity to design, implement, monitor and evaluate policies to achieve poverty eradication, which are evidenced both at the level of the individual and the institution; data constraints, which have posed severe constraints to policy making; inadequate domestic resource mobilization; and low rate of delivery of promised aid and debt relief.

3.1.3 Lessons learned and the way forward

The need to attain sustained economic growth, through a pro-poor perspective is critical. Ensuring a level field for all to actively participate in the growth process is vital. In addition, there is need for further diversification of economic activity within African economies. The volatility of SSA economies to shocks needs to be addressed if sustainable growth is the required outcome.

Growth patterns that reduce inequality (pro-poor growth) are more likely to shorten the number of years necessary to halve poverty than growth without changes in inequality. Equity in terms of access to: employment opportunities; productive resources such as land and credit; and basic social services such as health, education, water and sanitation, is central for poverty reduction. Additionally, the current pattern of growth must change and lead to generation of employment. However, in order to do this successfully, it is critical that the production structure of Africa's economies must become diversified away from natural resource sectors to labor intensive sectors such as the service industry.

Major lessons learnt from the review of the PRSPs are that the framework paid insufficient attention to important areas such as trade, employment, social protection and gender. Trade and regional integration aspects of poverty reduction programmes need to be strengthened. In landlocked countries trade and regional integration can significantly reduce poverty through joint regional programmes in infrastructure. Poverty reduction strategies should aim to promote equal opportunities for women and men. When women are empowered to live full and productive lives, children are lifted out of poverty. There is need to mainstream

social protection in National Development Strategies/PRSPs. Social protection schemes are needed to provide safety nets for those who are vulnerable to income shocks such as frictional unemployment, ill health, HIV/AIDS and old age. This will also help in improving equity.

An important emerging lesson coming out of country experiences on poverty eradication is that countries need to own their national development and be provided with the policy space to design strategies that meet the specific needs of the country. Countries also need to develop capacity for monitoring and evaluating progress on poverty eradication. There is already presence of well-developed plans of action at the regional level (eg. Ouagadougou Plan of Action to promote employment and poverty alleviation) and national-level poverty reduction strategies. Therefore, it is important to fully implement these plans to ensure that poverty eradication does take place on the ground.

Countries should improve revenue collection and public expenditure management. However, robust domestic resource mobilization strategies must be complemented by credible resource commitments by development partners to support national strategies for development in the core areas of infrastructure, human capital, regional integration and governance. Delivery of the promised aid and debt relief will allow African countries to boost expenditures in key sectors essential for poverty eradication including infrastructure and social services. Additionally, there is need to strengthen the statistical capacity of countries to collect data that is essential for monitoring poverty eradication.

3.2 Agriculture for sustainable development

Agriculture is the backbone of Africa's economy. About 70 percent of Africans and approximately 80 percent of the continent's poor live in rural areas and depend mainly on agriculture for their livelihoods. The sector accounts for about 20 percent of Africa's GDP (ECA, 2004), 60 percent of its labour force and 20 percent of the total merchandise exports (CAADP, 2003). Agriculture is the main source of income for 90 percent of rural population in Africa (ECA, 2005). Despite rapid urbanization proceeding at the annual rate of 4.9 percent over the past decades, the sector remains the highest employer in Africa.

Agricultural development is of fundamental importance to the achievement of broad-based economic growth and sustainable development. The Green Revolution of the mid-1960s, which brought about increases in food production and rural incomes, as well as sustainable modernization of agriculture and rural transformation elsewhere in the world, largely missed Africa. The Green Revolution did not take hold in Africa, largely because it was not designed for the continent's diverse agro-ecological zones, farming systems and socio-cultural contexts.

WSSD reiterated the Millennium Declaration target to halve by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's people who suffer from hunger. The Africa chapter of the JPOI calls for support in the development and implementation of national policies and programmes to regenerate the sector. The Plan also calls upon African countries to develop and implement food security strategies, within the context of national poverty eradication programmes, by 2005. This supports NEPAD's agriculture sector objectives, which include: to improve the productivity of agriculture, with particular attention to small-scale and women farmers; to ensure food security for all people and increase the access of the poor to adequate food and nutrition; and to develop Africa into a net exporter of agricultural products.

3.2.1 Concrete actions taken and progress made

In order to achieve the above objectives, African countries have taken measures at national, sub-regional and regional levels to boost the development of the agriculture and rural sector. These measures include the followings: i) the Maputo Summit Declaration that endorsed the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Plan of Action, and the commitment by African leaders to allocate at least 10 percent of their national budget to agricultural development; ii) the Sirte Declaration on Agriculture and Water that adopted the development of strategic agricultural commodities; iii) the Fertilizer Summit that adopted the resolution to increase fertilizer use in Africa from eight kg per hectare to 50 kg by 2015; and the Abuja Food Security Summit that recommended the establishment of African common market for basic food products.

FAO is promoting cross-country partnership and regional integration to enable countries to successfully confront the challenges of food security and solve regional problems through collective action. It works directly with RECs to promote structural reforms and policy harmonization; transboundary issues related to food trade and safety, to support national programmes for food security and water. Regional Food Security Programmes (RFSP) also work to strengthen national programmes by holding capacity building and training sessions with country representatives along with other initiatives to strengthen national capacity.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) plays a key role in the specific NEPAD Pan African Cassava Initiative (PACI) aimed at disseminating new cassava-processing technologies and developing regional markets for the crop. Cassava production in Africa has more than tripled since 1961 – from 33 million metric tons per year to 101 metric tons – making the continent the largest producer. In countries like Ghana and Nigeria, wide adoption of high-yielding varieties and improved pest management has been largely responsible for the sharp rise in production.

IFAD has given three grants to the West Africa Rice Development Association (WARDA), an intergovernmental research association of 17 West African States, to support efforts to boost rice production, in particular new varieties known as New Rice for Africa (NERICA). The variety combines the high-yield characteristics of Asian rice with the resistance of indigenous African strains. Through these grants, IFAD has established close links with WARDA's African Rice Initiative (ARI), launched in 2002 to promote the dissemination of NERICA. The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) is assisting African countries in developing their research capacity for improved agricultural productivity and sustainable management of natural resources.

The performance of agriculture in Africa has slightly improved. In recent years, annual agricultural growth has averaged around 3.9 percent. Contrary to the widespread perception that agriculture actually has performed worse after the implementation of structural adjustment programmes, evidence shows that Sub-Saharan Africa's agriculture grew more than one percent faster since the mid-eighties than during the period between independence and the launching of the adjustment programmes. However, while growth did take place, it did not really lead to improved food security and reduced poverty. Nevertheless, it has been possible, during the last decade, to lift agricultural growth at a level above the rate of population growth in the region as a whole, and substantially more in a few countries. This is an encouraging trend, as it shows that agriculture can be successful in SSA. Production of cassava, exports of fruits and vegetables, tea production and exports, and fish catch stand out as sub-sectors where success cannot be denied. Moreover, in terms of growth, agriculture has performed relatively better, on average, than the rest of the economy of sub-Saharan Africa (FAO, 2006a).

Africa's food security situation remains alarming despite the progress mentioned above. According to recent studies (FAO, 2006b; IFPRI/WORLDBANK, 2005). SSA accounts for 13 percent of the population and 25 percent of the undernourished people in the developing world. It is the developing region with the highest

proportion – one third of people suffering from chronic hunger. In 14 countries in the region, 35 percent or more of the population were chronically undernourished from 2001 to 2003. Between 1990 to 1992 and 2001 to 2003, the number of undernourished people increased from 169 million to 206 million. Given this trend, it is unlikely that the MDG of halving the number of poor and hunger by 2015 would be achieved.

3.2.2 Challenges and constraints

Efforts to reduce hunger in the region have been hampered by natural and human-induced disasters. The most significant constraints on agricultural development, and on improved food security, are political unrest and armed conflicts. These have prevented farmers from producing, displaced populations, destroyed infrastructure and littered the countryside with land mines. Poor governance, and weak institutional capacity has also contributed to poor policies that have proven incapable of addressing the challenges of agriculture and rural development. Brain drain, hasty implementation of inadequately worked-out reforms and urban bias are prevalent in most of SSA. In mineral-rich countries, macroeconomic conditions have also been unfavorable to agriculture, undermining its competitiveness.

Agricultural growth can come from expansion of cultivated land, increased productivity, diversification into higher value-added products or a combination of all three. It can also come from reduction of wastage and post-harvest losses. However, expansion of cultivated land in many sub-Sahara African countries has been constrained by physical access, insecure land ownership, limited access to animal and mechanical power and reduced availability of labor because of migration, competition from off-farm activities and diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Productivity has remained low because of underutilization of water resources, limited fertilizer use, limited use of improved soil-fertility management practices and weak support services (research, extension and finance). Recurrent droughts, plagues and related increased risks have discouraged the investment that is indispensable for raising productivity.

Malfunctioning and inefficient markets (largely due to a frail private sector in most countries), insufficient investment in infrastructure, high transportation costs, weak information systems and a poor regulatory frameworks have hampered proper remuneration of producers and deterred, indeed, incapacitated them from investing and specializing in new and high value products. Prices remain low and are highly volatile – and there are no mechanisms that can help minimize or share the risk borne by producers. Finally, government budget cuts have affected agriculture more than other sectors. The share of agriculture in government budgets declined from around 5 percent in 1990/1991 to 3.5 percent in 2000/2001 in most countries. This gravely affected public investment in agriculture and the capacity of public institutions.

3.2.3 Lessons learned and the way forward

Addressing the constraints and exploiting opportunities for agriculture and rural development in Africa require considerable public support, both in terms of additional resources and policy reform. The challenge is considerable, but as illustrated by some African agricultural success stories, it is possible to overcome them. It is clear that there are considerable opportunities for expanding land under cultivation, increasing yields (through better management of water and soil resources and use of improved technology). Tapping this potential will depend on the ability of governments to create the right conditions for farmers to take initiative, invest and trust in the functioning of markets that will remunerate fairly their efforts.

Africa needs to achieve a sustainable and structural transformation of its agriculture and rural economy, i.e. a process that involves a move from highly diversified subsistence modes of production towards more market-oriented production systems. This integration will be facilitated by greater specialization, exchange and by the harnessing of economies of scale. Over the long term, resources and employment are to be transferred from agriculture and other sectors producing primary goods to higher productivity (higher wages and salaries, output,

etc.) sectors, e.g. industry (including processing and manufacturing) and services. This process is triggered by the use of wider knowledge systems embodied in new technologies, management practices and institutions as a crucial source of comparative advantage and competitiveness vis-à-vis conventional comparative advantage gained by natural resources endowments.

Cities and towns are critical engines of rural economic transformation. They are centers of innovations and provide formal and informal markets (with a rural-urban linkages) for rural products and serve as market information centers for agricultural production. Their sustainable growth and development should therefore be factored into agricultural and rural economic policies and strategies.

Efforts at structural transformation of agriculture should therefore address, in an integrated approach, issues of Technology, Infrastructure, Institutions and Policies (TIIP), as well as urban-rural linkages, with a view to achieving two key objectives: maximizing productivity, efficiency and value addition, thereby minimizing unit production costs at the level of each physical transformation stage of commodity sub-sectors (value chains); and minimizing transactions costs among the different stages of commodity value chains, thereby minimizing total unit costs of products (goods and services) delivered to the final consumers and improving profits.

3.3 Gender equality for sustainable development

International commitments to gender equality, equity and women's empowerment have been reaffirmed in different UN Conferences, including the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action (BPFA). The world's leaders have agreed to take these commitments forward in the Millennium Declaration and to set targets for achieving the MDGs on gender. WSSD reiterated these commitments and the JPOI calls for promoting women's equal access to and full participation in, decision-making at all levels on the basis of equality with men. The Plan also calls for mainstreaming gender perspectives in all policies and strategies, eliminating all forms of violence and discrimination against women and improving the status, health and economic welfare of women and girls through full and equal access to economic opportunity, land, credit, education and health-care services.

In particular, the Africa chapter of the Plan emphasizes the right to gender equality. It calls on the international community to support Africa's efforts in ensuring equal access to all levels of education and to promote and support efforts and initiatives to secure equitable access to land tenure and clarify resource rights and responsibilities. Promoting the role of women in all activities is one of two NEPAD long-term objectives. The Initiative has as one of its goals, to make progress towards gender equality and empowering women by eliminating gender disparities in the enrolment in primary and secondary education by 2005.

3.3.1 Concrete actions taken and progress made

Regional initiatives

In addition to regional level initiatives on gender equality and equity mentioned in chapter one, at the sub regional level, RECs (ECOWAS, SADC, EAC, IGAD, ECCAS, COMESA) have adopted gender policies, declarations and guidelines for the promotion and protection of the human rights of women. To help governments achieve the goal of monitoring and evaluating the impact of gender equality and equity policies, ECA has developed the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI). This tool allows policy makers to assess their own performance in implementing policies and programmes aimed at ending women's marginalization. It should also improve knowledge on African women's issues and concerns, as they are made more visible. So far, the index has been successfully tested in 12 countries and testing in additional countries

is in progress. ECA has also set up an African Women Rights Observatory to monitor the Status of Women and Women's rights at the regional level.

National actions

Ratification of international and regional instruments: Efforts to promote gender equality, equity and women's empowerment in Africa, gained momentum on several fronts over the past years, thus, setting the stage for further gains. Fifty-one of the 53 African Member States have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), known as the women's international bill of rights, and 17 have signed the Optional Protocol. Some countries have aligned their national legislation to the provisions of CEDAW. Furthermore, 31 countries have signed and four have ratified the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa. Some governments have enacted or amended legislation on women's human rights and others have adopted constitutions that take on board gender equality.

Participation in governance: On the political front, several countries have significantly increased the level of women's representation in parliament, with one country reaching an impressive 49 percent and two at over 30 percent. Women have also been elected and/or appointed into powerful decision-making positions in the civil and public services.

Gender mainstreaming and institutional mechanisms: African governments have established various mechanisms at different levels, including national machineries to mainstream gender in the formulation of policies, plans and programmes, policy advocacy and to monitor and evaluate the implementation of international, regional and national commitments. Gender focal points have proven to be a valuable, but fragile link between Women's/ Gender Affairs and line Ministries. Particular attention has been given to the formulation of national gender policies and implementation plans, with some countries having prepared sector-specific gender policies. Capacity building for gender mainstreaming has been undertaken at national and regional levels. Issue-based advocacy has been successfully conducted in some countries, for example on violence against women and legal literacy.

Poverty reduction and economic empowerment: Attempts are underway to engender poverty surveys conducted during the poverty reduction strategy processes, which will provide the basis for stronger gender analysis in macroeconomic and socio-economic policies. The consideration of gender in some countries' budgets has triggered more transparent processes for gender responsiveness in public expenditures. Information available on Gender Responsive Budgets (GRB) and the inclusion of women's unpaid work in national accounts are likely to have tremendous impact on resource allocation in the context of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and the MDGs. Between 1995-2005, 48 African countries prepared poverty reduction strategies and action plans that included gender concerns. Furthermore, some African countries have strategies for supporting women's entrepreneurship through micro-credit schemes and capacity building in enterprise management.

Education: Some countries have managed to reduce gender differentials in education through affirmative action and gender-aware policies aimed at improving enrolment, retention and quality of education for girls. Faced with the role of women in traditional African societies, one of the most intimidating challenges for many African countries has been to guarantee access to education for the girl-child, and for young and adult women. Gender parity at the primary school level has been reached or is likely to be achieved in most Southern African countries such as Botswana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe.

Health: Some African countries have prioritized women's health as an area of concern. This has resulted in increased attention to the reproductive health and rights of women, encouraging breast-feeding and other infant feeding options making facilities available for the management of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, and raising awareness among men on their responsibilities in reproductive health. In many countries, progress has been made in offering free or subsidized sexual and reproductive health care

services and commodities, affordable preventive health services for rural populations and training grassroots health providers.

3.3.2 Challenges and constraints

In spite of African women's mobilization, advocacy, and increased representation in governance at regional and national levels, normative gains are not yet reflected in substantial changes in women's lives. African women, especially those living in rural communities and those with disabilities, still face daunting challenges. African women constitute the majority of both urban and rural poor (over 70 percent in some countries). Unequal power relations between women and men, the skewed distribution of remunerated and unremunerated work, unequal inheritance rights in some countries, food insecurity and lack of secure access to land, water, energy, credit, means of communication, education and training property, and other productive resources, as well as inadequate support for women's entrepreneurship are some of the major causes of women's poverty. Widespread poverty among women also affects other critical areas, such as women's health and education.

The cumulative effects of HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria, food insecurity, low economic productivity, low levels of education and the upsurge of sexual violence have left African women and girls vulnerable and with considerable challenges. Women are the most exposed to HIV/AIDS infection due to extreme poverty and their responsibility in caring for infected and affected persons. Even in countries where overall HIV prevalence is low or has been reduced, the number of infected and affected women is still on the rise.

Women and girls continue to be seriously affected by gender-specific violations of their human, sexual and reproductive rights. Indeed, situations of armed conflict take the heaviest toll on women and have become increasingly marked by rape and other forms of sexual violence of which women are victims. Some cultural and traditional practices continue to inhibit progress in promoting women and girls' human rights. Women and girls continue to risk death from maternal mortality with one in every 16 pregnancies in Sub-Saharan Africa resulting in death.

With few exceptions, educational statistics show large gender disparities. Female-to-male school enrolment, retention and completion favor boys in a majority of countries. Moreover, African women have the highest illiteracy rates in the world, which in some countries are rising. In addition, gender disparities in schooling undermine national efforts for human capital development, thereby slowing down the pace of economic and social development. At the tertiary and university levels the low participation for young women continues. Gender gaps are particularly pronounced in science, mathematics and computer sciences.

The mechanisms for the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment remain weak at all levels – lacking adequate capacity, authority and funding. Line ministries have not reached gender equality targets due to low levels of resource allocations. Gender concerns continue to be treated rhetorically or as separate women's projects. Sex-disaggregated data and information from gender-sensitive indicators are often not collected, lost in aggregation of published data, or not used.

Gender equality and equity principles are not yet fully integrated into democratization processes, and women continue to be under-represented in most structures of power and decision-making, including leadership positions in political parties, local government, the public and private sector and civil society organizations. Governments have recognized that passing laws and policies alone does not bring about substantial gender equality and equity or respect for women's human rights. The national and sub regional reports on the 10 year review of BPFA from both governments and NGOs identified the need to bridge the gap between commitments and implementation.

3.3.3 Lessons learned and the way forward

To achieve gender equality in Africa, greater efforts need be deployed. Several key actions are to be taken, particularly in the crucial areas of health and education, including mainstreaming gender issues into economic analyses and poverty reduction strategies. Affirmative action should be strengthened to boost women and girls' access to education and training programmes, particularly in mathematics, science and technology. In the field of health, governments, NGOs and the private sector should come together to provide accessible sexual and reproductive healthcare services and education to reduce maternal mortality. The rate of HIV/AIDS infection is much higher among women than men and in this regard, governments must establish and monitor strict legal frameworks to address the vulnerability of women and girls. Furthermore, access to anti-retroviral treatment should be ensured.

It is widely recognized that women's empowerment requires a higher rate of involvement in governance and decision-making. To this end, institutionalizing policies that guarantee gender equality and replicate the AU principle of 50/50 gender parity is necessary. The role media can play in promoting equality is crucial, and Africa should support women's press and communication initiatives, as well as making use of new information technology to promote women's activities. Women should also be allowed to have a prominent role in formulating and implementing environmental policies.

Women's rights begin with the girl-child, who must be protected against discrimination, ill health, malnutrition, violence, FGM, forced marriage and exploitation. Direct advocacy to achieve this should start with the parents, traditional and religious leaders and parliamentarians. All too often, women are the main victims of war and conflict, so governments should ensure that measures are in place to ensure the role and rights of women during the negotiation, transition and reconstruction phases, in accordance with UN resolution 1325. African countries should sign and ratify the protocol to the African Charter promoting women's rights as soon as possible, to demonstrate their commitments to women's human rights.

If NEPAD is to achieve its broad as well as gender specific goals and objectives, it not only has to facilitate the involvement, effective participation of women in the implementation process, but also has to ensure that economic empowerment of women is one of the priorities of NEPAD's social and economic agenda. Furthermore, new programmes emanating from the NEPAD implementation process rather than adding to the existing gender disparities and creating new ones should ensure that they empower women.

Finally, men and boys must be involved in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment through innovative rights-based and culturally sensitive programmes.

3.4 Education for sustainable development

Education is a critical sector whose performance directly affects and even determines the quality and magnitude of Africa's development. It is the most important means to develop human resources, impart appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes. Education forms the basis for developing innovation, science and technology. This is in order for Africa to harness its resources, industrialize, participate in the global knowledge economy and take its rightful place in the global community. It is also the means by which Africa will entrench a culture of peace, gender equality and positive African values. However, Africa entered the Millennium with severe education challenges at every level (African Union, 2006).

WSSD reaffirmed the MDG of ensuring that, by 2015, all children will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education relevant to national

needs. The Summit also reaffirmed the “Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All” of eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005. In addition, the Africa chapter of the JPOI calls for support to the development of national programmes and strategies to promote education. As part of its Human Resources Development Initiative, NEPAD pledges among other things, to work with development partners in meeting the universal MDG on primary education and has as one of its goals, to enroll all children of school age in primary schools by 2015.

3.4.1 Concrete actions taken and progress made

Regional initiatives

The Conference of African Ministers of Education adopted the Plan of Action of the First Decade of Education for Africa (1997-2006). However, an evaluation of the Decade revealed that member States did not achieve most of the goals set in the Decade Plan of Action. In this regard, the Sixth AU Summit of September 2006, adopted a resolution to launch a Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015), and endorsed the Framework for Action earlier adopted by the Second Conference of African Ministers of Education (African Union, 2006).

In order to enable African countries achieve the MDG of Universal Primary Education (UPE) and to promote centers of excellence, a detailed Action Plan has been formulated under the auspices of NEPAD. The NEPAD Secretariat is making progress in advancing various projects at different implementation stages. To ensure the timely and effective implementation of projects, the Secretariat is consulting with various partners and is focusing on resource mobilization efforts. Projects include: basic education and education for all; building capacity in education, research and development in Africa; gender equality in primary and secondary schools in Africa; school feeding and nutrition; distance education and teacher training and development; education in post-conflict environments; and mathematics, science and technology.

National actions

African countries have subscribed to the goal of achieving Education for All (EFA) by 2015 and many have undertaken education sector reforms. For example, countries such as Uganda have adopted system-wide, top-down reforms that integrate management improvements, decentralization, and finance reform, which required strong political commitment. The Ethiopian reforms had three wide goals: reach universal primary education by 2015, improve education quality, and improve education system efficiency and financial sustainability. Other interventions include successful implementation of health and nutrition programmes in schools, early childhood development programmes, shifting to low-cost school construction methods for schools and using contract teachers to make the costs of expanding coverage more fiscally sustainable (UN Millennium Project Taskforce on Education, 2005).

International community support

After the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank, the European Commission is the biggest multilateral donor for education. The Commission allocates greater shares of its education aid to SSA and to basic education than do donors overall. The concentration of donors in just a few countries poses important questions about the capacity of global aid to raise education levels across the region. Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania receive aid to education from ten to twelve donors, while some, including Comoros, the Gambia, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe, have no donors at all. Furthermore, some countries lack any multilateral donor presence, apart from the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and/or the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). UNESCO made substantial contributions to the finalization of the Action Plan of the Second Decade of Education for Africa.

The proportion of aid to education that goes to the basic level in Arab States is very low: less than 5 percent. Several donors have given priority to higher levels of education, even in countries where UPE has not yet been achieved. Aid flows raise important questions for donors about targeting aid to the countries and education levels most in need (UN, 2006; UNESCO, 2007a; UNESCO, 2007b ; UNESCO, 2007c).

Progress

The overall EFA picture in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is mixed. Enrolment in primary education has increased since Dakar, but the number of out-of-school children remains much too high (38 million in 2004). School progression and completion are still major concerns. With many countries in SSA promoting the universalization of basic education – which combines primary with lower secondary – pressures to expand secondary education and participation are mounting rapidly. Despite countries' commitment to basic education for all, universal participation is still far away. The average ²GER in basic education was 73 percent in 2004 in SSA, compared to 90 percent or above in other regions, though the ratio did increase by ten percentage points between 1999 and 2004. The rest of the EFA agenda is lagging, in particular with regard to gender parity, education quality and adult literacy. In Arab States, EFA remains a challenge. Enrolment in primary education has increased since Dakar, although more slowly than in SSA. There are still more than six million children not in school. Poor school progression and completion are concerns in some countries. The rest of the EFA agenda is lagging, in particular with regard to gender parity, education quality and adult literacy.

Primary education: advancing in enrolment

Overall, there has been progress towards universal primary education (UPE) in SSA since Dakar. The number of children enrolled in primary schools rose steeply from about 80 million in 1999 to some 101 million in 2004, a 27 percent increase largely reflecting rapid rises in the number of new entrants in grade one (about 31 percent over the period). The result was a jump of ten percentage points in the regional net enrolment ratio (³NER), from 55 to 65 percent. Increases were particularly impressive in countries including Benin, Ethiopia, Guinea, Lesotho, the Niger, Madagascar and Tanzania, often following the abolition of school fees. NER also increased in the Arab States (including Algeria, Djibouti, Sudan, Tunisia, Mauritania, Morocco and Egypt), but was less spectacular. Despite this expansion, the UPE challenge remains huge. SSA is still home to about half the world's out-of-school children, with 38 million of them in 2004, 53 percent of whom, were girls. The challenge is particularly great in countries such as Ethiopia and Nigeria, where four to eight million children of primary school age are not in school. Several others have more than one million children out of school, including Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, with NERs still under 50 percent in 2004.

School retention and completion

In addition to access, school retention and completion are still major concerns. Less than two-thirds of a cohort of pupils who had access to primary education reached the last grade in the majority of SSA countries with 2003 data. In some, including Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Malawi, Mozambique and Rwanda, the rate is under 40 percent. Not all children who reach the last primary grade necessarily complete it. In Burundi, Mali and Niger, primary completion rates are much lower than survival rates to last grade (a gap of more than 25 percentage points). The same factors behind being out of school also influence school retention and completion. Survival rates to the last grade are close to or above 90 percent in most Arab States for which data are available, except in three, including Mauritania (69 percent) and Morocco (76 percent).

2 Gross enrolment ratio [GER]. Total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to this level of education. The GER can exceed 100% due to late entry or/and repetition.

3 Net enrolment ratio [NER]. Enrolment of the official age group for a given level of education, expressed as a percentage of the population in that age group.

Secondary education

In 2004, some 31 million students were enrolled in secondary schools across the region, an increase (the highest for any EFA region) of about 43 percent since 1999. Beyond the absolute numbers, however, participation at that level remains low, with an average GER below 30 percent. Secondary education is more developed in English-speaking African countries, particularly those in the southern hemisphere, than in Central and West Africa. Increases in secondary school enrolments were significant in the developing country regions, including Arab States and SSA: in each, the number of secondary students rose by 20 percent or more during the period. Between 1999 and 2004, secondary GERs increased in most of the 32 countries with data available, with gains above 25 percent in more than half of them. The level of participation doubled in Ethiopia and Mozambique, albeit from low initial levels. On the other hand, some countries, including Malawi and Zimbabwe, recorded substantial decreases, by 15 percent or more. As regards Arab States, the level remains low in some countries. While the region's average GER was 66 percent in 2004, secondary education is much less developed in Djibouti, Iraq, Mauritania, Morocco and Sudan with secondary GERs below 50 percent.

Tertiary education

Despite increases in enrolment of more than 50 percent since 1999, only a small share of the relevant age group has access to this level of education, with a GER of less than five percent in 2004. Tertiary education is more developed in Mauritius, Nigeria and South Africa, where the GERs were above 10 percent. Participation at this level rose in almost all countries across SSA between 1999 and 2004, with an increase of ten percentage points in Mauritius. GER in the Arab States was between 20 to 28 percent. Tertiary education is more developed in four countries, including the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. Participation at this level rose in almost all countries of the region between 1999 and 2004, with increases of more than ten percentage points in four countries, including Tunisia.

Literacy

On average, only 61 percent of adults in SSA can read and write with understanding, one of the lowest adult literacy rates in the world. Although the rate increased by more than 10 percentage points between 1990 and 2004, high population growth meant the absolute number of adult illiterates continued to rise, from about 133 million to around 144 million. The number is expected to reach 168 million by 2015. Adult literacy rates vary greatly within the region, from 19 percent in Mali to more than 90 percent in Seychelles. Fourteen of the 22 countries in the world with literacy rates below 60 percent are in SSA. Adult literacy rates also vary within Arab States, with Mauritania, and Morocco recording below 60 percent. Most countries in SSA and Arab States have improved their adult literacy levels since 1990, but will find it difficult to meet the EFA literacy target by 2015, unless governments significantly expand adult literacy programmes.

Gender disparities

Girls are benefiting from the regional upward trend in enrolment, especially in primary education. Rapid progress towards gender parity at this level was registered between 1999 and 2004 in countries including Benin, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, the Gambia and Guinea. Despite these positive trends, disparities in education detrimental to girls remain pervasive in SSA. Eighty-nine girls were enrolled in primary schools for every 100 boys in 2004, up from 85 in 1999. Gender parity in primary education has been achieved in fewer than 30 percent of the 39 countries with data available. Disparities between the sexes are even worse at higher levels, with a gender parity index (4GPI) of 0.78 in secondary and 0.62 in tertiary education. More

4 Gender parity index [GPI]. Ratio of female to male values [or male to female, in certain cases] of a given indicator. A GPI of 1 indicates parity between sexes; a GPI between 0 and 1 means a disparity in favour of boys/men; a GPI greater than 1 indicates a disparity in favour of girls/women.

than 60 percent of the adult illiterates in SSA are women. The average GPI for adult literacy is 0.77, with values below 0.50 in countries including Benin, Chad, Guinea, Mali and the Niger. Overall, gender disparities in education and literacy are higher in countries with low enrolment and literacy rates. The situation in Arab States is similar.

3.4.2 Challenges and constraints

Many obstacles hinder access to and participation in education, among them poverty and the related issue of direct and indirect costs, as well as distance to school, social exclusion and the school environment. A main challenge is still to increase girls' access to education, and ensure that equal numbers of girls and boys are in school.

The quality of education is still an issue. Expansion of schooling in the region often occurs at the expense of quality. Not only do many children with access to school fail to complete it, but also national and international learning assessments continue to reveal poor literacy and numeracy skills, particularly for students from poorer and culturally excluded families. Numbers of teachers are not only insufficient, but teachers also often lack training and qualifications.

Despite the upward trend in public spending on education, the share of national income spent on education is still below five percent in the majority of countries with data available. Therefore, even with country efforts to invest more in education in general, external aid is required to achieve EFA. However, national expenditure and external aid, still fall short of the resources needed to achieve EFA.

The lack of data for a number of countries, mainly in SSA, that are or have recently been affected by conflict prevents the inclusion of these countries in analysis, thus making the creation of education opportunities for children in those countries quite difficult.

3.4.3 Lessons learned and the way forward

Most African countries are in danger of missing the goals. The considerable success achieved so far, demonstrates that further progress can be made. To do so requires that efforts be intensified. For UPE to be achieved in the region, governments should address factors that still exclude certain children from school. Possible measures include reducing the costs of schooling, supporting orphans and vulnerable children affected by HIV/AIDS, designing second-chance education programmes and, more generally, improving the quality of education and the school environment.

Countries should implement policies tailored to overcoming multiple sources of exclusion and to giving girls the educational support and physical safety they need to gain access to education. Teachers are critical to EFA. There is an urgent and obvious need to recruit more of them and to improve their quality as well as their status and working conditions, particularly in disadvantaged areas, if the goals are to be met.

A World Bank Independent Evaluation Group (2006) underscores the fact that countries have placed high priority on increasing enrolment in primary schools, but have paid far less attention to the crucial issue of whether children are learning adequately. It recommends that countries and development partners place the same emphasis on learning outcomes as they do on access, with the idea that current investment in primary education would thus have a far greater impact on poverty reduction and national development.

Expanding access to primary schooling does not necessarily imply a trade-off with improving school quality and learning outcomes. Policies can effectively enhance both access and quality – for example, by shifting

more public expenditure to basic education, directing more aid to basic education, increasing efficiency in the allocation of resources across schools and improving pre-service and in-service teacher training.

Countries currently or recently in conflict have no data and so tend not to be included in analysis, but their EFA situation is unlikely to be improving. Creating education opportunities for children living in conflict and post-conflict situations should be a very high priority.

African governments, which have not yet made long-term education plans, now need to do so, with special attention to girls' education. Work must be intensified to develop an effective strategy for providing Africa with a network of first class universities and research centers, as well as reversing the 'brain drain'.

3.5 Health for sustainable development

Health is one of the most serious casualties consequent on the poverty, social exclusion, marginalization and lack of sustainable development in Africa. Africa faces a huge burden of preventable disease and disability that not only causes unnecessary death and suffering, but also undermines economic development and damages the continent's social fabric. The burden is in spite of the availability of suitable tools and technology for prevention and treatment and is largely rooted in poverty and in weak health systems. Yet, where the necessary conditions have been created, there have been important successes (NEPAD Health Strategy, 2003).

The HIV/AIDS epidemic poses an unprecedented challenge, while malaria, tuberculosis, communicable diseases of childhood and non-communicable diseases all add to the untenable burden. Malnutrition underpins much ill health and is linked to more than 50 per cent of all childhood deaths. Non-communicable diseases are a growing cause of both death and disability. Trypanosomiasis is resurging and non-communicable diseases result in substantial preventable death and disability. Women and adolescents face unique health challenges, while deaths from conditions related to pregnancy and childbirth are at horrendous levels. The reasons behind the huge disease burden include: weak health systems and services; inadequate disease control programmes; insufficient empowerment of people to improve their own health; insufficient resources; and widespread poverty, marginalization and displacement on the continent (NEPAD Health Strategy, 2003).

WSSD reaffirmed the MDGs of reducing, by 2015, mortality rates for infants and children under five, by two thirds, and maternal mortality rates by three quarters, of the prevailing rate in 2000. With regard to the reduction of HIV and other diseases, the JPOI target is a reaffirmation of the General Assembly resolution, and complements the MDGs of halting by 2015, and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases. Furthermore, the Plan calls on the international community to support Africa mobilize financial and other support to develop and strengthen health systems that aim to: promote equitable access to health-care services; make available necessary drugs and technology in a sustainable and affordable manner in order to fight and control communicable diseases; build capacity of medical and paramedical personnel; promote indigenous medical knowledge, as appropriate, including traditional medicine; and research and control Ebola disease. The above action areas are similar, and support of the NEPAD health objectives.

3.5.1 Concrete actions taken and progress made

Regional initiatives

The NEPAD Health Strategy was approved by the First Conference of Health Ministers in April 2003 and subsequently adopted in July the same year by the AU Summit in Maputo. The Strategy offers a comprehensive,

integrated approach to addressing disease. It also seeks to address poverty, marginalization and displacement. Various countries have used the NEPAD Health Strategy in advancing their health plans, demonstrating the successful efforts of the NEPAD secretariat and other parties in advocating policies, plans and projects in the African Union/NEPAD Health Strategy. In Central Africa a gap analysis between country health plans and the NEPAD Health Strategy was undertaken at the request of the African Ministers of Health. Based on a review of documents and field visits to countries, proposals on the needed actions at the regional and country levels were submitted to the ministers.

The African Ministers of Health have also adopted the Africa Health Strategy 2007-2015. The strategy calls for strengthening the health systems with the goal of “reducing disease burden through improved resources, systems, policies and management. This will contribute to equity through a system that reaches the poor and those most in need of health care. Investment in health will impact on poverty reduction and overall economic development.

The NEPAD secretariat and an African non-governmental organization, the African Council for Sustainable Health Development, co-hosted a consultation meeting on human resources in the health sector. The secretariat is also working on establishing multi-stakeholder platforms to enable countries obtain the developmental support required to reach the health MDGs by training an adequate number of health workers. It is also working on identifying critical actions to address this challenge, including how to respond to the massive departure of health professionals who seek better opportunities in advanced countries. The Secretariat has collaborated with the World Health Organization (WHO) in addressing the “human resources for health” crisis. This partnership effort has seen the launch of the Global Health Workforce Alliance (UN, 2005; UN, 2006).

The continental consultative meeting on universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, organized by the AU with technical and financial assistance from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and WHO in March 2006, adopted the Brazzaville Commitment, which set the direction for HIV and AIDS policy and defined the universal access targets for Africa until 2010. During the summit on AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria organized in May 2006 in Nigeria with technical support from UNAIDS, Governments adopted the Abuja Call for Accelerated Action Towards Universal Access to HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Services in Africa.

HIV/AIDS has been mainstreamed into the work of all NEPAD programmes, and the provision of antiretroviral treatment on the continent is expanding. The NEPAD “Fight Against AIDS” plan adopted by the NEPAD Steering Committee provides an overarching framework to address HIV/AIDS and its impact on the continent. A joint report prepared by the NEPAD Secretariat and the AU Commission on the “Interim situational report on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and polio: framework on action to accelerate health improvement in Africa” have been endorsed by the Heads of State of the AU. NEPAD has also partnered with WHO in the development of the “treat, train and retain” initiative, which brings together efforts on the AIDS and health system challenges. Collaboration with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, in particular its office for Southern and East Africa, has continued, in particular in the field of mainstreaming, political support and engagement and monitoring and evaluation (UN, 2005; UN, 2006).

International community support

The immediate focus of UNICEF is on capacity building at country, regional and global levels to support countries to achieve MDGs relating to children’s and maternal health. UNICEF, WHO, and the World Bank have developed a joint strategic framework for reaching the MDGs on child survival in Africa. The framework aims to scale up a limited number of high-impact and low-cost interventions that could lead to a 60 percent reduction in under-five mortality (UN, 2007).

In the area of communicable diseases, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) contributed to the upgrading of laboratory facilities and strengthening of molecular capacity in 13 African countries. In collaboration with WHO and the African AIDS Vaccine Programme, IAEA provided support to Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa and Uganda, who are collaborating in the development of an AIDS vaccine. Furthermore, UNAIDS assisted the AU in developing the strategic framework and action plan for AIDS Watch Africa, an initiative launched by eight governments as an advocacy platform and a tool for monitoring the response to the AIDS pandemic and for mobilizing resources within and outside Africa, which was endorsed by the seventh AU Summit. In regard to tuberculosis, WHO support has focused on increasing access to and improving the quality of directly observed treatment, short course services, collaborative TB/HIV activities and public-private partnerships. As of December 2006, WHO had supported the adoption and implementation of the Directly Observed Treatment Strategy (DOTS) in all countries (UN, 2007).

Progress

Child mortality and maternal health

Some 10.8 million children are estimated to die before the age of five every year (Black, Morris, and Bryce 2003 in UN Millennium Project, 2005). Forty-one percent of these deaths occur in SSA. While child mortality has steadily declined in the past two decades, progress on key indicators has started to slow, and in parts of SSA, child mortality is on the rise (UN Millennium Project, 2005a). In SSA, the under-five mortality rate in 2002 was almost double the average for developing countries. Roughly one in six children in Africa does not reach the age of five, and 24 out of the 25 countries with the highest under-five mortality rates are in SSA (UNICEF, 2004 in ECOSOC, 2004). As regards maternal mortality SSA has dramatically higher maternal mortality ratios than any other part of the world. It also accounts for 47 percent of all maternal deaths (UN Millennium Project 2005a). Increase in maternal deaths in Africa is mainly attributed to HIV/AIDS and Malaria. Other causes include lack of birth spacing and domestic violence.

HIV/AIDS

According to the 2006 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, SSA is the worst affected region, with 24.5 million (21.6 million–27.4 million) people living with HIV in 2005. Two million of them are children below age 15. Almost two of every three people infected with HIV in the world are in SSA. The level of infection in 2005 is estimated at around 2.7 million (2.3 million–3.1 million), while about 2 million persons died of AIDS. Women comprise 59 percent (about 13.2 million) of all adults living with HIV in SSA. The number of children orphaned is estimated at about 12 million in 2005.

These estimates are lower than the previously published ones due to “genuine decline in HIV prevalence in several countries” and to “new data that have become available” (2006 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic). The prevalence in SSA is leveling off, while in Kenya, Zimbabwe and in urban areas of Burkina Faso, it has started to decline. Some countries, like Botswana, have recently reported declines in HIV prevalence among young women aged 15 to 24.

The HIV epidemic in Africa varies significantly between and within sub-regions. Southern Africa is the hardest hit. About 860,000 children under age 15, and 6.8 million women are living with HIV in this sub-region. The HIV prevalence among pregnant women attending antenatal clinics is exceptionally high in all countries, except Angola. In Eastern African countries the HIV prevalence either decreased or remained stable. The prevalence among pregnant women is about two percent in Eritrea and seven percent in Kenya. The other countries fall in between these two levels.

West Africa is much less severely affected than the other parts of SSA Africa, with an overall estimate of two percent of HIV prevalence among adults. The highest adult prevalence is in Cote d'Ivoire at 7.1 percent. The situation in central Africa appears to be more serious, where the adult prevalence rate is estimated at 10.7 percent in the Central African Republic, 5.4 percent in Cameroon, 5.3 percent in Congo and 3.2 percent in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The epidemic is growing in the countries of North Africa. The national adult prevalence rate in 2005 was estimated at 1.6 percent in the Sudan and 1.9 percent in Morocco. In the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, HIV prevalence of 18 percent was found among prisoners.

African countries are successfully responding to the HIV epidemic. There is political support and willingness to address HIV/AIDS and its repercussion through adopting multi-sectoral and multi-response strategies. The number of people receiving antiretroviral therapy increased from 100,000 in 2003 to 810,000 in 2005.

Malaria and Tuberculosis

More than 90 percent of the world's malaria burden is in Africa. Malaria takes its greatest toll on young children and pregnant women. At least 20 percent of all childhood deaths in SSA can be attributed to the disease. Pregnant women are at great risk of malaria infections, with complications that affect the survival and development of their newborns (UN Millennium Project 2005b). However, progress has been registered in some countries. In several African countries, the number of TB cases has increased up to fourfold in the past decade, mainly as a result of the HIV epidemic. South Africa and Zimbabwe have a rate of 60 percent or more. In all, it is estimated that some 11 million adults are co-infected with both TB and HIV—2 million in South Africa alone (UN Millennium, Project, 2005c). TB treatment—DOTS—has proven remarkably effective. However, at present, up to 70 percent of African people with HIV lack access to functioning DOTS programmes.

3.5.2 Challenges and constraints

Achievement of sustainable development in Africa is partly conditioned by its successes and failures in improving population health. The disease environment has largely derailed productive capacities and diverted investments and resources from productive sectors. The challenges of the disease burden have been the subject of discussion of the Third Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Health in April 2007. The health systems are too weak and under-resourced to achieve universal access. Therefore, the health interventions are often less than matching the scale of health problems. This is aggravated by the low health knowledge of people and inequitable distribution of health services. The benefits of health reach the urban people more than rural ones. Additionally, the NEPAD Secretariat has identified the lack of African centers of excellence, knowledge institutions and networks of stakeholders as a critical gap in health delivery and management.

3.5.3 Lessons learned and the way forward

Population health will continue to be a major challenge for achieving sustainable development in Africa. Health interventions, when well designed and implemented, usually lead to immediate results often reflected in improving survival of infants, children and women. In Africa health successes are sparse, fragmentary, and unsustainable. Countries vary considerably in their health systems and their efficiencies in delivering services. People, on the other hand, lack knowledge on diseases, their treatments and how and where to access health services. Therefore, health strategies in Africa have to address both the supply and demand sides of health. There is need for heightening political support to public health, improving the efficiency of health delivery systems, promoting home-based health care, and increasing population awareness and accessibility to health services. Well-coordinated health strategies will enable the continent to pursue a sustainable health development path.

3.6 Sustainable human settlements

Africa is the fastest urbanizing region in the world. Rural population is growing at a rate of 2.5 percent per annum, while the urban population is experiencing five to ten percent growth rate per annum (ECA / UN-Habitat, 2003). The highest levels of urbanization in the region are found in the northern and southern subregions, where over half of the total population live in urban agglomerations. In contrast, only about a quarter of the total population in the eastern subregion lives in urban areas. Although the latter subregion is among the least urbanized regions of the world, its urban population grew by 5.8 per cent annually during the 1950-2000 period. The western subregion is also experiencing one of the highest urban population growth rates in Africa at 5.3 percent per annum. On the other hand, some countries in the central and eastern subregion (Gabon and Djibouti) offer the extreme situation where two urban centres account for over 80 percent of the total population living in urban areas (ECA 2004).

Increasing numbers of the world's poor will be city dwellers. UN-HABITAT estimates that 924 million people, or 31.6 percent of the world's urban population, live in slums, where most lack access to basic services and secure tenure (UN-HABITAT, 2005). Slum conditions impact most negatively on the poorest section of the population, particularly women and children. Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) follows South and East Asia in having the third largest number of slum dwellers. North Africa is grouped together with West Asia, and together, have about one-third the number of slum dwellers found in SSA (UN Millennium Project, 2005d).

WSSD reaffirmed the MDG of achieving a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020, as proposed in the "Cities without slums" initiative. It's Africa chapter, the JPOI calls for support to African countries in their efforts to implement the Habitat Agenda and the Istanbul Declaration through initiatives to strengthen national and local institutional capacities in the areas of sustainable urbanization and human settlements, provide support for adequate shelter and basic services and the development of efficient and effective governance systems in cities and other human settlements.

3.6.1 Concrete actions taken and progress made

UN-HABITAT has launched the Global Campaign for Sustainable Urbanization to operationalize at country level, the Habitat Agenda through various Programmes such as Water for African Cities, Urban Observatories, Safer Cities, Good Urban Governance, Secure Tenure Campaign, Sustainable Cities and Local Agenda 21. Furthermore, the UN-HABITAT Regional Office for Africa and the Arab States (ROAAS) supported the Global Campaign launches in various countries. UN-HABITAT provided Technical Assistance in collaboration with Cities Alliance to implement the Plan of Action on slum prevention and upgrading, and Cities Development Strategies (CSD).

Furthermore, UN-HABITAT and other partners have launched the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), which thrives to document best land practices. The initiative will go a long way in improving knowledge management in the land sector, both rural and urban. Ongoing and planned activities within the GLTN framework indicate that Africa will be the first and foremost beneficiary. In collaboration with the European Union and further support from the government of Spain, UN-HABITAT has implemented the Regional Urban Sector Profile for Sustainability (RUSPS), in over 23 countries in Africa, to develop medium to long-term policies, and provide capacity building on gender and participatory budgeting, to local government and civil society partners.

Many African cities are beginning to adopt the ideals, principles and norms of good urban governance. The Global Campaign will also promote security of tenure and the improvement of the living standards of the poor by providing them affordable housing, employment and sustainable livelihoods. Many African countries

have mainstreamed sustainable urbanization into their PRSPs, and have introduced programmes and projects for the provision of basic urban services such as water and sanitation, and for slum upgrading and prevention policies, as well as social housing schemes. With support from ROAAS and the Habitat Programme Managers (24 African and Arab countries), several countries in the region have undertaken initiatives to review and reform national housing and urban development, and policies and legislation for adequate access to land, water and sanitation, security of tenure, slum prevention and upgrading, and shelter.

The responses to the challenges of urbanization vary from city to city. Most have tended to respond on adhoc basis, by employing both sectoral and top-down approaches to solving problems. In some cases, the role of either a city or local government has been dominant, especially in cities that are organized along mayoral principles (UN-Habitat, 2006). Initiatives undertaken by African countries to meet the target of improving the quality of life of 100 million slum dwellers range from review of national housing policies (Namibia), introducing programmes on the provision of basic urban services (Nigeria) and introduction of legislation and policy on housing rights, access to land and secure tenure (Tanzania, South Africa and Namibia) (ECA /UN-Habitat, 2003). Countries such as Egypt, South Africa, and Tunisia have developed specific slum upgrading and prevention policies as an integral part of their national poverty reduction policies and strategies (UN-Habitat, 2006).

Other countries like Burkina Faso, Senegal and Tanzania have shown growing political support for slum upgrading and prevention. However, policies and actions are at variance. With the exception of a few countries such as South Africa, efforts made have not had much impact on housing provision, slum upgrading and poverty reduction. The NEPAD City programme is a laudable initiative, which if successfully implemented, will go a long way in easing the lives of city dwellers, including those living in slums. NEPAD aims to address urbanization and its consequences to make African cities more attractive for economic investment (UN-HABITAT, 2005).

3.6.2 Challenges and constraints

Africa's population is increasing rapidly. The increase in population will also increase the demand for infrastructure and social amenities (water, sanitation, hygiene, schools, recreation facilities, housing, development land, security, food, etc.). The challenge is how to mobilize resources to meet the demands of the rapidly exploding population.

Experience from the advanced industrial countries has shown that the cities and other human settlements in Africa can make significant contributions to social, economic and environmental sustainability in Africa. The challenge is how to efficiently manage rapidly growing urban centres and their slums, and to translate cities in Africa into assets for sustainable development.

The management capacity of the local actors in Africa, especially the municipalities, for effective and sustainable governance is very low. The human, financial and technological resources needed for municipal management have been lacking, unpredictable and unreliable. Without enhancing this capacity there can be no sustainable development at the local level. If there is no sustainable development at the local level, there can be no sustainable development at the national level.

Other constraints and obstacles to the successful implementation of global and regional commitments are: poor governance and prevalence of conflicts and civil unrest; prevalence of diseases, and especially communicable and non-communicable diseases; Limited and / or absence of lending institutions in the financing of low-income housing; slow pace of economic growth and vulnerability of African economies to external shocks; weak institutional capacity in African countries; inadequate access to land for human settlements; weak regulatory and administrative frameworks; inadequate enabling environment for participation of private

sector; non-involvement and/or lack of capacity in local authorities to undertake the expanded developmental role in the management of human settlements; limited participation and involvement of civil society in human settlement development; and natural and man-made disasters.

3.6.3 Lessons learned and the way forward

Lessons learned include the followings: need for innovative and accountable partnerships and broad participation by all stakeholders; Focus on slum upgrading using local resources and technology, and focusing on employment creation, as a point of departure to achieve the goals and objectives of Local Agenda 21, the Habitat Agenda, the MDGs, the JPOI and NEPAD; importance of recognizing the role of the informal sector in the development of policy and long-term economic planning; need to recognize rural-urban linkages in achieving sustainable development; need to enhance and strengthen sub regional and inter-regional cooperation in the development of sustainable urbanization and human settlements.

Preventing slum development and upgrading existing slums, through participatory and systematic approach, requires innovative, affordable and gendered land tools. Considering that more than 70 percent of African city dwellers live in slums and informal settlements in peri-urban areas, innovative land management practices are urgently needed. Global Land Tool Network, a UN-HABITAT initiative involving stakeholders and actors across the globe, is leading a collaborative effort to develop these innovative tools.

The Global Campaign on Sustainable Urbanization (including security of tenure and good urban governance) can be achieved through joint efforts and partnerships, including between organized groups of slum dwellers and local governments, and through increasing awareness against forced evictions and securing land tenure. The Global Campaign also provides a strategic entry point to slum prevention and upgrading, based on social and economic justice.

3.7 Water supply and sanitation

In Africa, access to Water Supply and Sanitation (WSS) is very low. The fact that almost half of the African population suffers from one of six main water-related diseases is attributed to the high proportion of Africa's population without access to safe water and adequate sanitation (ECA, 2003). There are disparities between urban and rural areas, as well as high-income and slum areas in cities. A UN-HABITAT assessment on the water and sanitation situation in the world's cities indicated that in many slums, 150 inhabitants daily queue for one public toilet. A slum dweller in Nairobi or Dar es Salaam has to rely on private water vendors, paying five to seven times more for a litre of water than the average American citizen (UN-HABITAT, 2005). These poor access figures are likely to be compounded by the high population growth rate. Therefore to achieve the MDGs for WSS in Africa, it is estimated that the number of persons served must double from 350 million in 2000 to 700 million by 2015, still leaving 200 million unserved.⁵

WSSD underscored the importance of provision of clean drinking water and adequate sanitation to protect human health and the environment. In this respect it endorsed the Millennium Declaration target on drinking water and adopted one on sanitation. The JPOI calls for actions among other things to launch a programme of actions, with financial and technical assistance, to achieve the target on safe drinking water and adequate sanitation. With specific reference to Africa, the Plan calls for actions to provide access to potable domestic water, hygiene education and improved sanitation and waste management at the household level. It indicates that this could be done through initiatives to encourage public and private investment in water supply

⁵ <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTWSS/0,,contentMDK:20280170~menuPK:518142~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:337302,00.html>

and sanitation that give priority to the needs of the poor within stable and transparent national regulatory frameworks provided by Governments. Water and sanitation is an integral component of the NEPAD infrastructure programme, and has as one of its objectives, ensuring sustainable access to safe and adequate clean water supply and sanitation, especially for the poor.

3.7.1 Concrete actions taken and progress made

Regional initiatives

At regional level, the African Minister's Council on Water (AMCOW) has been established and is actively engaged in policy coordination and advocacy, and providing support to national, subregional and regional initiatives aimed at among other things, achieving the target of halving the proportion of people in Africa without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015. The African Water Vision 2025 has been developed, launched and is being implemented. The Vision sets out targets and goals for improving access to water and water resource management. One of its key messages is "provide safe and adequate water and sanitation for all, urgently" (UN Water/Africa, 2006).

UN Water/Africa has launched the preparation of the Africa Water Development Report (AWDR) to provide African countries and other stakeholders the necessary tools and skills to monitor the goals and targets of the African Water Vision. The AWDR 2006 has been released. The NEPAD Short-Term Action Plan (STAP) on infrastructure, which includes projects on Water Supply and Sanitation (WSS), is under implementation. The African Water Facility hosted by the African Development Bank (AfDB) has been launched and it is operational. The Facility aims to improve project preparation directly and indirectly through grants for building capacity in areas such as public and financial management, skills and knowledge transfer, research and data collection and training (UN Water/Africa, 2006).

In collaboration with African Development Bank, the UN-HABITAT Water for Cities Programme is currently being implemented in 14 countries and 17 cities, as well as in the Lake Victoria Basin, in order to contribute to MDG 7, target 10, on improving water and sanitation, as well as to improve living conditions in slums and secondary towns of Africa.

National actions

At the national level, many countries including Ethiopia, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Madagascar, Rwanda, Senegal and Tanzania have developed and/or updated national strategies and action plans on WSS within the context of PRSPs in order to meet the MDGs targets relevant to the sector. Countries have also embarked on or undertaken policy and institutional reforms on WSS. For instance, Benin has embarked on a policy reform programme that includes updating its Water Charter, creating a co-ordination unit for the sector, as well as National Water Council, and drafting a national policy for water. In the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the country's new constitution acknowledges access to water as a basic human right, while its PRSP acknowledges the need to restructure the water and sanitation sectors. Other countries that have carried out similar reform efforts include Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda Senegal, Tanzania and Zambia. Some countries such as Rwanda have substantially increased funding to the water sector as part of the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). In 2005, the Rwanda water sector performed very well, with water and sanitation expenditures tripling, compared to 2004. As a result, access to clean water was provided to an additional 598,000 people (AMCOW et al., 2006).

Progress

In spite of commendable efforts, SSA lags behind the rest of the world on progress to meet the drinking water target (AMCOW et al., 2007; WHO and UNICEF 2004). With coverage of 58 per cent in 2002, up from 49 percent in 1990, SSA remains one of the subregions with the lowest drinking water coverage levels. It falls far short of the progress needed to achieve the MDG target of 75 percent coverage by 2015. In contrast, North Africa is classified among the regions that have achieved coverage levels of close to 90 percent or more, and are on track to meeting the target on drinking water (WHO and UNICEF, 2004).

With respect to adequate sanitation in the region, North Africa is on track to halve the proportion of people without basic sanitation by 2015. SSA on the other hand is clustered among the regions, which have not made sufficient progress towards this target. In fact in SSA, the absolute number of people without access to sanitation actually increased – from 335 million in 1990 to 440 million people by the end of 2004. It is reported that this number may increase even further if trends do not improve (UN, 2007).

International community support

Development partners have played an instrumental role in funding and providing technical assistance to the WSS sector in many African countries. For instance, the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC) is currently the lead donor for the water sector in Niger (AMCOW et al., 2006). In the DRC, donors including the World Bank, the African Development Bank (AfDB), the European Union, Japan, Belgium and Germany, are expected to provide the bulk of funds, over the next five years. In Malawi, the World Bank financed a large water project that ended in 2003 and plans were underway to commence another project in 2007 (UN Water/Africa, 2006). Overall, World Bank investments in the WSS sector in the region have been increasing year by year, particularly through budget support.⁶

The AfDB is providing assistance to NEPAD to implement its water and sanitation infrastructure development programme with a view to enhancing regional integration. To this effect AfDB is assisting NEPAD in the formulation of the Medium to Long-Term Strategic Framework (MLTSF) for Water and Sanitation Infrastructure Programme.⁷ Under the auspices of UNHABITAT, the Water for African Cities Programme is being implemented with the aim of reducing the urban water crisis in African cities. It is reported that the programme is the first comprehensive initiative to support African countries to effectively manage the growing urban water crisis and protect the continent's threatened water resources and aquatic ecosystems from the increasing volume of land-based pollution from the cities.⁸ With financial support from the Government of the Netherlands, UN-HABITAT in collaboration with the Governments of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda has embarked on a water and sanitation project in four towns around Lake Victoria.

3.7.2 Challenges and constraints

Among the major challenges and constraints facing the water and sanitation sector are: inadequate integration or weak linkages between the water sector and the PRSs in some countries, which has contributed to limited funding /under investment in water supply and sanitation; weak institutional frameworks and lack of capacity, especially among decentralized systems; obsolete water and sanitation legislative text or its absence in some cases; limited enforcement of local laws and regulations relating to sanitation and hygiene; conflicts that lead to the poor maintenance and destruction, and thus deterioration of the sector's infrastructure; poor co-ordination

6 <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTWSS/0,,contentMDK:20280170~menuPK:518142~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:337302,00.html> Accessed on 3rd September 2007

7 http://www.afdb.org/portal/page?_pageid=473,969995&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL Accessed on 3rd September 2007.

8 <http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?cid=2154&catid=460&typeid=24&subMenuId=0> Accessed on 4th September 2007.

among sector stakeholders, both internal actors and external support actors; inadequate involvement of local NGOs, civil society and the private sector; and weak monitoring and evaluation systems which constrain tracking of results and enhanced targeting of WSS programmes and activities. In many countries, progress in the development of water supply and sanitation infrastructure is outpaced by high population growth rates. Additionally, the depletion and pollution of water resources in some regions and the projected impacts of climate change in the region pose serious challenges to WSS.

3.7.3 Lessons learned and the way forward

Although commendable progress has been made towards improving water supply and provision of adequate sanitation, more effort is required in the region as whole if the MDGs are to be met.

In light of the limited water and sanitation infrastructure and in order to keep up with the projected population growth, there is need for long-term strategies and plans for investments in and the development of urban and rural water and sanitation infrastructures in many countries. Furthermore, institutional and legislative reforms need to be expedited and the implementation of WSS policies and programmes harmonized among local actors, as well as development partners operating within countries in the region. Similarly, policies and guidelines for improved hygiene and sanitation practices, particularly at decentralized levels should be developed or improved and promoted.

There is limited correspondence between financial resource allocations and policy commitments on WSS in some countries, especially in rural areas. Stronger linkages are therefore needed between WSS strategies and national poverty reduction/development frameworks, as well as budgeting processes. Resource mobilization at all levels needs to be stepped up, and increased funding should be made available, particularly to local actors to scale-up well-targeted investments in water supply and sanitation.

There is a strong need to increase capacity and ensure the full and active participation of the private sector, civil society and local NGOs in WSS programmes and to work in strong partnership with governments and development cooperation partners. In spite of their infancy, decentralized systems such as districts and municipalities are increasingly mandated to plan, implement and maintain their WSS schemes. There is therefore need to develop capacity among local authorities and provide them with support to exercise their mandates in the implementation of water supply and sanitation policies and programmes at decentralized levels.

Information and knowledge management and sharing on WSS should be promoted to support public awareness programmes and decision-making. Furthermore monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress, particularly regarding access, financing, and cost-effectiveness, especially at decentralized levels need to be developed or improved.

Climate change threatens to wreck havoc on water supply and sanitation. Climate change adaptation measures should therefore be integrated into water supply and sanitation improvement programmes and activities at all levels.

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