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THE YOUNG FACE OF NEPAD

Children and Young People in the New Partnership for Africa's Development

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This paper suggests that the aspirations of NEPAD's initiators, partners and stakeholders for progress, peace and poverty-reducing growth should find their foundation in Africa's human capacity development – which in turn must start with Africa's children. Children and young people represent more than half of Africa's population. Substantial and sustained programmes in health, nutrition, basic education, clean water and social protection are essential investments in the development of these young citizens – and in Africa's future economic growth. Combating HIV/AIDS and making decisive progress on girls' education are especially crucial for progress.

Young Africans have the potential to be the engine that helps propel the NEPAD process in all parts of the continent. If given the right opportunities by African leaders, at all levels, young people will be positive and dynamic partners for NEPAD, and will champion the bold actions that are necessary to overcome the unacceptable state of Africa's children.

FOREWORD

"Today's investment in children is tomorrow's peace, stability, security, democracy and sustainable development." This is taken from the African Common Position forwarded to the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children, an 'Africa Fit for Children'. The statement captures an essential reality of our continent today: Africa is a continent of the young. More than half of our population consists of children and young people. In that context, it is only by providing young Africans with health, education and the confidence in a bright future that we will achieve our common goals of social and economic development. Only if we fully harness the energies of youth can Africa hope to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and effectively meet development challenges.

Our common aims, laid out in the Millennium Development Goals, emphasize the welfare of children and the realization of their rights. Increasing child survival and ensuring basic education for all lies at the heart of these goals.

Over the years, we have made many promises and commitments to our children. These include the landmark Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children and the Millennium Development Goals. Africa has also mapped out its promises in the Africa Common Position for an 'Africa Fit for Children' and individual countries have developed National Plans of Action for Children. It is clear that we do not need to make any additional promises to children. Instead we need to honour those commitments already made. This is the era for implementation.

This document, *The Young Face of NEPAD*, lays out tangible steps so that we can practically and effectively move towards meeting our fundamentally important aspirations.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is the instrument for delivering on our promises to children. It calls for "bold and imaginative leadership" and for partnerships between African governments and their citizens, and between Africa and the international community. Ensuring the rights and welfare of children must lie at the heart of these partnerships and leadership must acknowledge the pivotal role of young people.

Up to now, we have been failing our children and young people. While Africa accounts for only 12 per cent of the world's population, it is home to 43 per cent of the world's child deaths, 50 per cent of maternal deaths, 70 per cent of people living with HIV/AIDS, and a staggering 90 per cent of the world's children orphaned by AIDS. Our obligation is not just to move towards implementing our commitments, but to a radical and accelerated programme of realizing the fundamental rights of the next generation of Africans.

Among the fast track actions necessary to transform the prospects for young Africans, let us focus on just a few.

First, we must overcome the scourge of HIV/AIDS that is blighting the lives and prospects for our children. Africans born in the years after independence could expect to live to almost 60 years, but children born in the continent today face a savagely reduced life expectancy. The chief reason being that, using today's projections, the lifetime chance of contracting HIV and dying of AIDS is no less than one in five. This is a truly shocking prospect and one that demands our collective energies to reverse.

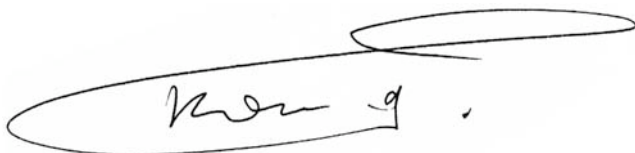
Second, we must not forget the many other essential needs of our young people. There are key steps towards guaranteeing their health, including completing the eradication of polio and guinea worm disease, increasing coverage of immunization programmes and rolling back malaria, with particular emphasis on the massive use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets. We need to improve nutrition and greatly expand safe drinking water and sanitation services, including ensuring that every school in Africa has separate latrines for girls and boys.

Education is key to the future of Africa. This demands not just guaranteeing that every boy and girl obtains a basic education, but also opening the doors of secondary and tertiary education. We must bring information and communication technology to every classroom and open the world of learning to our students. It is through Africa's efforts in science and technology that we will find the solutions to our health crises, the degradation of our natural environment and our lack of food security. It is Africa's young people that will master these technologies and enable Africa to participate as a full player in a high-technology globalized world.

This is an era demanding accountability. We now need to deliver on our common promises. We must monitor our investments and actions, as well as their outcomes. We need to share those outcomes publicly and be honest in acknowledging where our investments and choices have been effective or not. The ultimate test of our success will be the well-being of children.

Governments alone cannot achieve these goals. The private sector and civil society – and especially children and young people themselves – need to be fully engaged. As the UN Secretary-General reminded us in his report to the Special Session on Children in 2002, “The lesson of the last decade is that it is not enough for leaders to promise something, even when resources are available to back it up, unless the whole of society is mobilized to achieve the goal.” For the whole of society to embrace and realize NEPAD’s goals, we need to ensure the participation of young Africans. We need to provide significant new opportunities for children and young people in the development process. We need to enlist their contributions as key actors in solving the problems that they face.

Only then will we have an ‘Africa Fit for Children’.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Konare', enclosed within a large, hand-drawn oval.

H.E. Mr. Alpha Oumar Konare
Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amoako', written in a cursive style.

Mr. K.Y. Amoako
Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nkuhlu', written in a cursive style.

Professor Wiseman Nkuhlu
Chairman of the NEPAD Steering Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bellamy', written in a cursive style.

Ms. Carol Bellamy
Executive Director of the United Nations Children’s Fund

I. INTRODUCTION

"In fulfilling its promise, the New Partnership for Africa's Development must give hope to the emaciated African child that the 21st century is Africa's century."

NEPAD Framework Document, paragraph 207

"We recognize that the future of Africa lies with the well-being of its children and youth. The prospect for socio-economic transformation of the continent rests with investing in the young people of the continent. Today's investment in children is tomorrow's peace, stability, security, democracy and sustainable development."

'Africa Fit for Children', The African Common Position, Paragraph 6

This paper is intended as a contribution to the NEPAD process. It is founded in the belief that the New Partnership for Africa's Development reflects the aspirations of African families and communities and the promise of its children and grandchildren – girls and boys alike. It is also based on the conviction that radical action is needed to avert the loss – in terms of human survival as well as human capacity – of much of the potential of today's generation of African children. Improvements in the situation of a country's children are good indicators of the quality of its governance – and it is clear that determined action and leadership are needed to grasp the fruits for Africa's future of the survival, growth and development of these children.

The time is right – and is now – to ensure that NEPAD is built around the obligations already assumed by African leaders and their governments to children and young people. The New Partnership can be founded on the potential that these youngsters represent. As the NEPAD document's concluding words proclaim, this new process must give hope to the African child that the 21st century will be Africa's century.

However, without sustained and dramatic efforts by African leaders, civil society and international partners to ensure the rights and well-being of African children, and to mobilize the contributions of young Africans, this hope will remain a dim one – if not an impossible dream.

This paper seeks to contribute to Africa's fulfilment of this hope. We believe that the New Partnership can be energized by a common global and continental concern for children, and by the recognition that human capacity – the foundation for sustained development – is best achieved by investing in children and young people and realizing their rights. The proposal is to sharpen the focus on children and young people in NEPAD – to give it a 'young face'. We review what has worked and what has not worked for children in the last decades; propose strategies for human development within the framework of NEPAD, the Millennium Development Goals (Millennium Development Goals) and national Poverty Reduction Strategies; and identify priority actions for and with children and young people which – in the favourable macroeconomic and institutional climate sought by NEPAD and the African Union – will help ensure sustained progress.

A set of potential priority actions is laid out – a ‘fast track’ upon which African leaders can demonstrate and accelerate their commitments to improve the lives of children. These proposals can build on African experience and available delivery systems, and can form a key part of national development strategies within the NEPAD framework.

Possible fast-track areas to make a difference for Africa’s children¹

- **Bold political leadership against HIV/AIDS and prevention of HIV transmission among young people, especially girls and infants** – including explicit recognition that HIV/AIDS is the biggest single threat to economic survival, social stability and young people in Africa, and acting on this recognition through massive mobilization, tested medical interventions such as provision of nevirapine, and by placing life-saving information in every home and school.
- **Realizing the rights of orphans and other vulnerable children to a decent standard of living, health care and schooling** – including through removing barriers and reducing the costs of schooling and health care to levels that they can afford, and channelling available welfare benefits directly to these children and their caregivers.
- **Bringing malaria, measles and malnutrition rapidly and decisively under control** – including through approaches such as the use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets, diarrhoeal disease control and accelerated immunization, micronutrient supplementation, and communication with families for good nutritional practices, coupled with provision of nutritional support to households affected by HIV/AIDS and emergencies.
- **Capturing the goals of universal access to basic health services and universal primary education** – including through revitalized sector reforms, budget reallocations and practical administrative steps that put children’s interests first – **above all, the education of girls**; in addition to specific supporting measures such as ensuring clean water and sanitary facilities in every school, and helping students to avoid pregnancy or resume their education after giving birth.
- **A decisive move to give children better protection against all forms of violence, discrimination, abuse and exploitation** – through a combination of legislation and legal review, conflict-resolution initiatives, raising of public awareness, bold efforts by political leaders and civil society actors to change attitudes and expose abuses, ending impunity, and ensuring local monitoring and care for the most vulnerable.

Among these urgent actions, two are of special priority. As put by the UN Secretary-General in his statement to the UN General Assembly’s September 2002 meeting on NEPAD, “combating HIV/AIDS and promoting girls’ education are particularly central to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and realizing the promise NEPAD holds for all of Africa...besides being key Millennium Development Goals in their own right, promotion of girls’ education and control of HIV/AIDS would be the most powerful enablers for the achievement of all the other Millennium Development Goals in Africa.”

¹ These and other potential fast-track actions are further detailed in Section IV.

II. OVERVIEW: CHILDREN AS THE CORNERSTONE FOR AFRICA'S NEW PARTNERSHIP

"Africa's development begins with the quality of its human resources."

NEPAD Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance, paragraph 21

Many promises have been made to Africa's children. The obligations are reflected in the almost universally ratified Convention on the Rights of the Child and in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The promises are found in national policies – including National Plans of Action for Children – and in the Declarations of the 1990 World Summit for Children, the 1992 Organization of African Unity International Conference on Assistance to African Children, the 2000 Millennium Summit, the 2002 United Nations Special Session on Children² and the African Common Position³ that preceded it. The promises – and the country goals and targets which took them further – have been largely consistent for the last 12 years. There is little argument about what needs to be done. It is also clear, from the best examples, what can be achieved. But to actually meet these obligations and achieve these goals, we cannot afford to continue with 'business as usual'. As recognized by NEPAD: "unless something new and radical is done, Africa will not achieve the International Development Goals" – goals that focus largely on children and youth.⁴

Reaching the development goals in Africa will be extremely difficult

Business as usual – and the absence of bold leadership and new partnerships for children – would mean that:

The goal of reducing child mortality by two thirds by 2015 would not be reached until 2140 at the earliest.⁵ In fact, we have already seen some worsening of mortality rates in 13 African countries in the 1990s. This is due to the stagnation or decline of health care for childhood diseases and the aggravation caused by conflict, failure to uproot poverty, massive undernutrition and the explosion of HIV/AIDS. A number of African countries have registered significant drops in child mortality rates, but most of these are now being halted or reversed.

² In 'A World Fit for Children', the outcome document of the Special Session on Children, governments adopted 21 goals and associated targets for children, building on the goals of the World Summit for Children and applying lessons from the 1990s. These goals fall into the following four priority areas: a) promoting healthy lives; b) providing quality education; c) protecting against abuse, exploitation and neglect; and d) combating HIV/AIDS.

³ 'Africa Fit for Children: The African Common Position as Africa's Contribution to the United Nations General Assembly Session on Children: Declaration and Plan of Action', Pan African Forum on the Future of Children, OAU and UNICEF, Cairo, May 2001.

⁴ The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), October 2001, paragraph 70.

⁵ *The Millennium Development Goals in Africa: Promises and Progress*, UNDP and UNICEF, June 2002.

The destruction caused by HIV/AIDS would continue relentlessly. Today's situation in large parts of the continent is truly catastrophic. Tomorrow's probable trends – without leadership, determined partnerships and massive levels of mobilization – are even worse. Some 28.5 million Africans alive today are HIV-positive, including approximately 3 million infants and very young children, plus many teenagers, mostly girls. All are likely to die if nothing changes fast. Among the child survivors, over 10 million have already lost one or both parents to the effects of HIV and AIDS, and this number will multiply. Seven African countries now record adult HIV prevalence rates above 25 per cent. And already in over a dozen countries, the impact of the pandemic has led to plunging life expectancy. The staffing of schools, health facilities and workplaces is becoming ever more difficult. All this is directly undermining the economic security of both households and nations and threatens Africa's social stability. It is relentlessly tearing to shreds the gains of African independence and is forcing family after family, village after village, city after city, far deeper into poverty.

Africa has little hope for the future if the AIDS pandemic is not halted and reversed. But there is an opportunity: Almost all 5- to 10-year-old African children are free of HIV today. **The need is overwhelming to keep this generation free from AIDS** so that they can reach their most productive years alive and healthy. The pandemic must be confronted head-on by Africa and its partners – with young people themselves as key partners for change.

The goal of universal primary education by 2015 would not be achieved until 2100.⁶ At present, only seven countries, notably in North Africa, are on track to achieve this basic education goal (UNDP/UNICEF, 2002). These countries have managed to improve the coverage and efficiency of their education systems and to raise domestic public resources to invest in the minds and skills of their children, improving access and increasing quality. But the majority of African countries are either moderately or seriously off track, including in educating their girls. Even those that have registered strong results at primary level see a rapid drop-off in schooling as children enter into early adolescence, leaving these young citizens poorly prepared for adulthood. It is feared that by 2015 more than half of the world's out-of-school youth and children will be Africans. And without wide-scale success in meeting basic education goals, the gains for family health, nutrition, productivity and citizenship that flow from human learning will not be realized for Africa's youngest and future generations.

The goal of reducing by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water would also not be achieved. The costs in deaths, illness and time and energy devoted to lifting and carrying distant, dirty water would continue to mount – and Africa cannot afford them. Deaths and illness – cholera, diarrhoea – related to unsafe water and poor sanitation will also continue to blight the lives of people who are poor. African cannot afford this either. The current rate of progress must be quadrupled – and this can be done, drawing from the successful experiences on the continent.

The goal of reducing poverty by half would not be achieved. Low-income poverty is the single greatest contributor to Africa's failure to realize the rights of its children. Africa needs to treble its average economic growth rates to achieve the target of halving poverty. Its recent performance, notwithstanding some outstanding success stories, indicates that the number of Africans struggling to live on the equivalent of one dollar a day or less will remain unchanged by 2015. The majority of people who are poor – and the vast majority of the poorest – are children and women.

⁶ Ibid.

But real progress is possible...

Despite slow progress, overall – with not only the spread of HIV/AIDS, but also the overhang of near-worthless debt and the growth of population serving to ‘raise the bar’ even further – there have been successes in some countries and sectors and in many communities. The near-eradication of polio and Guinea worm disease, the widespread iodization of salt, the improvement of child-related laws and juvenile justice systems, reforms to health and education systems, sustainable approaches to local clean water management, initiatives to expand access to primary education and dynamic post-conflict recovery are all areas where success stories can be found in Africa, and around which momentum and future growth can be built. The central factor in virtually all of these cases has not been the arrival of special funds so much as the presence of strong political leadership, linked to the mobilization of families and civil society.

... starting with children

It is worth recalling that the achievement of these goals is important not just because they are good in themselves and will help the children concerned. Advances for Africa’s children – as part of a comprehensive effort by society to realize their rights – are a ‘public good’ for Africa and the world.⁷ A healthy and well-educated population is the foundation for rapid and sustained development, because people living to their full potential are the only actors who can raise productivity, make use of new technologies, ensure that Africa plays a more central role in international trade and the global economy – in the process mounting a serious assault on poverty. And a population will not become healthy and well-educated if its children are not.

Women, men, young people and societies that remain poor in health and education will be unable to play their part in the New Partnership. For Africa to unlock the future, NEPAD’s initiative must emphasize a process of human development which starts with children. It must ensure the rapid improvement and expansion of social services, quality learning opportunities, child care, the protection and participation of young people, all within a context of peace, security and political and macro-economic stability.

If Africa is to make a breakthrough for children on these fronts, exceptional efforts for human development are required of its leaders. NEPAD provides a platform and a process for changing past patterns and priorities. NEPAD makes it clear that development overall – including a quantum leap in aggregate economic growth rates and thereby the continent’s escape from low-income poverty – is only possible by taking a path that builds the capacities and transforms the productivity of Africa’s human resources. These Africans will then build and improve their institutions and the systems with which they operate. The place to start is with priority to children and youth – in programmes and policies, as in families and communities – and with children’s rights, which encompass their survival, growth, development, protection and participation. The mobilization of young people for their own development and for creative contributions to Africa’s development is a further hidden resource for NEPAD to tap.

⁷ A ‘public good’ is something that is not owned by any individual or institution, but brings benefit to all people in a society, a continent or across the world. Examples include a clean environment, the eradication of a disease or an increase in knowledge (see Kaul, Grunberg and Stern, 1999).

“We know more clearly now than ever before that if development is to be sustained and poverty to be reduced, it will require the strong and active participation of children, women and men in the decisions that affect them. People must be empowered to be key actors in their development. This applies equally to children, whose participation and self-expression – based on their evolving capacities and with respect for parental guidance – should be valued by adults”. (United Nations Secretary-General, *We the Children*, 2001)

Governments in partnership with civil society and business – a golden ring

But action by governments alone will not be enough to fulfil the promise of an Africa Fit for Children. While governments and political leaders are accountable for action and progress, partnerships are needed, with civil society, young people and families. Most families need no urging to put children first. Local interest groups and NGOs – ranging from neighbourhood day-care groups to community water maintenance, child rights monitoring and welfare committees – support families and are supported by them. Young people can be dynamic and effective actors for the betterment of their families, schools (if they have them) and communities.

As recognized by the African Common Position in ‘Africa Fit for Children’, the participation of young people and children is central to tackling issues ranging from peace-building to HIV infection. Young people’s participation is a matter of rights as well as development progress and it needs the support of governments. The African Common Position seeks to bring together “people’s movements, youth movements, professional networks, artists, intellectuals, mass media, the business community, women groups, religious and traditional leaders, children, the military, adolescents, political leaders as well as civil society organizations in order to advocate for the rights of children and tackle problems affecting them.” These ambitions are true to experience: Society counts on the contributions of all its members for effective development.

As put by the UN Secretary-General: “The lesson of the last decade is that it is not enough for leaders to promise something, even when the resources are available to back it up, unless the whole of society is mobilized to achieve the goal. The most striking advances towards the goals of the World Summit for Children...were achieved through this combination of strong partnerships and sustained political commitment, involving the broadest possible range of people.”⁸

The private sector, in turn, must play a leading role in generating economic opportunities, jobs and taxable surplus for investment in basic services. A vibrant private sector that pursues profit in a context of social responsibility and efficient regulation is the necessary complement to government leadership and action. The ‘golden ring’ of civil society – including communities and their young movers and shakers – together with enterprise and public leaders, can pave the way for the right types of investment in all children. It can provide them with the tools to build a richer and more secure Africa in which no child goes hungry and no person’s potential is wasted.

⁸ *We the Children*, page 95.

International partners and enhanced partnerships in support of African action for children

Africa has some of the resources and much of the experience that it needs to achieve these goals and meet these obligations – but not all. Such is the scale of the challenge and the threats to progress – and such are the costs and consequences of failure – that an extraordinary effort is also needed from Africa’s international partners. They too have made many commitments to children, and these are not yet fully reflected in their cooperation partnerships. The commitments need to be embodied in an increased scale of international cooperation involving greater resource flows, in its focus that still gives only a minor place to direct investment in people, including children and people who are very poor, as well as in its composition (which remains biased to non-African goods and experts) and modalities (which still often involve fragmented collections of projects with high transaction costs). As envisaged by NEPAD, international cooperation needs to be reshaped around coordinated, efficient and long-term support to programme delivery and the building of capacities – in systems, institutions and among key actors at all levels of society.

Rethinking, restructuring and reallocation around new priorities – and new ways of doing business – are needed on both sides of these partnerships for Africa’s development. NEPAD is expected to help accelerate this restructuring, and to bring a new dimension of mutual accountability for results. Progress towards goals for children could be a benchmark and, if successful, a hallmark of these enhanced partnerships. Promising frameworks have already been put in place by many countries and these can support new approaches to cooperation in which all partners accept a measure of accountability for the results, including improvements in the lives and prospects of children. However, it is time for young people, children and people who are poor, to become full members of these partnerships.

While funding needs to be stepped up (see Section VII, page 36), all investments in children and their families need to be made more effectively. For this to happen, key actors from all sides of the ‘golden ring’ need to be involved. And current budgets as well as the additional resources to be generated by NEPAD and country-level frameworks need to focus strongly on sectors, priorities and proven good practices for human development in Africa.

NEPAD provides an unprecedented opportunity for radical and sustained action for Africa’s children – and Africa’s children provide the cornerstone for the hopes and success of NEPAD.

III. INVESTING IN AFRICA'S CHILDREN

Development goals and investment in children converge

There are compelling economic, ethical and security reasons – and indeed cultural reasons – for investing in the children and young people who constitute more than half of Africa's population. As discussed already, for NEPAD to be successful, and to build the human capacities needed for its objectives, it needs an explicit focus on the survival, growth and development of children. This is neither a charitable gesture nor an extravagance. NEPAD's commitment to human development and poverty reduction makes such a focus inevitable.

Investment in children is entirely consistent with the international development targets that are encapsulated in the Millennium Development Goals. Most of the Millennium Development Goals directly concern children, and all of them will directly affect children's futures. They reflect also the goals adopted by the UN Special Session on Children held in 2002. More than this, the Millennium Development Goals largely depend on each other for their achievement. Most will not be reached in Africa without a strong, sustained priority across the continent to children and actions that focus on the services and institutions on which children most depend.

Convergence between the Millennium Agenda and the 'World Fit for Children' Declaration

Goals of 'A World Fit for Children' (Outcome Document of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children)	The Millennium Agenda: The Millennium Summit Declaration and Millennium Development Goals
Promote healthy lives	MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger MDG 4: Reduce child mortality MDG 5: Improve maternal health MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
Promote quality education	MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
Combat HIV/AIDS	MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
Protect children against abuse, exploitation and violence	Millennium Summit Declaration, Section 6 – Protecting the Vulnerable

The rights of Africa's children, a global public good

The overview to this paper has put forward the idea that the rights and well-being of Africa's children are public goods. This is also an idea with global scope, and provides an argument that Africa can make to the world: The future of Africa's children is, in fact, a matter of global concern. In this era of globalization and interdependence, the poverty, conflicts and disease that engulf large numbers of people in a whole continent are bound to affect people everywhere. The world cannot develop in security and prosperity while a major region is mired in poverty and suffering.

Global achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is highly dependent on Africa's progress. As put by the UN Secretary-General, "NEPAD will not be a success if Africa fails to achieve the MDGs – and the world as a whole cannot achieve the MDGs unless they are achieved in Africa."⁹ To illustrate this: Sub-Saharan Africa today has some 10 per cent of the world's population, 70 per cent of the world's HIV/AIDS cases, 80 per cent of AIDS deaths and 90 per cent of children orphaned by AIDS. In stark contrast to trends in other regions, today's southern African children can expect to live shorter lives than their grandparents. The situation is better in North Africa, but there is a dearth of reliable data on HIV infection, which limits the ability of policy makers there to generate a broad momentum for preventive action.

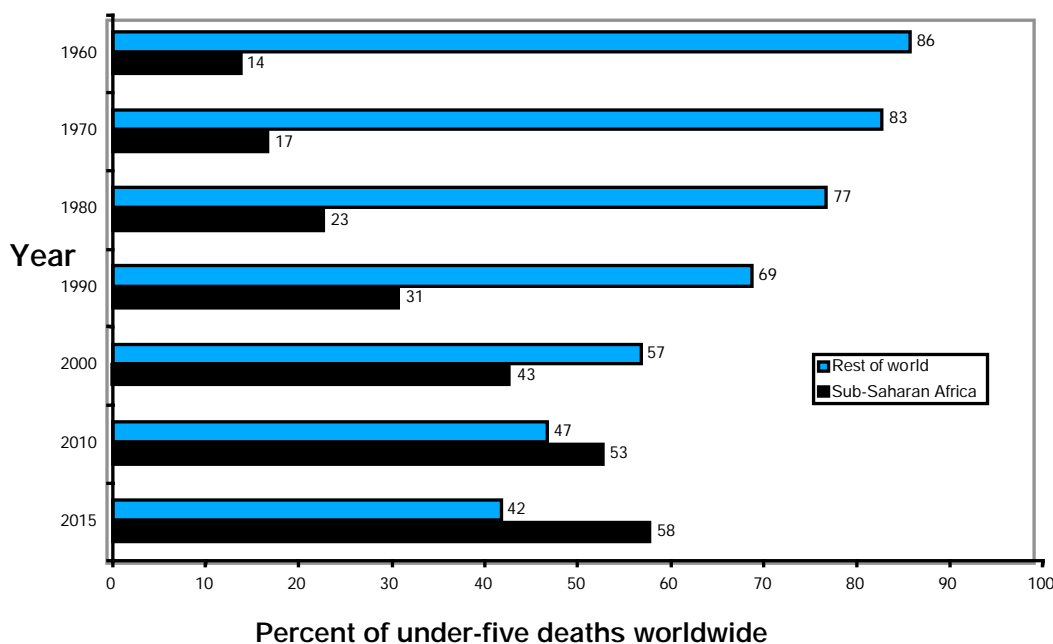
For Africa as a whole, there has been some improvement in preventing young child deaths during the 1990s: Under-five mortality across the continent is estimated at around 12 per cent of newborns.¹⁰ But sub-Saharan Africa is still the part of the world with the highest child death rates – 17 per cent of its newborns do not live to the age of five – and it contains 9 of the 14 countries in the world where child mortality has actually increased in recent years. Its share of young child mortality in the world has risen from around 14 per cent in the 1960s to 43 per cent in the year 2000. In the coming decade, Africa's share of global under-five mortality – the subject of MDG 4 – will probably exceed that of the rest of the world combined, as shown below:

⁹ Statement of the Secretary-General to the Meeting of the UN General Assembly on NEPAD, 16 September 2002.

¹⁰ African Development Bank, estimate for 2000.

Growing share of under-five mortality rate in sub-Saharan Africa

Projections based on progress in the 1990s



While modest gains have been made in expanding access to improved water sources, less than two thirds of all Africans¹¹ are estimated to have access to an improved water source. Families in sub-Saharan Africa in particular have the poorest access to safe drinking water in the world, while access to sanitation has remained static at about 54 per cent. Meanwhile, the weakness of public health systems is reflected in the resurgence of major child-killers, such as malaria and cholera.

Maternal mortality (MDG 5) is highest in Africa. Some 52 per cent of maternal deaths occur in Africa, which has an overall maternal mortality rate of about 640 deaths for every 100,000 live births.¹² Women south of the Sahara in particular face a very high (1-in-13) lifetime risk of dying in pregnancy or childbirth. Persistent patterns of gender discrimination, coupled with poverty and lack of investment in essential obstetric services, are among the contributing factors.

The net primary school enrolment rate rose from 54 per cent in 1990 to 60 per cent in 1998. However, this rate is still the lowest of any region. Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for nearly 40 per cent of the world's children out of school, and no progress overall has been made in closing Africa's gender gap in education. This seriously jeopardizes the worldwide achievement of Millennium Development Goals 2 and 3, as well as other development goals. And children out of school are especially vulnerable to exploitative labour and other forms of exploitation and abuse.

¹¹ About 62 per cent, African Development Bank.

¹² African Development Bank.

There are additional reasons why investment in the well-being of Africa's children should be considered a global public good and a priority for national and international public policy.¹³ Firstly, market-driven actions alone cannot deliver health, education and security. Realizing these rights demands public action. As African governments at present do not have the all resources and capacities needed to deliver these goods, it also demands partnerships – with civil society, the private sector and the international community.

Secondly, the benefits are not only for the children and families directly concerned, they flow to the whole of society and to succeeding generations. Children and young people who become familiar with democratic and tolerant behaviour are the bedrock of a peaceful society. Children who are healthy, well-educated and optimistic about the future will themselves bring up the next generation to be more healthy, better educated and better national and world citizens. In this respect, realizing the rights of African children is an inter-generational public good.

Thirdly, the rights of African children are of worldwide concern and benefit. In a globalized world, no country can be considered remote or isolated from any other. The whole world has reason to be concerned about the poorest and most unstable regions of the globe. If the collective conscience of the wealthy corners of the world is not powerful enough, their reasons for concern should be evident from the flow of refugees, the incubation of terrorism, the spread of anger and despair, the loss of environmental assets and the emergence of new diseases and disease strains. Africa's problems affect the world. Solutions to those problems benefit the world.

The idea of the health, security and education of Africa's children as a global public good allows us to think differently about international cooperation for children. Instead of 'aid programmes' aimed at delivering specific benefits to a targeted population, international development cooperation becomes a joint, mutually-accountable effort to provide the common good of healthier, better educated, better protected global citizens for the next generation.

Priority to children – the economic basis, and why poverty reduction starts with children

"While growth rates are important, they are not by themselves sufficient to enable African countries achieve the goal of poverty reduction. The challenge for Africa, therefore, is to develop the capacity to sustain growth at levels required to achieve poverty reduction and sustainable development. This, in turn depends on other factors such as infrastructure, capital accumulation, human capital, institutions, structural diversification, competitiveness, health and good stewardship of the environment."

NEPAD framework document, para 64

¹³ This and subsequent paragraphs discussing public goods are adapted from De Waal, *Realising Child Rights in Africa – Children, Young People and Leadership*, 2002.

Empirical evidence shows that a strong base of social development – including widespread access to good quality basic services and the education of girls – is key to reducing income-poverty in a sustained manner.¹⁴ Effective policies for income-poverty reduction, fiscal stability and macro-economic growth are essential, but they must go hand-in-hand with policies and priority actions for social development, including investments in children, if economic growth is to be sustained and poverty levels decisively reduced.

Investing in Africa's children provides a strong starting point for human capital development and for new, higher levels of economic growth that will lead to exponential progress. An effective way to break the relentless toll of poverty that is transmitted from generation to generation is to start with the young: Poverty reduction starts with children.

The reasons why children are at the core of poverty-reducing economic progress start with the nature of childhood. The physical, cognitive and social development of children, particularly at a very young age, determines to a large extent their capacities as adults. Their future efforts and decisions can win the long struggle against poverty. Early childhood care for survival, growth and development is therefore not just an obvious humanitarian action, but an action at the centre of long-term development and the evolution of society.

Second, children are numbered disproportionately among those who are poor, since families in poverty tend to have more children and other dependents than families who are not. In Africa, furthermore, children and young people make up more than half of all people.

Third, children are also the human beings most vulnerable to the effects of poverty. Their bodies and brains are those most damaged by malnutrition, disease, abuse and violence. This damage carries forward into adulthood: Malnourished girls are more likely to grow up to be malnourished mothers, who give birth to underweight babies; and parents who could not obtain good quality education during childhood are more likely to have to see their own children die. If we are to break the transmission of widespread poverty from one generation to the next, it is essential that all young people have the best start to life, have access to good quality basic health care, have a decent education and grow up free from violence and disease.

If this happens, children can grow up to be productive adults and can participate strongly as citizens and actors in the globalized economy. Investing in children today – in a favourable investment climate marked by good government, fiscal stability and respect for human rights – will contribute powerfully to broad-based poverty reduction and human development tomorrow.

The importance of making investments in human development through children also emanates from the costs and irreversible effects of failing to make such investments. Once a generation of children is exposed to life without health care, nutrition or schooling, there is little that can be done during their adulthood to reverse the damage. As a result, investments in human capital are not a luxury for the good times – they cannot be put off until economic conditions are better.¹⁵

¹⁴ UNICEF, *Development with a Human Face*.

¹⁵ See *African Development Report*, African Development Bank, 1998.

Public health, for example, is both a necessary area of investment and one with high rates of return. The burden of disease in Africa is largely caused by infectious diseases that are compounded by malnutrition – especially among children under three. Effective prevention and control of the major causes of death and illness require large scale interventions. Polio can only be eradicated by protecting the whole susceptible population. Mental retardation can be minimized by iodizing salt at the point of production. Outbreaks of measles and yellow fever will rage where there is no immunity in the community. Water-borne diseases can only be tackled by building and properly managing public facilities that provide safe water and sanitation services to households. And while there is no effective vaccine as yet against HIV/AIDS, public health action is vital, including large-scale awareness-raising. To reverse trends in HIV/AIDS, actions for, and together with, young people and children have to be developed and regularly implemented.

Like good public health, a quality education, which equips people with literacy, numeracy and other skills, directly contributes to human capacity and productivity. Education also has a wide range of indirect effects that “instigate positive changes in people’s attitudes toward work and society. It makes it easier for people to learn new skills throughout their lives...it is also an important factor that affects the health and life expectancy of individuals, because it equips them with the knowledge and the means to prevent, control and detect diseases.”¹⁶ Public sector action is needed to increase access to schools and wider learning opportunities, and to improve the quality of learning, conditions for teachers and the school environment. An essential ingredient in child learning is a mutual partnership between school staff and parents.

The evidence of the positive relationship between a nation’s investment in education and its economic growth is summarized – for both developing and industrialized countries – in the African Development Bank’s 1998 *Annual Report*. Earlier, the comprehensive 1993 World Bank study of the East Asian ‘tiger’ countries indicated that primary education has been the single largest contributor to their often spectacular growth. The World Bank has also found that the single most important factor accounting for the stark three-decade divergence between East Asian and sub-Saharan African economic performance is the gap in primary school enrolment rates. This is not to downplay the importance of building up productive physical capital – roads, machine tools, tractors, school buildings or computers – most of which have been the traditional focus of national plans and external assistance; but rather to stress the curiously neglected point that it takes knowledge and skills to make productive use of these assets. That means, again, investing substantially in children and their lifelong learning, and in the capabilities, pay and health of their teachers.¹⁷

NEPAD clearly states the view that education is likely to become even more important as a determinant of economic success in the competitive global economy of the 21st century – as productivity and international competitiveness are based more and more on knowledge, agility and the use of information technology. African countries, such as Botswana, Mauritius and Tunisia – despite the major setbacks suffered by Tunisia as it mobilizes against HIV/AIDS – are among the promising examples.

¹⁶ African Development Bank, 1998.

¹⁷ Public spending on adequate levels of teachers’ pay, classroom materials and essential medicines should also be viewed as investments – in national development terms if not in strict accounting terms – because of the strong socioeconomic returns from the programmes of which they form an essential part.

Priority to children – the moral basis

The moral rationale for investment in children is based on the norms and standards established in international human rights law, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child in particular. States that have ratified the Convention – including all African countries – are obliged to take measures to implement the provisions of the children's Convention "to the maximum extent of their available resources."

The last decade has seen widespread agreement on the centrality of human rights as the underpinning of human development and an emphasis on the meeting of basic human needs and the development of human capacities as key indicators of a nation's development. This approach, pioneered by UNDP's *Human Development Reports*, considers improvements in people's well-being and the enlargement of the choices open to them as the central aim of development. Macroeconomic indicators such as growth of GNP are essential enabling components of people-centred development, but are not the ultimate objectives of development itself.

The principles that underlie the Convention on the Rights of the Child – the universality of rights, non-discrimination of treatment, respect for the views of the child and the obligation to take into account the best interests of the child – provide norms and guidance for the development process and for decision-making. Among the standards of the Convention, the right of children to life, survival and development (Article 6) is fundamental. The right to life implies protection from the life of a child being taken, including in situations of conflict, while the right to survival obliges countries to take all possible measures to ensure the child does not die from disease and malnutrition. Realizing rights is linked to the achievement of child-related goals such as the progressive reduction of mortality and malnutrition in children under five and ensuring that all children have access to basic education. Human rights obligations such as these provide a benchmark for the setting, at progressively higher levels, of national and local development goals and targets.

And, in the end, it is our conviction that societies, especially governments, must ultimately be judged on the best efforts they make to protect and improve the lives of their children.

A down payment on Africa's security

Children who are nurtured and encouraged to have dreams, positive thoughts and well-adjusted minds are a down payment on a continent's security. Fear, anxiety, being turned away at school, the loss of parents and the perception and reality of abandonment by society, on the other hand, will breed frustration and resentment that will be carried into adulthood and is almost impossible for them to shake.

Today security is an overriding priority for Africa's children: security and protection from the fear and suffering caused by malaria and other diseases; from the terror of devastation of civil conflict. The security provided by the family, without the traumatic loss of parents to AIDS. The love of a mother who has not died while giving birth. And the security provided by a good quality education, as a foundation for a productive life and the hope of escaping poverty.

On the other hand, disillusioned young people with no sense of a stake in the future – denied good basic education, perhaps with stunted, disabled or HIV-infected bodies – are likely to realize the worst nightmares of the continent. Child and youthful victims of violence and abuse are prone to perpetuate the cycle when they become adults. Uneducated young people are less likely to escape from poverty, and are more likely to succumb to disease and participate in violence. Secure environments for children are needed everywhere to give peace and tolerance a chance.

IV. PRIORITY ACTIONS

A sustained agenda for change

Priority actions for Africa's children can be identified and designed within the framework provided by NEPAD, as well as the commitments made by African countries in the Millennium Declaration, 'A World Fit for Children' and the African Common Position. NEPAD provides a framework for designing a country-level action plan to rapidly improve the state of Africa's children.

A possible short-term action plan for children within the context of the NEPAD priorities and Africa's commitments is set out in this section, along with consideration of the longer-term agenda for change in which these urgent actions will need to be placed.

Strategies and actions to accelerate progress for Africa's children should systematically draw on – and creatively adapt – the lessons of the 1990s (see discussion in Section V). However, there is a bottom line to adaptation: Effective strategies will always be based on respect for the dignity and equality of all people and marked by the courage to tackle both the immediate and deeper causes of problems that face poor families. This implies a combination of a sustained vision centred on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and bold, short-term actions.

New partnerships must focus on breaking the patterns of poverty that have entrapped generation after generation in Africa. Complementary short- and longer-term strategies should focus on providing the safety nets and crucial investments that will enable children to emerge from poverty. This will involve access to care and protection, health services, good quality learning opportunities and participation in community life. And as part of the longer-term agenda – on which a start cannot be postponed – patterns of violence and exploitation will need to be challenged. The multiple reasons why education systems still fail millions of African children and the discriminations that prevent girls from achieving their full potential must also be addressed.

Short run priority actions – the 'fast track'

Short-run priority actions should be pursued with a larger vision in mind. Today's priorities should help uproot the factors that have blocked Africa's progress for so long. Short term actions can bring rapid and large-scale improvements, even if partial, in the lives of Africa's children. By doing so, they should generate hope, skills and momentum for solving the deeper, more stubborn challenges. This approach to human capacity development is something like an economic growth strategy with two elements: specific investments to kick-start the growth process; and a longer-run strategy for building institutions to sustain the momentum and to cope with external shocks.¹⁸

Targets for shorter-term progress are important for a national planning framework that aims at the progressive realization of human rights. If set carefully, and pursued with principles such as participation, non-discrimination and accountability, short-run actions can unlock the door to the sustained realization of rights. They will improve lives, unleash human capacities and generate resources for action in future.

¹⁸ See Rodrik, 2002.

Fast-track achievements will also help NEPAD – and the national frameworks for mutual accountability and enhanced partnerships that will help take it forward – to maintain credibility and momentum, among communities and families that are currently facing great difficulties and are impatient for change.

Among the major possibilities for decisive action there are a number focusing centrally on children:

- **Bold political leadership against HIV/AIDS and the prevention of HIV transmission among young people, especially girls and infants**, including explicit recognition that HIV/AIDS is the biggest single threat to economic survival, social stability and young people in Africa, and acting on this recognition through massive mobilization, tested medical interventions such as provision of nevirapine, and providing life-saving information to every home and school
- **Realizing the rights of orphans and other vulnerable children to a decent standard of living, health care and schooling** by reducing the costs of schooling and health care to levels that all those children can afford, and channelling available welfare benefits directly to these children and their caregivers
- **Bringing malaria, measles and malnutrition rapidly and decisively under control** through approaches such as the use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets, diarrhoeal disease control and accelerated immunization, micronutrient supplementation and communication with families for good nutritional practices, coupled with nutritional support to households affected by HIV/AIDS and emergencies
- **Capturing the goals of universal access to basic health services and universal primary education** through revitalized sector reforms, budget reallocations and practical administrative measures that put children's interests – above all, the learning of girls – first, in addition to specific supporting measures such as ensuring clean water and adequate sanitary facilities in every school, and helping students to avoid pregnancy or resume their education thereafter
- **Decisively moving to give children better protection against all forms of violence, discrimination, abuse and exploitation** through a combination of legislation and legal review, conflict-resolution initiatives, raising of public awareness, bold efforts by leaders and civil-society actors to change attitudes and expose abuses, an ending of impunity, and local monitoring and care for the most vulnerable.

Actions in each of these areas are affordable in terms of costs and people, and can make use of proven technologies and African country experience in tackling problems. They are synergistic: Success in one of these areas will support progress in others. They are likely to attract support from partners: International consensus has been reached on goals and targets in most of them already, and these provide the basis for leadership initiatives.¹⁹ These fast-track actions are also consistent with the NEPAD sectoral priorities and the strategies outlined later in this paper for effective investment in human development. They represent concrete first-tier activities for priority attention.

¹⁹ See the African Common Position, the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals, the Education For All Declaration, and the Declarations adopted at the UN Special Sessions on HIV/AIDS (2001) and Children (2002).

The struggle for freedom from HIV/AIDS and malaria

Actions include:

- Breaking the 'second wall' of silence around HIV/AIDS: The 'first wall' has largely been broken in Africa, with political leaders now speaking more openly about the epidemic. Breaching the 'second wall' involves encouraging communication throughout society on vital issues often still shrouded in silence. The issues of sex, sexuality, human rights and HIV/AIDS need to be openly discussed by parents with their children, teachers with pupils, politicians and religious leaders with their constituents. New patterns of behaviour must be developed to better protect young people against AIDS.
- Preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV: the urgent and overwhelming challenge at present is a rapid expansion of services to women of childbearing age, including: voluntary and confidential HIV testing and counseling; administration of nevirapine; and advice on the choice of appropriate infant and young child feeding methods, combined with support for appropriate feeding practices to prevent HIV transmission. In addition, male partners need to be encouraged to participate in the use of these services as part of a broader prevention strategy.
- Preventing the transmission of HIV/AIDS among young people, including putting HIV/AIDS prevention materials in all places where young people learn and socialize, and communicating 'Facts for Life' messages to every home – so that all young people have access to accurate information.
- Ensuring that orphans and other vulnerable children have access to at least basic health-care services by explicitly avoiding discrimination in service provision; and strengthening the partnerships between health workers and the communities they serve, in order to identify and support these children.
- Fast-track the production and distribution of insecticide-treated mosquito nets, so that every African child, mother and mother-to-be at risk of malaria can be protected, and remove any remaining tariffs on mosquito net importation and sale.
- Together with the wider use of mosquito nets, expand the basic complementary measures for malaria prevention and control: health education, community mobilization and ensure the availability of generic anti-malarial drugs.

In pursuing these interventions, the struggle against HIV/AIDS and as against malaria should be mainstreamed in all sectors and policy instruments: in schools and what children learn; in the health service and how users are treated; in the prison and juvenile-justice systems and how people are protected; in statistical and survey design and how issues of vulnerability are counted; in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and how they seek to address the spread of AIDS and malaria in order to prevent the widening and deepening of poverty and the costs for the family and national economy; and in medium-term financial frameworks, recognizing that prevention of AIDS and the treatment of its effects are among the best investments that most African societies can make. Similarly, in Africa-wide strategic planning, resource mobilization, monitoring and review, including NEPAD, the threat and impact across sectors and societies of AIDS and malaria should be of primary concern.

The difficulties should not be underestimated, but what is most important is that the success of one area of intervention in this struggle depends on another. Ensuring effective nutrition for infants while interrupting HIV transmission from parents, for example, will be difficult without breaking the social wall of silence around

HIV/AIDS. Here again, all opinion makers will have a key role in raising awareness and giving hope that one can still lead a useful life with HIV/AIDS. Protecting the rights to health and education of orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS must rely upon the capacity of local communities to provide sustenance. This in turn will depend on well-designed external support to these communities.

At the same time, young people – the most vulnerable and most likely to be infected – are the greatest resource for the war on the pandemic. They have sex, but lack information and, especially if they are girls, are at very high risk. But young people are helping to reverse the trends. Where sustained efforts have been made to create a supportive environment and ensure that young people have the knowledge, skills and services to protect themselves. In Kampala, Uganda, and Lusaka, Zambia, and more widely in Brazil and Thailand, HIV rates have declined.²⁰

A ten-step strategy for working with young people to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS

- End the silence, stigma and shame
- Provide young people with knowledge and information
- Equip young people with life skills to put knowledge into practice
- Provide youth-friendly health services
- Promote voluntary and confidential HIV counselling and testing
- Work with young people and promote their participation
- Support young people who are living with HIV/AIDS
- Create safe and supportive environments
- Reach out to young people who are most at risk
- Strength partnerships, monitor progress.

Sources: UNICEF, UNAIDS and WHO, 2002

Basic education

A short-term basic education strategy, coupled with longer-term sector reform, can concentrate on lowering the costs and other barriers to the poorest children and families – and specifically girls – to gaining access to school. It should also promote a school environment that will encourage girls as well as boys to stay and to learn. Complementary education opportunities could be expanded, on the basis of community leadership, for older children and young people who have missed out on basic education. Leaders and policy makers could seek to:

²⁰ See *Young People and HIV/AIDS: Opportunity in Crisis*, UNICEF, UNAIDS and WHO, 2002.

- Accelerate the provision of free and compulsory primary education. Malawi and Uganda provide examples of dramatic increases in school enrolment because of free tuition and significant reductions in non-tuition costs to the family, e.g. uniforms. Uganda's recent initiatives, and those of other countries such as Mozambique, have been fuelled by the use of savings on debt repayments, helped by the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. Since such measures lead to large increases in enrolment, it is important that quality does not suffer due to overcrowded classes. Training and hiring of additional teachers usually follows the implementation of such measures. Successful experiments in contracting teachers and building strong cadres can be replicated.
- Make modest investments in improving the conditions for school-based learning, through providing teaching and learning materials in every classroom and promoting parental and community partnerships with schools.
- Supplement the drive towards universal education with educational initiatives for young people, including girls, who have missed out on schooling. Algeria, Egypt, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania can provide examples of such 'second chance', complementary education measures.
- In those countries that have a significant incidence of early pregnancy, use a combination of two fairly simple measures in the education system: Appropriately-designed information and support to adolescents (both girls and boys) on avoiding pregnancy; and changing the rules that penalize pregnant girls by expelling them from school or making it very difficult for them to resume schooling. These measures can avoid huge social and economic costs, while ending the practice of unnecessarily ruining the future prospects and earning potential of teenage girls. Changing school rules and the piloting of day-care facilities linked to secondary schools in Botswana, for example, have charted the way towards avoiding these self-inflicted costs and abandoning the 'blame the girl' approach.
- Put learning before the lack of a uniform. If school uniforms are necessary, ways must be found to provide them to poor children and orphans. If this is not possible then the rationale for uniforms should be re-examined. The same applies to school fees. The clear principle should be that uninterrupted learning is the number one objective. National resource mobilization rather than charges to families who can least afford them should be the basis for funding the national education system, at least at the basic levels. This is the only possible basis for universal education.
- Ensure clean water and sanitary facilities in every school. Many girls drop out of school on reaching puberty, in part because of lack of facilities. This simple action will remove one more barrier to school completion. In addition, putting clean water in or near schools increases the access of nearby populations and helps achieve other development goals. While a thorough upgrading of facilities in all schools may take some time to achieve, underserved schools and health facilities can be given priority for water and sanitation in regular national public works programmes, including those supported under Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers.

- Eradicate discrimination and violence, whether blatant or hidden (e.g. through threats or intimidation), from all institutions of learning. Leaders can send an unambiguous message throughout the school system that such behaviour is intolerable. School staff, parents and local leaders should work with children to identify and expose such practices, whether they are directed to girls, orphans, children with disabilities, or children from minority ethnic or language groups. Where necessary, social mobilization efforts may be needed to encourage families to send girls to school. National efforts to expose and eliminate the discrimination or violence that may keep children from attending, completing or learning at school cost little and have potentially major rewards.

Child protection

Progress on development goals will be impossible if societies fail to protect children from growing up in an atmosphere of violence, conflict and insecurity. The implications of collective failure to protect children and young people from these ills, for sustained economic growth and healthy, stable and democratic societies, should not be underestimated.

The often less visible evils of discrimination, trafficking, abuse, neglect and harmful or exploitative labour, including forced military service, can be dramatic in their effects on the vulnerable, growing bodies and minds of individuals. It is the responsibility of governments, the private sector and civil society to prevent, uproot and, where necessary, punish the perpetrators. The large and still-growing numbers of orphaned children in Africa are particularly vulnerable. Young people and community organizations can be effective 'watchdogs' in identifying and helping to prevent the abuse and neglect of children by creating a protective environment. The priority actions will vary from country to country, depending on the problems. They will often include the following:

- Ensure that every birth is registered, with immediate focus on expanding birth registration in the poorest communities and among disadvantaged groups for whom the lack of a birth certificate is most likely to form a barrier to accessing health, education and civic services.
- Support communities to strengthen the traditional safety nets provided by extended families and relatives. Orphans and vulnerable children must have equal access to education, health care and other basic services, and be under the supervision of a caring adult.
- Prohibit and work towards the elimination of trafficking of children and women by ensuring that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration in decisions made by social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities and legislative bodies. Child victims of trafficking should be provided with appropriate psychosocial, legal and educational support, together with community based prevention. Neighbouring countries should aim to harmonize legislation and procedures to combat the trafficking of children and women.
- Prohibit and give priority to the elimination of the worst forms of child labour through education as a preventive and protective strategy, complemented by poverty-reduction efforts and child rights advocacy.
- Reviewing existing laws and administrative regulations to ensure that practices do not exist in the public sector that cause or allow discrimination, harm or neglect to children, especially the most vulnerable, such as orphans and those with disabilities.

- Ensure that the protection, needs and respect of the rights of children are given explicit priority in all situations of armed conflict, and in situations of displacement or loss of parents and main caregivers. This can be pursued through the African Union's Peace and Security Council, and would include training and instituting norms of behaviour for humanitarian workers, social workers, military and police personnel.
- Build on the momentum for peace in many African countries to immediately and unconditionally demobilize all child soldiers and work on their reintegration in communities, including through providing psychological support and skills development.
- Prohibit and work with communities towards ending harmful customary practices such as early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting.

Health and nutrition

A lot of irreversible damage can easily be prevented at an early age. For example, the provision of vitamin A supplements and iodine can do a great deal to foster development and reduce susceptibility to disease. Universal salt iodization and the provision of vitamin A capsules are simple, affordable and proven solutions. Deworming is another intervention that contributes to enhanced school performance.

More than half of all child deaths happen within the first twelve months of life, from largely preventable diseases. As major planks of an effort to accelerate child-survival activities, the prevention and control of malaria and measles would reduce a significant proportion of these deaths. In addition to polio eradication, African countries should invest resources and build capacity in the primary-health-care system to ensure that at least 80 per cent of all children in every district are fully vaccinated. Further advances in the use of oral rehydration therapy to manage diarrhoea, basic medicines and treatments for acute respiratory infections, and support to good breastfeeding, complementary and young child feeding are also well-established health system priorities with proven, major benefits. These should be combined in a basic, essential package of preventive and curative services for young children and mothers – reflecting the priority given by NEPAD to the Millennium Development Goals and the commitments of the 'promoting healthy lives' goals of the 'World Fit for Children' Plan of Action.

Priority actions include:

- Immunization against childhood diseases, including measles, with at least 80 per cent coverage of the relevant groups in all districts. This should be built on to reach children with other fast-track priorities, such as malaria prevention and control and micronutrient supplementation
- Maternal- and newborn-care services, including effective antenatal care, skilled attendance (such as trained midwives) for delivery, access to emergency obstetric care and essential care for newborns
- Education and services to control diarrhoea, cholera and acute respiratory infections, including through the use of standard protocols in every health facility, community-based approaches and the promotion of oral rehydration therapy
- Promotion of recommended breastfeeding, complementary feeding and other childcare practices

- Providing a nutritional safety net for the poorest of the poor, including children and families impoverished due to HIV/AIDS, including bulk food supplements in emergency situations, and participatory social welfare systems that support basic consumption through income transfers
- Community-led monitoring and promotion of the growth of young children, linked to parental action where children are not growing well
- Nutritional care and support to children and women affected by HIV
- Micronutrient supplementation and staple food fortification, including maintaining or expanding the efforts of the 1990s in salt iodization and vitamin A supplementation, and rapidly expanding iron supplementation for women as a part of antenatal care.

If adequately designed and managed, these actions are effective, affordable, politically attractive and technically feasible, even for countries with limited delivery capacity.

V. STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN

Experience since the 1990 World Summit for Children has shown that a focus on all children, across the spectrum of their rights, is essential for sustained human development. The political and financial commitment, as well as the necessary resources, also need to be guaranteed. At the same time, there is compelling evidence in African countries of the power of decentralized and local approaches that work with and support people as agents and innovators in their own development. These strategies recognize that human development takes place in families and communities, supported by the wider society and the public sector – and that community action provides the source of many, if not all, solutions.

As discussed in this paper, the starting point for programmes and strategies that emphasize broad-based human capacity development is quite naturally the rights and well-being of children. This was the basis of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the inspiration for the World Summit for Children and generated a global principle of 'first call for children' as a guide to policy, resource allocation and planning. In the 1990s, it also became increasingly clear and accepted that women's rights and well-being are central both to human development and to the realization of children's rights.

Emerging from this convergence of development and human rights thinking, and from practical experience, are some lessons to guide effective investment in human development.

Lessons of public policy

Countries that have achieved significant human development progress in the span of one generation recognized the essential role of economic growth, but did not simply wait for growth to occur. These countries also took deliberate action to make social investments a priority and invested in basic services, with the view that education and health are the foundation for sustained development. They also recognized that special attention must be paid to the poorest and most vulnerable.

During the last decade, it has also become clear that children's rights are best pursued within the broader framework of human rights. The persistence of grossly unequal gender relations and wide gaps between ethnic groups have not only constituted a denial of individual human rights, but have reduced human capabilities and threatened social cohesion. Development, democracy and human rights are closely interrelated and mutually reinforcing.²¹

Related to this has been the need to move away from approaches in which children who do not succeed are 'held to blame'. The failures of earlier programmes that 'targeted' children as 'problem individuals' show that the causes of violations of children's rights and lack of educational success do not essentially lie with boys and girls themselves, but are found in the wider society. Policy efforts should focus on addressing not only the immediate factors affecting groups of children in difficult circumstances, but also the wider causes of exclusion.

²¹ See UNDP's *Human Development Report 2000* and *2002*.

Programmes for children in early childhood, especially those in high-risk conditions, are now widely acknowledged to have lasting benefits. The prevention of childhood illness and the promotion of good care practices need to be central to such programmes. Adequate public funding of basic education and other social services, especially for girls and women, leads to better use of family planning, raises the age of marriage, delays first pregnancy and contributes to improved childcare and nutrition. More broadly, it is clear that the development of children in the earliest years determines, to a large extent, their success in school and capabilities as adults. This, in turn, is the key to national development and to breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

Lessons of practical intervention and partnership

Sustained development requires the participation of children, young people and adults in the decisions that affect them within the family, community and at local and national levels. People must be viewed, assisted and empowered as agents in their own development. As part of this, the participation and self-expression of young people and children in decision-making, including adolescents, should be supported and valued by adults.

Leaders for development in Africa are increasingly able to take advantage of the expansion and falling cost of new technologies in information, medical science and communication. Both the established mass media and newer ways of networking can place more power at community level. Affordable interventions drawn from science and technology, and growing experiences in public-private partnerships, have shown potential where combined with community dialogue and participation – such as for the prevention of malaria and the eradication of polio.

Meanwhile, it is clear that other developmental problems, on which most African countries made at best slow progress during the 1990s, such as maternal mortality, malnutrition, poor sanitation and HIV/AIDS, can only be addressed through coordinated strategies. These need to empower the people most affected and to provide solutions that address the underlying reasons for poor human development and exclusion. Where access to sanitation has improved, for example, it has required going beyond technological solutions. Where people have been helped to understand the relationship between safe water, hygiene and health, and have been supported with resources, they have acted on this priority. Another example is malnutrition; addressing this problem is key to improving the health of children and women.

As suggested by these examples, the role of families, parents and other caregivers in the community in the care and nurturing of children, particularly in the early years, should not be underestimated. But this has often happened in the past – perhaps because these frontline contributions to the survival, health, nutrition and learning of children are less immediately visible and are more difficult to support and measure. However, recent approaches in primary health care have paid more serious attention to partnerships and communication with families and young people, while concentrating essential public resources on local and district facilities.²²

²² The Tanzania Essential Health Interventions Project, for example, is emphasizing the matching of additional spending on public health to local patterns of morbidity, in consultation with the families affected. The Bamako Initiative is an earlier, multi-country example of this kind of approach.

The ambitious goals and targets that were set for children in the 1990s were useful for spurring and focusing action, but they were seldom matched with adequate resources. Plans of action and goals relating to children and women must continue to be ambitious if human progress is to be accelerated. However, to mobilize the necessary resources and to avoid the consigning of these targets to the periphery, they should be closely linked or integrated with initiatives for human development, poverty reduction, debt relief, decentralization and sector-wide reform.

Targeted interventions and specific goals are needed to reach those children and families who are most disadvantaged – those who are mired in poverty face special risks and barriers and are unable to benefit immediately from economic growth. But these need not always be ‘special programmes’ with special administrations and budgets that are hard to sustain. The most disadvantaged are more likely to benefit in a significant and lasting way if they are put first within mainstream interventions aiming at universal coverage. This prioritization of the poorest – and frameworks, such as national plans of action and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, which commit to doing so – should be subject to verification through local monitoring, consultation and evaluations of the flow of benefits.

These wider frameworks can be vehicles for rapidly advancing a priority agenda for children if they include child-specific goals, intermediate and local targets and indicators, regular progress reviews and public reports. Where wide disparities persist, the data to assess human progress will need to be more systematically disaggregated, e.g. by gender, location, family characteristics and income group, in order to understand the progress of the individual child.

Main elements of a strategy – a summary

Coherent strategies for investment in children and young people, and for realizing their rights, should be incorporated in both national and local planning and implementation frameworks. The major elements would include:

Strengthening the capacity of families and communities for children. The responsibilities and positive front-line role of families and communities in nurturing, protecting and supporting the survival, development, learning and self-expression of children should be reinforced as a priority strategy. This will need to take account of the diversity of family and community structures and take a holistic view of children’s care and protection needs. Analysis and participatory assessment with families and communities provide a way of identifying gaps in capacities and designing strategies for support. These may include: parental education and advice; building on local initiatives for children, including the support given by extended families to orphans and displaced children; participation in local decision-making for basic services; assisting older relatives and, as seen in recent ‘better parenting’ initiatives in Egypt, reinforcing a positive role for fathers as caregivers for children.

Focusing on basic services and taking proven interventions to a comprehensive scale. There are several tested approaches for the design and delivery of basic services that have shown their effectiveness in the developing world and have contributed to improved health status, better nutrition and dynamic learning among children and their families. The evidence for many of these approaches has been detailed in the 1993 World Bank Report 'Investing in Health' and by the more recent Commission on Macroeconomics and Health. National measures to raise basic education enrolment towards universal levels, improve education system efficiency, increase participation in the learning process and ensure family access to clean water and sanitation facilities have also been successful in a number of countries. Strategies that focus partners' resources and efforts on universal basic service access, and incorporate the best available experience, have the potential for a very high impact and future economic returns.

Addressing gender inequality and discrimination. NEPAD explicitly recognizes the lesson that a society cannot make progress when it fails to develop the capacities of half of its citizens – those who, in addition to many other roles, are on the front-line of child-rearing and safeguarding the nation's future. Around the world, countries with the greatest levels of inequality between males and females – whether in literacy, access to credit or land, in political participation or in the legal system – are prominent among those whose development has been hamstrung.²³ And experience suggests that if the goal of gender equality is not to be simply proclaimed and then put aside, women and girls need to be equally represented in all monitoring and review activities.

Leveraging of resources for children. A key strategy for achieving Africa's goals for children and the Millennium Development Goals will be the promotion of additional investments – finances, information, skills, leadership and organizational capacity – in children's rights and priority needs. This will involve working with governments, international development partners, businesses and civil society to increase and sustain their resource commitments in key areas. It will also involve processes through which families, local interest groups and communities increase the efficiency of their own resource use, including the funds and time invested in their children. The resource challenge should be tackled both through improved decision-making for existing resources and increasing the scale of resources available to families through short-term transfers and inter-generational increases in knowledge, skills and physical capacities. It will also require better opportunities for poor families to market and trade the goods and services they produce. Participatory development plans, broad-based partnerships and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers will be important instruments for leveraging resources in favour of children.

Using the legal framework now in place to promote rights and development. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other widely-ratified international instruments provide tools and opportunities for advocacy and reform of national legislation, policies and administrative practices, which will have a positive impact for children and women. The reporting systems in place for these and other international human rights obligations also provide opportunities to identify and promote key actions and support monitoring of human development by Africa's institutions.

²³ As put by the *Arab Human Development Report* (2002): "Development not engendered is endangered."

Harnessing the power of mass communications and information technology. This will take advantage of the potential for the democratization of information and expanding of learning opportunities arising from technological innovation. It will build upon accumulated experience in communication, information technology and social mobilization – in areas such as immunization, health education and participatory learning in the classroom – and will recognize the crucial role played by values and beliefs in determining the ways in which children are viewed and treated in society.

Innovation, learning and knowledge networking. Well-structured learning from innovation is needed to find solutions to a number of problems facing children. A major emphasis should be placed on supporting families and community groups to find local solutions to local issues ranging from the organization of quality day-care to school and community partnerships. This should be complemented by national efforts to identify effective innovations and scale them up. Meanwhile, child-focused research – including on family care practices, community management of diseases, effectiveness in service delivery and the participation of young people – is key to more effective interventions. There is an essential role for African institutions that organize such research and support the dissemination of its results across the continent.

Participation in development. Policies and programmes that fully incorporate the participation of those whom they are meant to serve, and which build in mechanisms for the accountability of those providing services and managing public resources, are likely to be the most effective and sustainable. Africa has demonstrated this positively in many public health programmes such as clean water management and conservation initiatives, and negatively in some other areas. Where communities, service users and young people have not been enabled to participate, even well-financed efforts have stalled. The same is now clearly seen with HIV/AIDS, where a lack of reliance on mass mobilization and on participatory approaches to communication has aided the spread of infection and where solutions lie not only in the health field, but also in empowering people, especially the young, to make informed decisions about their own lives.

Enabling the participation of children and youth. Support and recognition of the participation and self-expression of children and young people will be both a priority concern in itself and a strategy in support of the overriding aim of African human capacity development. The genuine and regular participation of children, adolescents and young people will also directly contribute to the building blocks of human capacity development and responsible citizenship on which the success of NEPAD depends. Participation by children – through families, schools, clubs and decentralized government agencies – will expand if development partners gain a better understanding of youth perspectives. Young people are Africa's most vibrant source of creative approaches and solutions to major problems, including HIV/AIDS.

VI. MONITORING, PEER REVIEW AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Monitoring goals for development and children in Africa

A range of tools now exists to enable governments and their partners in Africa to monitor the human face – indeed the young face – of NEPAD. Tracking and analysis of progress towards national and international goals relating to children can be done at the local, district or provincial, city, national, regional and continental levels, making use of a combination of methods and sources, through:

- Routine administrative data from health, education, civil registration and other systems
- Periodic national surveys, including census and demographic and health surveys
- Multiple indicator cluster surveys, which over the last three years have been a major source of information for the end-decade review of progress towards the World Summit for Children goals, and which are also practical in emergency-affected region
- Community-led nutrition and school-monitoring activities, where they exist, plus other sources such as participatory consultations.

As in the past, a major challenge for effective monitoring and understanding of the situation of the poorest children and families is the need for disaggregation of data and other information (e.g. on programme expenditures), as well as its use at both national and sub-national levels, including urban jurisdictions. A further stage that will be important for true accountability in the NEPAD and national development process is that of regular feedback of information to, and participatory discussion with, the communities and families whose lives are most at risk.

Following the 2000 Millennium Declaration, it is expected that many governments in Africa, including sub-national agencies, will formally adopt, and where necessary adapt the goals and targets which have become known as the Millennium Development Goals, building them into national development plans, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, sector-wide approaches, district plans and the like. The United Nations system is expected to provide ongoing support to national and local authorities in monitoring, analysis and accounting for progress on the Millennium Development Goals and to help build capacity where needed.

As part of this effort, UNICEF will continue its support of periodic in-depth analysis of the situation and rights of children, which can provide a contribution to national reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child as well as for assessing progress on the Millennium Development Goals and the 'World Fit for Children' plan of action. As well as using the multiple indicator cluster surveys, which are particularly useful for looking at disparities in the situation of children, a number of countries are considering the adoption of the ChildInfo software that assists in the organization and analysis of child-related data. ChildInfo is a powerful tool that can be used to visually demonstrate, with maps, that parts of a country or region that are doing well and the parts that are lagging behind, thereby prompting action by decision makers. The various information sources outlined above will also assist the NEPAD process in obtaining country data for continent-wide analysis on a comparable footing.

Since, as earlier discussed, the goals and commitments of the 'World Fit for Children' correspond well to the Millennium Development Goals and to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, there can be effective convergence in the process of monitoring the situation of children. However, some of the newer areas of commitment, notably in protecting the most vulnerable children, will require expansion of the areas of monitoring. The multiple indicator clusters surveys used by a majority of African countries from 1999 to 2001, have already incorporated some data-gathering in these areas, such as on the situation of children who are orphaned.

Children and the African Peer Review Mechanism

One of the most innovative dimensions of NEPAD is the commitment of Heads of State to periodically monitor and assess progress made by African countries in meeting commitments towards achieving good governance and reforms. The system will use an independent body of experts and will be based on voluntary accession as well as mutually-agreed codes and standards.²⁴

The system of 'peer review' also provides a platform for countries to share experience with a view to fostering good governance and the democratic process. This procedure is very much in line with world experience since the 1990 World Summit for Children, which has shown that the involvement of top leadership is a critical factor in the success of public action for children.

Improving the difficult situation of Africa's children must be a key dimension of good governance. UNICEF has long urged that nations "be judged not by their military or economic strength, nor by the splendour of their capital cities and public buildings, but by the well-being of their peoples: by their levels of health, nutrition and education; by their opportunities to earn a fair reward for their labours; ...by the respect that is shown for their civil and political liberties; by the provision that is made for those that are vulnerable and disadvantaged; and by the protection that is afforded to the growing minds and bodies of their children" (*The Progress of Nations 1999*). The quality of governance will be mirrored in the results that countries achieve, over time, for their children.

An effective peer-review system requires clear goals, targets and standards against which progress can be assessed, plus a credible and transparent mechanism for measuring progress. NEPAD responds to this with the commitment to carry out each review on the basis of technical competence and freedom from political interference. The design of the first stages of the review provides for participation by civil society and international partners. With the high level of consistency between NEPAD's goals and the Millennium Declaration, the African Peer Review Mechanism can also benefit from the technical work that has already been done internationally in the design of indicators and measurement tools, such as those discussed above.

With extensive experience in monitoring progress for children at the global, national and local levels, UNICEF is well placed to work with NEPAD, national authorities and other development partners to develop monitoring and analysis. One possibility that could be considered for regional and continent-wide comparisons of progress is the national performance gap analysis which has been used for several years in the UNICEF global publication, *The Progress of Nations*. This method looks at indicators such as child survival, child nutrition and primary education attainment levels, and assesses the difference between the actual level of progress achieved and the level that would be expected, given a country's level of gross national product per head.

²⁴ NEPAD, June 2002.

National performance gap analysis

Comparing the country status of child goals such as mortality, malnutrition and educational achievement with 'expected' levels based on national income per head could be used as a prominent part of NEPAD's peer review process. It would enable leaders, analysts and civil society partners to review benchmarks of where countries ideally 'should' have reached, in terms of human capacity development and child goals in particular and would support discussion of why countries have faced difficulties or have been successful in relation to the benchmark. This type of participatory analysis also provides a good basis for partners and stakeholders to decide on future actions.

As an example of the approach: African countries which are currently in a similar per capita income range of \$260 to \$300 register wide variations in the rate of child mortality (from 75 deaths per 1,000 live births to 202 deaths per 1,000) as well as in the percentage of children reaching school grade 5 (from 24 per cent to 84 per cent) and in the percentage of under-fives who are malnourished (from 16 per cent to 33 per cent). Countries in this income range sometimes score relatively better on one child-related indicator but poorly on another.

A further indicator of performance and commitment which could be useful in the review process is the percentage of, and trends in, national budgets and official development assistance allocated to basic social services, in the line with the '20/20' minimum target recommended by the World Summit for Social Development.²⁵

The indicators used in the national performance gap analysis developed by UNICEF have the advantages of being good indicators of human development as a whole, of being relatively easily measured and being directly related to the Millennium Development Goals. They can also be readily disaggregated or compared across countries. Progress and improvements in these indicators over time could be considered indicators of good governance in turn.

UNICEF and other UN agencies would stand ready to collaborate with interested African countries and structures, to help introduce national performance gap analysis as part of the NEPAD peer review process. A complementary process could happen within countries where sub-national data are available.

In addition to the goals which were endorsed as part of the World Fit for Children outcome document at the UN Special Session on Children, the provisions of the African Common Position – endorsed at the Organization of African Unity Summit of Heads of State in Lusaka in July 2001 – constitute specific OAU/AU commitments against which progress can be measured. The biennial report on the situation of the African child that was adopted as part of the African Common Position should complement and support the NEPAD process, by

²⁵ The '20/20' approach sets a standard of at least one fifth of national spending and overseas development assistance being provided to basic social services.

providing a further opportunity for taking stock of progress, problems and new opportunities for children and youth. The African Union's Education Decade is a further highly relevant initiative for the young face of NEPAD.

The review of progress and the sharing of experience will inevitably generate a need for further analysis. This can be tackled through a practical agenda for national child-focused and human development research. In anticipation of this need, networking between existing research centres can be strengthened and efforts made to assess their support needs to reinforce research capacity. This is consistent with NEPAD's commitment to prioritized capacity building.

Past experience suggests that the peer review system should be kept simple and manageable, especially in the initial start-up period. Attention should be focused on a limited and carefully-selected set of indicators that will provide reliable evidence of changes in important areas for children in a cost-effective way. To complement this, the Security Council of the African Union could consider the situation of children affected by armed conflict – including those who are victims of violence, famine, abduction, forced soldiery and landmines – in its consideration of conflict and humanitarian crises. The Peer Review could also consider indicators in the area of child protection, such as the ending of trafficking, militarization and harmful labour among children.

The monitoring conducted by the Heads of State Forum will undoubtedly galvanize other key actors, notably parliamentarians and locally-elected officials, who can be encouraged to undertake similar monitoring and performance review exercises at their respective levels.

Young people in a mutually-accountable planning and monitoring process

Strengthening of joint planning, monitoring and mutual accountability is a major challenge. A solution with wider benefits lies in evolving NEPAD and associated instruments national (such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers), sectoral (such as sector-wide approaches) and local (e.g. municipal and provincial programmes) – into a three-way partnership between African governments, international agencies and African citizens, including young people and children. As NEPAD comes into operation, the mutual accountability between partner governments should evolve into a 'common accountability' that involves citizens, civil society representatives and organizations of young people. Starting points are provided by the commitment of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers to a participatory approach; the provisions for participatory follow-up in the Plan of Action of 'A World Fit for Children', and the consultations to be carried out as part of Stage Two of each country review under the African Peer Review Mechanism.

This will need experimentation. The approaches chosen by young people to organizing themselves for representation, participation and partnership will vary between countries and situations. The support they need to do so will also have to be sensitive and non-standard. All members of the three-way partnership should regard themselves as being committed to a mutually-supporting learning process. The fruit of this process will be strategies and programmes which are energized by, and widely and truly 'owned' by young Africans.

While the involvement of young people in the planning and monitoring process is likely to be valuable, dynamic and a contributory factor in capacity development, within countries and across the entire continent, the African Peer Review Mechanism itself might consider a place in the process, at both country and regional levels, for representatives of young Africans.

VII. MOBILIZING RESOURCES

NEPAD estimates the total 'finance gap' faced by Africa to achieve a growth rate adequate to achieve its development targets at about \$64 billion per year. The basic requirements, in addition to current spending, for adequate investment to achieve the major goals for Africa's children were first estimated in the supporting document for the ICAAC 1992 conference, 'Africa's Children, Africa's Future: Human Investment Priorities for the 1990s.' Updated at 5 per cent per year to take account of population growth and inflation, as well as some allowance for intensified investments for HIV and AIDS, these indicative additional requirements for Africa's human development – a core strategy for NEPAD – amount to around \$20.5 billion per year over the next ten years. This amount includes provisions for basic education, basic health care, nutrition-focused interventions, clean water supplies and sanitation. It also covers needs for post-conflict and post-disaster rehabilitation, including support to livelihoods and basic services as well as mitigation efforts focused on families, children and communities in extreme poverty and/or with special protection and welfare needs. A major part of this latter category consists of measures to assist children who have been orphaned by AIDS, to assist the families trying to care for them, as well as non-medical support to people who are HIV-positive.

These total estimated annual additional costs of around \$20.5 billion per year for child-focused, human development investment are broad orders of magnitude which are well within the bounds of possibility. They represent just under one third of the total annual resource gap for the continent estimated by NEPAD. These broad estimates have only limited value in themselves, and depend on the assumptions used.²⁶ What is more important is consensus on the scale of the effort required, including the restructuring of existing expenditures and aid flows and the deployment of additional amounts. The effort is both challenging, requiring leadership from North and South alike, and entirely affordable because the amounts are very small by comparison with the global economy itself.

More than this, it will be counterproductive not to make these investments, because failure to do so leads to additional costs for countries and more intense problems for societies to deal with. The benefits from these investments, as public goods and contributions to security on a continental and global scale, are also reviewed in Section II.

²⁶ Detailed annual investment cost estimates are most useful at the level of major programme interventions in individual countries. This is normally the highest level of aggregation in which costs can be estimated on the basis of specific policy, design and technology choices, local data on prices, priority population numbers, projected wage costs, internal logistics, etc. Pan African aggregate estimates would ideally be built up from these, but it would require an investment of time and human resources to do so.

Financing the investments needed²⁷

The resources must come from both existing and additional local, national and international sources. The main options (without significant consideration of private investment, which will be central to some areas but is unlikely to be substantial for core human development programmes) are:

- Reallocation of existing domestic spending
- Additional domestic revenue – the gains from growth
- Community voluntary contributions; and particularly
- Reallocation and expansion of aid.

Reallocation of domestic spending: Clear or clearer budget priorities can help to guide allocations towards sectors and strategic areas based on their contribution to the achievement of national development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals and child-specific targets. By introducing these goals into national and district development plans, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, sector-wide approaches and medium term financial plans, it can be determined whether recurrent and capital spending is best oriented to the desired human development outcomes. Sector reviews can also be used to promote efficiency in spending through appropriate choices of technology, improved allocations within sectors (e.g. between primary and tertiary levels of service), identifying capacity gaps in the implementation process and reducing imbalances in the composition of inputs.

The '20/20' approach provides one relevant benchmark by which to assess the adequacy of both domestic and ODA allocations to basic social services.²⁸ So far, only a few developing country governments and international development partners have met this standard and many could go further towards it. The reduction of public subsidies which cannot be justified in terms of priority social and economic goals e.g. for high cost water and electrical facilities in high-income areas, may still provide an important source of savings for investment in the basics.

In addition, effective debt relief, on which some progress has been made in a limited number of countries, could provide a major opportunity for reallocation of budget resources away from interest payments and onto human capacity development. The proceeds of debt relief from enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, could, through Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, support the large-scale adoption of 'fast track' actions for children with demonstrable and measurable results such as those proposed in this paper. The long-sought peace dividends anticipated from the end of conflict in several parts of Africa and those expected from an effective Peace and Security Council in Africa can be put to work to support the priority agenda, especially for the children who have been affected by conflict. This would be consistent with the leadership commitment made at the UN Special Session on Children to pursue the generation of resources through "reduction of excessive military expenditures."²⁹

²⁷ This section draws upon the analysis in OAU/UNICEF, *Africa's Children, Africa's Future*, Chapter 5.

²⁸ See Note 24.

²⁹ 'A World Fit for Children', UN General Assembly A/RES/S-27/19/Rev.1, Para 52(g).

Raising additional domestic revenue will depend substantially on how successful Africa becomes at moving economic growth rates, and thereby budget receipts, towards the 5 to 7 per cent range. Over a decade, expansion and allocation from growth can have a major impact on human development sectors and child-related goals. Meanwhile, more limited scope for raising domestic revenue for investment in children may be available from tax reform initiatives and user charges on public services, including those provided by municipalities. Such charges should be used carefully and mainly at higher levels of service in order to avoid exclusion of those with little capacity to pay.

Voluntary contributions have been mobilized locally as additions to core government funding by many African communities for priority development activities. Contributions have included cash, work, services and materials in kind. Decentralized and participatory approaches can help to promote expansion of the resource base for child-focused activities in schools and health facilities, around issues of clean water, child care and child protection. This strategy is distinct from that of user charges as it incorporates in kind contributions, and is based directly on local accountability for and local management of the resources that are generated. However, the scope for such contributions is limited by widespread poverty and has been further undermined by the AIDS pandemic, which cuts deeply into household resources. Adequate levels of external support to African communities and families will, for the foreseeable future, be critical to ensure the survival, development and protection of children.

Reallocation and expansion of aid in favour of Africa's human development priorities and child-focused action is a major possibility, whether from existing total flows or as part of expanded levels of ODA to Africa. This focus will be encouraged both by the priorities of and momentum generated by NEPAD and by mechanisms such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. Recent action by major donor agencies to refocus on the Millennium Development Goals, to further untie their assistance and make greater use of national sources of expertise are all hopeful signs. The emphasis in NEPAD on new, more standardized business arrangements with external cooperating partners in the context of mutual accountability raises the possibility of gains in net aid through the reduction of transaction costs. Yet more gains are possible if aid from all sources, including multilaterals and NGOs, moves to the level of broad and strategic programmes, including major health and education sector interventions and focuses less on individual projects with often limited scope of benefits – not least those which tend to be unsustainably 'gold-plated' in design.³⁰ Greater consideration by donor partners for temporary and phased support to recurrent costs of priority programmes is also warranted. Another aspect to be supported is the chronic and inefficient underpayment of frontline service providers such as teachers, nurses and water maintenance technicians.

International action to reduce the costs of Africa's integration to the global economy, including the further improvement of market access for African exports and the reduction of excessive subsidies to producers in rich nations, will help generate growth and resources for investment. And if private investments increase as confidence grows in Africa's development, both aid and domestic spending could be further reallocated to human development priorities.

³⁰ Well-designed and evaluated/documentated 'pilot' projects which contribute effectively to learning from innovation are an exception.

At the root of all of this, however, is the need for a deeper consensus and commitment to the principle that Africa's development must be focused on its people, and that children and young people are at the heart of this project. With a firmly-rooted consensus on this, among all key partners, the resources necessary for adequate and sustained levels of investment in Africa's children are likely to follow.

Partnerships for mobilizing resources for children's priority agenda

To drive NEPAD with a youthful face and a priority action agenda for Africa's children, initiatives at the local level will need to be supported by expanded partnerships of non-governmental and civil society organizations. These can help to generate the additional resources which are needed to realize children's rights and, consequently, to meet goals for children's well-being. In this information-rich age, partnerships can be formed 'horizontally,' across districts, provinces and municipal borders, and also regionally and globally. They can include coalitions among initiators at the grassroots level, as well as advocacy groups, NGOs and policymakers in government.

The need for child-focused alliances of civil society, NGOs, religious organizations and committed individuals – such as artists, young people, parliamentarians, journalists, professional and intellectual leaders – has long been foreseen. The approach was used quite effectively during the 1990s in areas such as the campaigns for immunization and guinea worm eradication and, in a few countries, AIDS awareness. Energy, skills, political commitment and finance were among the resources generated by these coalitions. An action agenda for the new decade, however, must view such alliances as a more fundamental resource and as a central part of the enabling environment. It must also capitalize on new communication opportunities to form such partnerships, sustain them and broaden them to include young people themselves.

Such coalitions within and across societies will also be crucial for entrenching an ethic in which children are given first call in public policy, and in which violations such as exclusion from school, discrimination based on gender, disability or ethnicity, trafficking, militarization and labour exploitation of children are no longer tolerated or left unpunished.

A further key component in generating resources for a priority action agenda will involve fostering the participation of the private and international corporate sectors, on the basis of principles of social responsibility and mutual respect. The role of these agencies, in alliance with governments, will be central to putting breakthroughs in science, medical technology, interactive learning methods and mass communications to work for children, especially in the poorest countries and communities. During the last decade, private sector initiatives, in alliance with governments, service organizations and international development agencies were strikingly effective in improving vaccine production and availability, for example in polio eradication efforts, and in the iodination of salt to reduce micronutrient deficiencies. The huge challenges of HIV/AIDS and malaria have now emerged as litmus tests of the true depth of commitment to use new science to protect humanity and of the compassion and solidarity of the global community.

There is much experience that can be built on through expanded public-private partnerships, as new technologies are tried and standards are developed, and as private sector partnerships evolve around specific initiatives with civil society groups, schools and communities. Great potential for a more effective web of alliances focusing on children and working with young people also lies in the experience and capacities of African labour unions, consumer groups, religious and professional associations – including those which have been providing community health services, tackling environmental issues, promoting legal and judicial reform in the best interests of children and defending human rights.

In such ways, the community of nations, private partners, local initiators, political representatives, young people and civil society organizations can develop and use their skills and capacities to seize major opportunities for Africa's children as well as to respond to the threats that children and their families face. National frameworks such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers should be carefully designed to take full account of the role that these partnerships must play. Such partnerships will need to be based clearly on shared values rooted in the principles of respect, non-discrimination and accountability that underpin the Convention on the Rights of the Child and on well-structured agendas and targets which provide a focus for responsible action for children.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The central idea of this paper is that the aspirations of NEPAD's initiators, partners and stakeholders for progress, peace and poverty-reducing growth are founded in Africa's human capacity development, which in turn must start with and remain focused on Africa's children. Children and young people represent more than half of Africa's population. Substantial and sustained programmes in health, nutrition, basic education, clean water and social protection are essential investments in the development and protection of these young citizens. Turning the tide on HIV/AIDS and making decisive progress on girls' education are especially crucial for progress.

Africa's future will undoubtedly, like the present, be full of difficult challenges – but it will be significantly less difficult if these investments are put in place now.

Young Africans have the potential to be the engine that helps propel the NEPAD process in all parts of the continent. They are the groups most affected by the AIDS disaster, and they are often parents themselves. At the same time, they relate directly to children, often providing their role models and they are willing and impatient to express themselves, organize and engage in the affairs of their communities and nations. Young people can be positive and dynamic for NEPAD if given the right opportunities by African leaders at all levels, and if their right to participate is taken seriously.

Children and young people embody the future and are a major source of creative energy for shaping it. The quality of their future will lead either to an exit from Africa's current predicament or to an intensification of that predicament. The scale of Africa's crisis is such that 'its' children and young people need to be considered a continental and global priority.

“When our children are assured of survival and health, provided with a good education, protected from war and violence, and when youth participate in the democracy and development of their countries, then Africa will be set to claim the 21st century”

K. Y. Amoako

Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

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