

Potsdam Spring Dialogues 2010

External Shocks and Africa's Regional Organisations From Reaction to Prevention

Externe Schocks und Afrikas Regionalorganisationen: Von der Reaktion zur Prävention

Hotel Voltaire, Potsdam
16-17 April 2010

Programme

Background

In September 2010, the United Nations will hold a high-level meeting at which the international community will review progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Whereas the first review back in 2005 was characterised by a mood of muted optimism, large parts of Africa now seem to be further from meeting the goals than ever. In the search for reasons why, the customary discourses about endemic problems such as poor governance, the lack of interest and commitment on the part of the developed countries, or their neo-colonialist behaviour are now being supplemented by a focus on new trends. External shocks such as the global economic and financial crisis and climate change are hitting Africa's already vulnerable population particularly hard, worsening the conditions for development and thus additionally undermining human security on the continent.

The shock generated by the economic and financial crisis: Rising budget deficits and collapsing reserves in the wake of the global economic crisis are reducing the African countries' scope for action. Protectionist measures are adversely affecting regional trade. Decreasing remittances and falling commodity prices are resulting in revenue losses. Weakening growth could also lead to a decrease in support for economic reforms and regional cooperation in the public at large and among the elites, especially as the developed countries, in their reactions to the crisis, are tending to insist on a greater focus on national economies.

The climate shock: Water scarcity and desertification on the one hand, flooding and extreme weather events, on the other: these are just some of the symptoms of climate change, which is radically altering conditions of life throughout Africa. People's livelihood bases – arable and pasture land, and crop yields – are shrinking or shifting into other regions. Already, many conflicts, such as those in Darfur, are being fed by clashes of interests over arable and pasture land and other increasingly scarce resources.

The Potsdam Spring Dialogues 2010 will focus on the options for Africa's regional organisations to react to these external shocks, as well as on the preventive capacities available to them. The aim of the event is to identify the needs and potentials for an expansion of the African regional organisations' capacities to deal with external shocks. A further question of relevance here is the role of the European Union and Africa's positioning in the emerging global governance arenas. After an introductory review of the impacts of the external shocks mentioned above and national and regional reactions to date, the two subsequent sessions will focus more specifically on the potential of the African regional organisations in combating climate change and the global economic and financial crisis. As part of this more focussed exploration, the role of the European Union and its possible contribution to overcoming external shocks will also be considered in more detail. The next two sessions will look at strategies that would enable African regional organisations to enhance their capacities to react proactively to these external shocks, focussing initially on the regional level. The final panel will explore strategies to strengthen African influence and amplify the African voice in global governance fora.

Friday, 16 April 2010

09:30h – 10:00h **Registration**

Welcome

10.00h **Dr Helmuth Markov**
Minister of Finance
Deputy Minister-President of the Land Brandenburg, Potsdam

Introductory Discussion
External Shocks and Africa's Regional Organisations
Reactions and Preventive Potentials

10.15h Chair
Professor Siegmur Schmidt
Director, Department of Political Science,
University Koblenz-Landau
Member of the Advisory Board
Development and Peace Foundation (SEF)

Keynote Contributions

Djimadoum Mandekor
Senior Economist
Commission of the African Union, Addis Ababa

Thomas Albert
Director for Africa
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Berlin

11.15h Plenary Discussion

12.15h Lunch

Background:

Regional coordination and global cooperation are required in order to create the requisite capacities for dealing with climate change in Africa. Mitigation of climate change and adaptation to its impacts are the two main strategic approaches. With mitigation, the primary responsibility lies with the major emitters – the industrialised countries, most of which are located in the Northern hemisphere. However, by protecting forests and promoting “green” forms of energy generation and use, Africa could also contribute to mitigation of climate change. In the adaptation context, the challenges arise, inter alia, in relation to the management of transboundary water resources, climate-related migration and the potential for resource conflicts. Around 30 countries in Africa have already adopted National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) to facilitate adaptation to the impacts of climate change. Cooperation at regional level is still in its infancy, however, and little is known at present about the specific regional impacts of climate change.

Key Questions:

- On which issues should the African countries engage in regional cooperation in combating climate change and its impacts, and which form(s) should such cooperation take?
- Which potentials and instruments already exist at regional level in relation to mitigation and adaptation?
- Are exchange and cooperation between the local, national and regional level and at global/inter-regional level functioning effectively? How coherent are the various programmes, and is there scope for linkage between them?
- Which support can the European Union provide? Which lessons can be learned from experiences with the European Union programmes? What can the European Union learn from the African programmes?

13.30h

Chair

Mag. Martin Janata

Department European and International Politics
Renner Institute, Vienna

Panel Discussion

Rosario Bento-Pais

Head of Unit
Directorate Climate Change and Air
Directorate General Environment, European Commission, Brussels

Professor Richard S. Odingo

Department of Geography & Environmental Studies, University of Nairobi
Former Vice-Chair, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

Dr Youba Sokona

Executive Secretary
Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS), Tunis

14.30h

Plenary Discussion

15.30h

Coffee Break

Background:

In the *Global Monitoring Report 2009*, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) warn of a “development emergency” in sub-Saharan Africa in particular. There are widespread concerns that factors such as the low level of regional integration, chronic under-financing of regional and sub-regional organisations, and a weak transboundary infrastructure are impeding a coherent African response to the crisis. Furthermore, experience around the globe has shown that at times of crisis, the protectionist reflex appears to be more active and more politically popular than regional cooperation. This panel will explore whether these fears are applicable to the African reactions to the crisis as well.

Key Questions:

- Which measures are being taken by African regional organisations in response to the economic and financial crisis?
- How successful are they likely to be? What alternatives exist?
- Are exchange and cooperation between the local, national and regional level and at global/inter-regional level functioning effectively? How coherent are the various programmes, and is there scope for linkage between them?
- How useful is the example of the European Union? To what extent are external actors, especially the European Union, supporting or inhibiting the responses by African RECs to the global economic crisis?

16.00h

Chair

Albrecht Ansohn

Director, Development Policy Forum

Inwent – Capacity Building International, Germany, Berlin

Keynote Contributions

Professor Lambert N’galadjo Bamba

Commissioner, Macroeconomic Policy Department

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Abuja

Sadwick L. Mtonakutha

Senior Programme Officer, Macroeconomic Policies and Convergence

Southern African Development Community (SADC), Gaborone

Comment

Detlev Puetz

Principal Evaluation Officer

Operation Evaluation Department (OPEV)

African Development Bank (AfDB), Tunis

17.00h – 18.00h Plenary Discussion

19.00h Sight Seeing Tour through the City of Potsdam

20.00h Reception at the brewery “Meierei” hosted by the Minister-President of Land Brandenburg, represented by

Dr Gerd Harms

Former State Secretary, Potsdam

Deputy Chairman of the Executive Committee

Development and Peace Foundation (SEF)

Saturday, 17 April 2010

Background:

Up to this point, the conference will focus on reactive measures in terms of immediate responses to current external shocks. The concluding panels will shed light on strategies to enhance the preventive capacities of African countries and regions in order to reduce vulnerabilities and also to amplify the African voice in the transforming setting of global governance fora.

Concluding Panel I

Capacity Building to Reduce Vulnerability to External Shocks

Key Questions:

- How could and should African RECs enhance their proactive capacities to reduce crisis vulnerability?
- What are the prerequisites for better coordination of economic policies, poverty reduction, infrastructural measures and climate change policies?
- How can the European Union contribute and how expedient has the EU been so far?

09.15h

Chair

Klaus Brückner

Director

GTZ Office, Berlin

Member of the Board Trustees of the Development and Peace Foundation (SEF)

Keynote Contribution

Dr Lassaad Lachal

Chief Training Officer

Joint Africa Institute

African Development Bank, Tunis

Veniece Pottinger-Scott

Assistant Secretary-General

Department of Macroeconomics

African, Caribbean and Pacific Group (ACP), Brussels

Comments

Wolfram Vetter

Panafrican Issues, Institutions, Governance and Migration

Directorate General for Development, European Commission, Brussels

09.45h

Panel Discussion

10.15h

Plenary Discussion

11.15h

Coffee Break

Key Questions:

- How can Africa's states and regions amplify their voice in a changing environment of global governance?
- What could be the impact on future global governance and global policies?
- How can the European Union contribute?
- What role will Africa-EU relations play in a changed global setting?

11.45h

Chair

Dr Henning Melber

Executive Director

Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Uppsala,

Member of the Advisory Board of the Development and Peace Foundation (SEF)

Keynote Contribution

The Right Honorable Paul Martin

Member of the Advisory Board of the Coalition for Dialogue on Africa (CoDa),

Former Prime Minister of Canada, Montreal

Comments

Professor Lambert N'galadjo Bamba

Commissioner, Macroeconomic Policy Department

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Abuja

H.E. Ambassador Abdul-Kadir Bin Rimdap (tbc)

Ambassador of the Republic of Nigeria, Berlin

12.30h

Panel Discussion

13.00h

Plenary Discussion

14.00h

Closing Remarks by the Organisers, followed by light refreshments

Dr Michèle Roth

Executive Director

Development and Peace Foundation (SEF), Bonn