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Economic Recovery and Self-sustaining Development in sub-Saharan Africa: A Review of Capacity Building Implications

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Résumé: Le déficit de développement de l'Afrique au sud du Sahara ne fait qu'augmenter. Or, les réformes institutionnelles, fiscales et politiques proposées par les programmes d'ajustement structurel comme remèdes, s'avèrent insuffisantes. L'article tente de lier le renforcement institutionnel en Afrique au développement de celle-ci. Par ailleurs, l'auteur met en exergue les différents domaines dans lesquels l'Afrique a enregistré des performances particulièrement médiocres. C'est le cas de l'industrie, de l'agriculture et des finances, etc.

Introduction

Since the early 1960s when many African countries attained independence, the declared goal of public policy has been development. Yet, development, howsoever defined, least reflects the current sub-Saharan African condition. Instead of political development, the region has had to contend with political decay, and in place of economic growth, it has witnessed economic stagnation and depression. While its peoples had, on the eve of independence, eagerly looked forward to an era of abundance — an era when the 'fruits of independence' would be shared by all and sundry — the realities of today differ significantly from the dream of yesterday. Indeed, no term more accurately describes sub-Saharan Africa's dilemma over the past three and half decades than that of 'development deficit' — a term coined by Stuart Holland (1993) but here used in a broader sense than implied by a mere comparison of revenue with expenditure outlays.

The underlying thesis of this paper is that sub-Saharan Africa's development deficit is not only widening but that reducing it will take more than the fiscal,

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policy and institutional reforms incorporated in structural adjustment programmes. As argued in the paper, development deficit is essentially a deficit in capacity — particularly, human, and to some extent, institutional, capacity. A legitimate question is why such a self-evident truth has not really influenced the content and direction of public policy, and if it has, why sub-Saharan Africa's development has stalled for so long.

The answer to the first part of the preceding question is that capacity building has always formed an integral part of development policy management in Africa. In other words, it is not a new crusade, but an old idea repackaged. After all, long before the advocates of structural adjustment and of structural transformation (or 'collective self-reliance') recognised the value of capacity building, contributors to development thought had indicated how nations waxed or waned depending on the extent to which human potential was harnessed and utilised. It is thus not surprising that the technical assistance strategies embarked upon in the First Development Decade placed high premium on training, human resource development and the development of 'executive capacity'. Institution building was a priority in the early post-independence period.

If, in spite of the attention paid to capacity building over the years, sub-Saharan Africa remains underdeveloped, what factors must have been at work? Why for instance, has 'capacity building' not done for the region what it has done for the newly industrialising countries of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and Malaysia? Above all, how can the on-going initiatives in the area of capacity building be implemented to ensure macro-economic stability in the short-term, and structural transformation and self-sustaining development in the long-run?

In attempting to answer the preceding questions about the links between capacity building and development, this paper begins with a broad conceptual framework. It then proceeds to examine the challenges of economic recovery and development — i.e. the objective conditions which programmes in capacity building are expected to address. In the third part, the paper discusses, against the background of the challenges described in the second section, the strengths and limitations of the early and the contemporary capacity building programmes. The fourth part of the paper outlines a new capacity building strategy which simultaneously addresses the immediate concerns for economic turn-around, and the long-term need for self-sustaining development.

The Development or Decay of Nations and Human Capacity: An Analytical Framework

It is generally agreed that human capacity is the major driving force in development. Whether a society will progress from one stage of existence to a preferred alternative, or stand still, or, worst of all, revert to barbaric, stone-age conditions, depends to a significant extent on the will and capacity of its people to manage and generally add value to available resources. The question is what we mean by 'development' and precisely what kind of 'capacity' is needed to bring it about. Until we answer this dual question in a fairly satisfactory manner, we cannot expect to respond in any meaningful way to the analytical and practical problems encountered in the process of formulating, managing, and reforming development policy.

What Development is Not

One concept which has up to now proved difficult to define is 'development'. While some analysts equate it with 'modernisation' others have taken it to mean 'Westernisation'. Yet others define it loosely as technological progress or improvement in the material conditions of the people.

None of the preceding attempts at concept clarification has succeeded in overcoming language and cultural barriers, and in promoting a communality of vision on the essence and 'techniques' of development. In any case, and if the experience of sub-Saharan Africa offers any lesson, development is best understood within the context of what it is not. And for one, it is not a mathematically precise, value-neutral and scientific concept — one which can be approached with a universal formula and an automatic technique. As Toye (1987:10) eloquently puts it: 'Definitions of the goals of development and of the process by which these goals should be striven for, unavoidably depend on the values of the person doing the defining, as well as on facts that are in principle falsifiable.'

This cautionary approach to development — i.e. one that makes allowance for multi-cultural variations — runs counter to the unilinear view adopted for decades by the adherents of modernisation theory. It will also certainly come as a rude shock to policy-makers in sub-Saharan Africa who had invested time, money and their personal reputation (including political fortunes) on projects sanctioned by development 'experts', and on the importation of 'modern' institutions. Contrary to a fundamental principle of capacity building which places high premium on indigenous intellectual leadership and sees possibilities for the incorporation of local cultural values in the process of development, the majority of the then newly independent countries of Africa continued for decades to rely on external models and 'know-how'.

One example of Africa's over-dependence on external institutions is in the choice of economic policy and management tools. The Keynesian revolution had, after the Second World War, not only started to influence public policy in the industrialised societies of the West, its advocacy of a substantial developmental role for the state also found ready acceptability in the then emerging states of Africa and Asia. Apart from the Harrod-Domar formulation which targeted fixed capital investment as the critical variable in economic growth, a new set of development models and planning techniques, based on Keynes' General Theory, were constructed by scholars, and widely promoted in the developing countries by technical assistance agencies. Among the leading structuralists who exported the Keynesian revolution to what subsequently came to be known as the Third World are Sir W. Arthur Lewis, Albert I. Hirschman, Paul Rosenstein-Rodan and John K. Gailbraith.

It took approximately four decades and a combination of Thatcherism and Reaganomics for the opponents of structuralism to stage a neo-liberal, monetarist counter-revolution. According to a central figure in the propagation of the new economic orthodoxy, Harry O. Johnson, monetarism (like Keynesianism before it) owed its success not to its intrinsic scientific worth, but its uncanny ability to gauge and respond to contemporary social mood: 'New ideas win a public and professional hearing, not on their scientific merits, but on whether or not they promise a solution to important problems that the established orthodoxy has proved itself incapable of solving' (Toye 1987:23).

Yet without taking pains to identify their own 'important problems', the political and administrative elites in post-independence Africa went ahead with a solution which to them appeared most attractive — i.e. modernisation. To these elites and their local and foreign advisers, that option offers otherwise traditional, agrarian, and subsistence economies an opportunity of a life-time to break away from 'backwardness', and join the advanced societies of the West in the race towards increasing literacy, industrialisation, urbanisation, material prosperity, and political participation. To be 'developed' then came to mean discarding the ways of, and loyalties to ancestors, while embracing the culture of individualism and mass consumption. Above all, development was interpreted as necessitating the replacement of an old mind-set with a new, predominantly, alien one. Talcott Parsons' pattern variables readily sum up the choice which the 'developing' society had to make to cross the boundary of poverty and move to the land of affluence: specifically, it had to give recognition to 'achievement', 'universalism', 'collectivity orientation', 'functional specificity' and 'affective neutrality', and step down, if not obliterate, the erstwhile traditional and primordial values (Parsons 1951:58-67).

Suffice it to say that sub-Saharan Africa's single-minded pursuit of 'modernisation' objectives has not availed the region against poverty, hunger and disease — precisely the misfortunes it had hoped to escape and the 'important problems' it had intended to tackle by embarking on the new course. If anything, modernisation, or at least, Africa's approach to it, has brought untold suffering to the vast majority of the people, and has contributed in no small way to the continent's marginalisation in the world order. Modernisation has diverted the Africans' attention away from indigenous knowledge and traditional practices which in ancient time produced notable results in fields such as sculpture, iron smelting and metal fabrication, herbal medicine, weaving, agriculture, and territorial administration.

Modernisation has particularly had a devastating impact on Africa's cultural identity. The triple heritage (of indigenous African values, Christianity and Islam) described by Mazrui (1986:1-2) is one of increasing de-Africanisation of the African soul. Some will even argue that instead of de-Africanisation, a process of outright emptying of the soul is taking place, with the consequent loss of awareness of who or what the African is. Whatever the case — whether it is one of de-Africanisation or de-humanisation — the 'modernised' Africa is not doing well. To quote Mazrui: 'Things are not working in Africa. From Dakar to Dar-es-Salaam, from Marrakech to Maputo, institutions are decaying, structures are rusting away'.

The rapid decomposition of socio-economic and political structures might, according to Mazrui, not be unconnected with the wrath of the ancestors. They cannot rest in peace because their descendants, i.e. the modern-day Africans, seem too eager to become what they were not meant to be. In the name of modernisation, and for want of a credible indigenous developmental ideology, they 'seem to be undergoing faster cultural changes in a single generation than the Jews underwent in the first 1000 years of dispersal' (Mazrui 1986:12).

The argument in this paper is not that change is inconsistent with the goals and strategies of development. The critical question is the nature and direction of the changes taking place at any point in time. The African dilemma is how to identify (from the triple heritage) those values which are abiding and should be strengthened, as against those values which should be constantly adapted to the imperatives of development. This by itself is a major capacity building priority.

If, in a broad sense, development is not synonymous with modernisation, it is also not, in specific terms, Westernisation. Neither can it be equated with the defunct ideology of communism. While the need to overcome ethnocentric barriers in development thought was recognised early enough, getting all the actors to heed Wilson's (1993) advice and perceive human development as a multi-linear and multi-cultural enterprise has up to now proved difficult. Ironically, those who first dealt objectivity in social science a fatal blow were the social scientists themselves. While the pioneering work of anthropologists, such as Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (1940), has given birth to the structural-functional mode of analysis, and had opened up new vistas in cross-cultural comparisons of social systems, even the most scholarly assessment of Third World conditions today could not help applying First World cultural standards.

How else could Daniel Lerner (1958), Morroe Berger (1957), and Zbigniew Brizezinski (1970) have concluded that the 'modernisation' of the Islamic societies of the Middle East depended on these societies 'reforming' aspects of Islam which inhibited the assimilation of 'western technology'? It did not occur to these critics that Islam is by itself a potent force of social change. If it appears to 'resist' the this-worldly culture of the west, it is because it sees itself as a self-contained, credible and internally consistent alternative way of life.

Development scholars are not alone in wishing to reconstruct developing societies in the image of the 'developed'. Donor and technical assistance agencies are also liable to export their ideas of development to the so-called Third World. In other words, the basic goal of the agencies is to equip the average developing country with the 'capacity' to produce and consume as developed countries. Kindleberger, for instance, noted as far back as 1954 that World Bank missions:

> bring to the under-developed country a notion of what a developed country is like. They observe the under-developed country. They subtract the latter from the former. The difference is a program.... Ethnocentricity leads inevitably to the conclusion that the way to achieve the comparable levels of capital formation, productivity and consumption is to duplicate these institutions (McClelland 1961).

The developing countries' insatiable appetite for the benefits of economic growth has been taken as a vindication of the hedonistic culture of western capitalism, and of the liberal political philosophy underpinning it. Hedonism is seen as a normal human desire, and western technology and managerial 'know-how', the most efficient — nay, the logically inevitable — way of fulfilling it.

Lewis (1955) for instance argues that the 'desire for goods' is an obvious psychological factor determining how hard people will strive to improve their material welfare. In his view, and contrary to Weber's conclusions on the positive impact of religious asceticism on capital accumulation, a frame of mind which stresses abstinence and 'places a positive value on prayer and other non-economic activities' was highly unlikely to foster growth in the short-, or development in the long-run. If Lewis is right, secularism and development are synonymous.

Yet efforts in many parts of Africa at separating the church (or mosque) from the state have not yielded the expected 'developmental' results. For the secularist model of development to operate as intended, a proper balance has to be maintained between consumption and investment. This, sub-Saharan Africa has by and large been unable to do. Though there is no limit to desire, the capacity to fulfil it is sadly lacking.

In contrast to the open-ended 'consumption possibilities', sub-Saharan Africa is faced with a huge deficit in productive capacity or what might be termed 'development deficit'. Indeed the root of Africa's development crisis lies in the recurring tendency to import the taste for foreign goods, as well as the capacity for satisfying it. Whether it is for the capital needed to meet growth targets in the public and private sectors, or the skills required to manage and add value to the capital, the region is heavily dependent on the industrialised economies. The doctrine underpinning this dependency relationship is that of 'comparative advantage' — one which requires that nations concentrate their attention on what they are best endowed by nature to produce. Needless to add that the doctrine ignores the fact that the late entry of some countries (particularly those in Africa) into the global economic competition, by its nature, inhibits their 'comparative advantage', and that the solution lies in the structural transformation of the economies of these new-comers — i.e. in the development of indigenous capacity to fulfil basic and higher-order needs.

The experience of sub-Saharan Africa further shows that the harder the dependent nations try to enhance their 'comparative advantage' the more disadvantaged and dependent they become. The primary commodities which they export at low prices can barely pay for the capital goods which they import at exorbitant costs. Maintaining the capital goods and obtaining replacement parts constitute additional burdens on their dwindling resources.

In a nutshell, development is not a commodity to be imported from outside or a formula to be copied without regard to the conditions prevailing inside a country. It is not a computerised air terminal in a country where the level of numeracy and literacy is low. It is not a turn-key project financed entirely from external sources, and managed, maintained and rehabilitated with external technical assistance.

It is true that no society exists in isolation. Modern transport and communication means have brought the nations of the world close to one another. Developments in international economic relations — particularly, the globalisation of markets, payments and production systems — have further contributed to the integration of the world's economies. However, insofar as Africa remains at the periphery of the momentous changes taking place in today's world, it is necessary to examine the root causes of the crisis facing it as a region. The position taken in this paper is that the crisis is essentially that of the capacity to conceptualise, formulate, and manage development policies and programmes.

Development: A Working Definition

Thus far, we have defined development essentially as what it is not. Exactly what is it? Could it possibly mean a state of nature — a state in which things are left as they have always been? If this is development, man (or woman) would have been no different from lower animals, or indeed, plants and other passive objects of nature. Development does not have to mean resisting change or negating what foreign cultures stand for. Indeed, Islam, which has been erroneously described as a religion with a static and fatalistic view of the universe, is, in reality, development-oriented. The Holy Qur'an (13:11) teaches that '... God will never change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves...'

And while acknowledging that God never tasks any soul beyond its capacity, the Qur'an notes that the human race in general has to bear certain earthly and spiritual responsibilities in return for the special endowments from the Creator: 'It is He (God) Who has created for thee (the faculties of) hearing, sight, feeling and intellect; little gratitude have ye (human beings) shown' (23:78).

To the extent, therefore, that human beings are endowed with physical and mental attributes, to that will it be illogical to visualise a society that perpetually stands still. In its basic form, development means moving an organism, a household, a firm, a tribe, or a nation from one stage of existence to another — usually, to a preferred alternative — while at the same time maintaining the cherished values, norms and traditions. Development is very much like Vieg (1946) defines administration and management, i.e. making those things happen which a polity through its acknowledged representatives would like to see happen, and forestalling any occurrence which runs counter to this vision. Development is a process in which society identifies its 'important problems' and provides an atmosphere that is congenial to the articulation of ideas for resolving these problems — or the bulk of the problems — locally. Development is in effect the sum total of indigenous resources (or capacities) that are deployed to achieve specific ends, while battling with environmental constraints and foreign competition. The first equation below denotes a situation whereby indigenous capacity is overwhelmed by environmental constraints and foreign competition, resulting in development deficits. The second and third show how additional efforts on the capacity building front could rework the balance in favour of development.

$$P = \frac{P_{x_1} P_{x_2} \dots P_{x_n}}{E_{x_1} E_{x_2} \dots E_{x_n}} < P_{y_1} P_{y_2} \dots P_{y_n} \quad (1)$$

where;

P	=	the initial, dependent stage of development (a stage characterised by development deficits of various kinds);
$P_{x1} \dots P_{xn}$	=	net value of indigenous capacities and of capacity building programmes/measures;
$E_{x1} \dots E_{xn}$	=	internal and external environmental constraints on indigenous capacities (civil strife, political instability, ethical violations, bias towards foreign assistance, etc.;
$P_{y1} \dots P_{yn}$	=	net value of imported capacities and external capacity building assistance.

$$P_1 = \frac{P_{x_1} P_{x_2} \dots P_{x_n}}{E_{x_1} E_{x_2} \dots E_{x_n}} > \frac{P_{y_1} P_{y_2} \dots P_{y_n}}{\sum^{n} S_{P_1} S_{P_2} \dots S_{P_n}} \quad (2)$$

where:

P_1	=	self-sustaining development stage;
$P_{x1} \dots P_{xn}$	=	net value of indigenous capacities and of capacity building programmes/measures;
$E_{x1} \dots E_{xn}$	=	internal and external environmental constraints on indigenous capacities;
$P_{y1} \dots P_{yn}$	=	net value of external/imported capacity and external capacity building assistance.
$\sum^{n} S_{P_1} \dots S_{P_n}$	=	net value of supplementary policies/measures instituted locally in support of capacity (i.e. all-inclusive, competitive and equitably administered affirmative action, procurement set-asides, and skills development programmes, support to local R&D initiatives; etc.). Note that whereas other variables have geometric values, the supplementary measures, in view of overwhelming internal and external constraints, impact on one another in an incremental, arithmetic manner.

A third option may yet be considered. In other words, instead of perceiving capacity building as an eternal struggle between domestic and foreign initiatives, and instituting measures aimed at strengthening the former at the expense of the latter, our supplementary policies ($S_{p1}...S_{pn}$) may be directed towards reducing the negative impact of the environment ($E_{x1}...E_{xn}$). Equation 3 attempts to capture this environment-centred approach to indigenous capacity building. It shows how specific environmental constraints could be dealt with through the adoption of appropriate measures.

$$P_2 = \frac{P_{x_1} P_{x_2} \ldots P_{x_n}}{(E_{x_1} - S_{P_1}) \cdot (E_{x_2} - S_{P_2}) \ldots (E_{x_n} - S_{P_n})} > P_{y_1} P_{y_2} \ldots P_{y_n} \quad (3)$$

Human and Institutional Capacity

In much the same way as we looked at development, human and institutional capacity may be defined as a process which is totally different from previous conceptions. It is certainly not the acquisition of skills which are either not relevant or, if relevant, are not properly harnessed and optimally deployed. A policy or programme which relies permanently on external advisers and managers is not consistent with the objectives of capacity building or of development. Thus, the token 'capacity building' efforts indicated by equation 1 ($P_{x1}...P_n$) will not result in any substantial development until the additional ($S_{p1}...S_{pn}$) measures referred to in equations 2 and 3 are implemented.

In essence, capacity has to do with human, material, financial and organisational resources that are essential to the successful accomplishment of development policy — be the policy in the area of nation-building, economic stabilisation or growth, social welfare, community development, civil service or public enterprise management, technological innovation or law enforcement. Of all the resources which are subsumed under the heading of capacity, the most crucial — in fact, the moulder of other resources — is the human resource. Consequently, the selection, development, deployment, motivation and management of this resource constitute vital components in the design and implementation of capacity building programmes.

However, it is necessary to underscore the fact that capacity building goes beyond human resource management. When the World Bank (1992) refers to capacity building, it simply means strengthening indigenous capacities in policy analysis and development management. The assumption is that targeting the policy and senior management level was necessary to 'clear the way' for growth. In recent years, the World Bank has stressed the need for a 'governance approach' to capacity building (Dia 1993). This entails a radical overhaul of the machinery of government — with special emphasis on measures directed towards promoting the rule of law, transparency, and accountability, and towards the rehabilitation of executive, legislative and judicial institutions. Equally comprehensive is ECA's definition of capacity building. In the framework document submitted to its 1994 Conference of Ministers, ECA identified three broad areas in which sub-Saharan Africa is deficient in capacity — the human, institutional and infrastructural areas (ECA 1994). Like the World Bank's, the ECA approach does not make any fine distinctions between specific policy objectives and the capacities needed to attain them, or between factors which promote and those which impede capacities in any given area.

In the interest of analytical clarity, it has been deemed necessary in this paper to make a distinction between dependent and independent variables. The capacities (which are subject to manipulation) are the indigenous human, material, financial and organisational resources referred to earlier ($P_{x1}...P_n$). The environmental constraints ($E_{x1}...E_{xn}$) include bureaucratic and other obstacles to individual creativity, civil strife, political instability, internal and external resistance to affirmative action. The measures taken to enhance the problem-solving capacity of indigenous resources, and to turn the restrictive environment of capacity building into an enabling one ($S_{p1}...S_{pn}$) represent the third and last set of variables included in our model.

Capacity Building for Economic Turnaround and Development: A Paradigm

Although capacity building is no doubt essential to, and could justifiably be deemed synonymous with, development, we should resist the temptation to regard it as a magic wand to be waved at the slightest sign of economic distress, or a miracle cure for sub-Saharan Africa's socio-political ills. How effective it will be in meeting particular challenges depends largely on certain minimum conditions being fulfilled. When viewed against the background of the imperative of economic recovery and long-term development in sub-Saharan Africa, the success of capacity building programmes will very much hinge on:

(i) the strength of political institutions and their ability to formulate, or at least, sustain capacity building programmes;

(ii) the commitment of policy-makers to indigenous capacity enhancement measures, as reflected in their readiness to support capacity building and utilising institutions, and to overcome internal and external resistance to change;

(iii) the credibility of formal capacity building institutions, and their effectiveness in undertaking policy analytic, institution building and rehabilitation, and human resource development activities;

(iv) the preparedness of agencies in the civil service, public enterprises, local government, and the private sector (formal and informal) to implement innovative management measures, including new initiatives in human resource management; and

(v) the extent to which a culture of accountability, efficiency, and responsiveness can be developed in place of the patrimonial and rent-seeking tendencies frequently encountered at different levels of officialdom.

Before discussing these issues in subsequent sections, it is necessary to examine the challenges which capacity-building programmes in sub-Saharan Africa ought to address.

The Challenges of Economic Recovery and Self-sustaining Development

The challenges which capacity building programmes in sub-Saharan Africa are expected to meet are daunting. These challenges include stemming the precipitate decline in economic performance and eliminating obstacles to growth; mobilising the resources required not only for the maintenance of infrastructural facilities and the management of capital development programmes, but also to plug the deficits in social and environmental management expenditure; extinguishing fires ignited by ethnic conflicts, civil strife, and political instability; and above all, reconstructing and rehabilitating political and administrative institutions which are currently at different stages of decay. Building the capacity to produce public and private goods at minimum socio-political and economic cost about sums up the challenges facing sub-Saharan Africa today.

The Economic Challenge

That the economies of sub-Saharan Africa have performed very badly in recent years is by now very clear. Table 1 shows that the general trend between 1978 and 1988 was negative.

Table 1: Performance of the African Economy: 1978-1988

	1978	1988
1. GDP per capita (US)	854.00	565.00
2. Growth of GDP per capita (%)	3.03	-0.88
3. Share of investment in GDP (%)	25.20	15.80
4. Annual rate of inflation (%)	15.10 (1980)	21.30
5. Annual growth rate of agriculture (%)	1.50	2.30
6. Annual growth rate of industry (%)	7.50	4.90
7. Annual growth rate of mining (%)	7.20	4.70
8. Annual growth of export (%)	11.20	3.80
9. Annual growth of import (%)	9.90	0.30
10. Current account/Foreign trade deficit ($ billion)	3.90	20.30
11. Total external debt ($ billion)	48.30	230.00 276.7 (1991)

Sources: Adedeji (1990); Onimode (1993).

Admittedly, some countries have done better than others. The oil exporters, for instance, have recorded higher GDP growth than the oil importers. However, a consistent growth pattern is yet to be established in any of the countries. Even Botswana which was once presented as an economic show piece is beginning to show symptoms of recession.

The decline in the level of investment is a clear evidence of sub-Saharan African economies' lack-lustre performance in the last two decades. From a peak of 23 per cent of GDP (at current prices) recorded in 1975/76, gross domestic investment fell to below 16 per cent of GDP in 1991.

Table 2: Industrial Performance Indicators for Selected Countries in Tropical Africa, 1980 and 1990 (in constant 1985 dollars)

Country	MVA 1988 (million 1985 dollars)	MVA 1990 (million 1985 dollars)	Manufacturing employment 1980 (thousands)	Manufacturing employment 1990 (thousands)	Labour productivity 1980	Labour productivity 1990	Wage per worker 1980	Wage per worker 1990
Nigeria	2 742	2 042	432	393	6 344	5 189	1 388	1 058
Zimbabwe	1 186	1 692	161	193	7 376	8 770	3 083	3 228
Kenya	639	897	143	188	4 466	4 776	1 920	2 092
Ethiopia	662	811	77	107	8 635	7 530	1 270	1 560
Côte d'Ivoire	786	786	67	51	11 708	15 539	3 549	6 679
Zambia	510	760	59	63	8 631	12 143	2 122	3 25[illegible]
Cameroon	549	715	51	50	10 845	14 207	3 757	4 63[illegible]
Ghana	252	574	80	71	3 141	8 069	627	1 019
Sudan	303	405	65	52	4 644	7 835	1 615	1 645
Mauritius	104	341	43	121	2 429	2 823	1 270	1 248
United Republic of Tanzania	468	323	101	117	4 637	2 763	1 521	1 036
Senegal	200	221	32	44	6 307	4 999	2 710	2 573
Gabon	167	198	18	21	9 329	9 487	4 701	5 268
Burkina Faso	99	159	8	10	12 022	16 519	2 768	3 541
Madagascar	176	139	41	47	4 336	2 955	1 657	998
Rwanda	140	139	65	80	21 571	17 342	2 239	2 340
Burundi	58	109	3	5	16 726	21 364	2 408	2 154
Malawi	102	91	39	45	2 622	2 014	864	846
Botswana	28	80	5	19	5 141	4 149	2 530	1 284
Swaziland	75	74	11	15	6 936	5 060	2 798	2 518
Mali	51	54	14	21	3 724	2 585	1 029	834
Congo	48	47	5	10	8 972	4 384	3 169	2 365
Somalia	61	46	10	14	5 584	3 336	1 871	774
Togo	33	43	5	5	6 348	7 882	1 911	2 286
Benin	45	31	6	7	7 501	4 577	1 858	1 262
Niger	21	23	2	2	10 302	9 847	4 493	3 483
Gambia	10	17	2	3	5 124	5 470	1 296	1 195
Central African Republic	27	16	6	5	4 628	3 257	2 109	2 561
Lesotho	9	6	3	4	2 733	1 281	717	1 998

Source: UNIDO database

Nearly all the sectors of the African economy have been plagued by various types of crises. The manufacturing sector, in particular, faces what UNIDO (1992:77) terms 'the challenge of ... declining employment, labour productivity and wage earnings'. Among the factors militating against increased manufacturing value added (MVA) are the global recession of 1981-1982; foreign exchange scarcity; shortage of intermediate inputs, parts and machinery; high and fluctuating interest rates; and, above all, managerial weaknesses. Table 2 shows that while MVA rose in many countries (between 1980 and 1990), the result of overall industrial performance (as measured by MVA manufacturing employment, labour productivity, and wage per worker) was mixed. Within this period, many countries recorded productivity losses and decline in manufacturing employment. The few countries where productivity (and to some extent, employment) gains were achieved are Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The food and agriculture sector has not done better than the industrial sector. Table 3 reveals that in contrast to the other regions of the world, per caput food production between 1980 and 1991 has remained consistently low. By contrast, the developing world, to which Africa was once supposed to belong, recorded high production rates.

Table 3: Per Caput Food Production by Region (1979-81 = 100)

Region	1980	1985	1990	1991
World (total)	99.09	104.72	105.53	103.06
Africa	99.35	96.23	94.90	94.99
Asia	99.13	111.29	119.78	119.73
Europe	100.97	105.57	105.00	103.79
Developing Countries	99.32	108.13	113.00	113.26

Source: FAO (1992) *1991 Yearbook*, Vol.45, Rome (Table 9).

Trade and Finance

The lack of progress on the economic production front has been reflected in sub-Saharan Africa's trade and finance balance sheet. The region's insignificant contribution to the production of the world's tradable commodities is clearly mirrored by the available trade statistics. Out of a total value of merchandise trade exports of US$3,415,299 million for the entire world in 1990, sub-Saharan Africa accounted for a mere US$40,330 million, i.e., 1.18 per cent of the global figure. The value of Africa's imports in the same year was US$37,834 million which was 1.06 per cent of the world's total (US$3,549,300 million) (See Tables 4 and 5).

Table 4: All Merchandise Trade Exports by Region (1970-1990)

Region/Country	Value of all Exports (US$ million)			
	1970	1981	1985	1990
World Total	315,100	1,973,800	1,937,199	3,415,299
Developed Market Economies	223,500	1,228,100	1,281,499	2,439,299
South Africa	2,151	11,076	9,326	18,969
Developing Countries and Territories (a)	57,900	566,000	457,000	738,000
Africa (total)	12,770	76,630	61,990	74,100
North Africa	5,105	36,405	28,460	33,767
Other Africa (a)	7,663	40,228	33,531	40,330
Other Africa as Per cent of World Total	2.43	2.03	1.73	1.18

Source: Percentages calculated from figures supplied by UNCTAD (1992), *UNCTAD Commodity Yearbook 1992*, United Nations, New York.

(a) Excluding major petroleum and/or manufacturing exporters.

Table 5: Imports: All Merchandise Trade (Million of US Dollars)

Region/Country	Value of all Imports (US$ million)			
	1970	1981	1985	1990
World Total	328,300	2,043,400	2,017,999	3,549,300
Developed Market Economies	234,900	1,335,699	1,388,600	2,566,800
South Africa	3,937	21,077	10,319	17,075
Developing Countries and Territories	58,700	521,800	413,200	723,500
Africa (total)	11,080	85,470	53,600	75,230
North Africa	3,872	38,241	26,624	38,319
Other Africa*	7,210	48,476	27,553	37,834
Other Africa as Per cent of World Total	2.19	2.37	1.36	1.06

Source: *UNCTAD Commodity Yearbook* 1992.

It is true that external factors are partly responsible for Africa's poor performance in world trade. In particular, and as a result of the recession in the industrialised countries in the early 1980s, as well as the fall in the demand for, and the stockpiling of, Africa's export commodities, the region had to contend with worsening terms of trade. Tables 6 and 7 reveal steep falls in Africa's commodity prices between 1978 and 1989 and between 1989 and 1991 respectively.

The negative effect of an increasingly hostile international economic environment notwithstanding, sub-Saharan Africa has to face up to the responsibility for its own economic sustenance. It has to develop the capacity to restructure the entire production system so that the region becomes a force to reckon with on the global scene rather than the bit player it currently is. It should be noted that when UNCTAD (1992) prepared a line-up of 30 principal exporters of 18 IPC (Integrated Programme for Commodities) and other selected commodities, Africa could boast no more than a few countries — South Africa for agricultural products; South Africa and Zambia for minerals and metals;

Zambia and Zaire for copper; Egypt for cotton; South Africa, Liberia and Mauritania for iron ore; Côte-d'Ivoire and Kenya for coffee; Zimbabwe and Malawi for tobacco. Suffice it to say that even fewer African 'principal producers' of the commodities (possibly South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Kenya) added any substantial (manufacturing) value to the export commodities. Besides, Africa did not feature significantly (if at all) in technology exports, and in exports of commodities such as live animals and meat, fisheries, vegetable oilseeds and oils, natural textile fibres, non-coniferous timber, sugar, bovine meat, hides and skins, bananas, tin, jute products.

Table 6: Percentage Change in Africa's Commodity Prices 1968-78 and 1978-89

Commodity	Percentage Change in Prices	
	1962-78	1978-89
Agricultural		
Cocoa	+7.4	-6.7
Coffee	+3.4	-3.3
Cotton	+1.5	-1.5
Sugar	+7.4	-12.4
Tea	-3.2	-3.1
Groundnut oil	+3.1	-7.5
Tropical timber	+1.0	-0.1
Hides and skins	+1.4	-5.9
Minerals		
Copper	-5.3	-3.7
Aluminium	-1.0	-3.7
Phosphate rock	+5.6	-3.9
Iron ore	-1.3	-1.8

Sources: United Nations, *Africa's Commodity Problems — Towards a Solution*, New York, 1989; and Onimode, Bade, 'Lessons from Africa's Development Experience for South Africa', paper presented at Conference on Development Strategy for South Africa, 2-4 August 1993.

Table 7: Commodity Price Indices in Tropical Africa, 1989-1991 (Base year 1978-1981 = 100)

Commodities	1989	1990	1991
Agricultural non-food	84.2	84.0	81.1
Agricultural food	81.5	75.2	73.0
Metals and Minerals	121.1	112.7	102.2
33 selected commodities (excluding petroleum and steel)	95.1	89.0	84.9

Source: ADB (1992) *African Development Report 1992*, Abidjan, 1992, p.39.

In the meantime, Africa has to wrestle with balance of payments difficulties (Table 8).

Table 8: Sub-Saharan Africa's Balance of Payments Statistics (1972-1978)

	1972	1973	1974	1975	1978
Current account balance (US$ billion)	-	-2.1	-3.5	-6.9	-0.9
Overall balance of payments (US$ billion)	-	0.5	0.2	-0.7	-0.4
Terms of trade (% change)	-1.8	8.5	4.7	-12.78	-7.2

Source: World Bank (1989) *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth — A Long Term Perspective Study*, LTPS, Washington DC 1989

As a consequence of the worsening balance of payments position, sub-Saharan Africa has accumulated a huge external debt — $140.1 billion in 1989, $167.4 billion in 1992, and approximately $300 billion in 1994.

Social and Environmental Imbalances

An offshoot of the economic crisis is an equally devastating crisis in the social and human development sector. In response to the deteriorating economic situation, many countries introduced draconian structural adjustment policy measures, the elements of which include the reduction in the size of the public sector, budget rationalisation, privatisation of state enterprises, currency devaluation, elimination of subsidies and price controls, and liberalisation of the economy. An assessment of the justification for, and the impact of SAPs is beyond the scope of this paper. It is, however, necessary to add that the belt-tightening measures adopted under the programmes had adverse capacity-building implications in the public sector beside the restrictive impact on the private sector. As Adedeji observed, structural adjustment reforms 'failed to provide short-term relief, and their impact in the long run might be to cripple public management capacity without replacing it with viable alternatives' (Adedeji 1992).

SAPs have also been implemented at tremendous social and political cost. With the retrenchments in the public service, the factory closures and reduced capacity utilisation in the private sector, the rising unemployment, and the general shortage of essential commodities (like food, medical prescriptions, school textbooks and stationery and laboratory equipment), life in structurally adjusting Africa is not far from a simulation of the Armageddon. It is probably the deterioration in the quality of life which ignited the demand for political change in many countries, and threatened peace and security in a few others.

Before discussing the crisis of governance, it is necessary to add that economic decline has worsened the already precarious environmental situation. Toxic waste dumping, deforestation, sea pollution and other ecological threats are symptoms of a deeper malaise — i.e. absolute lack of ideas on how else to tackle the problem of economic survival.

Ethics, Accountability and Good Government

Establishing political and administrative institutions which enjoy the support and confidence of the people is the last main challenge facing Africa today. Unfortunately, after decades of one-party rule and/or military dictatorship, the systems of governance inherited on independence have by and large atrophied. With the exception of countries such as Botswana, Mauritius, Kenya and Zambia, attempts to restore the democratic political process have not been an unqualified success. It is easy to be taken in by the elaborate arrangements made to organise free elections and to encourage the hitherto disenfranchised groups to participate in these elections. Yet voter turnout is not likely to be high where the tradition of voting is alien and/or the results of elections are still subject to the ratification of a military junta. As the UNDP (1993:65) aptly noted: 'Democracy is not a matter of one decision or of hastily organised elections'. To move towards genuine democracy, more than token efforts would have to be made to restore the citizens' confidence in the basic institutions of governance. In addition, it is essential that a credible programme of citizen empowerment be designed and implemented with total honesty. The main elements of this programme are as follows:

(i) the development of an open society in which people can freely 'associate' with, or dissociate from, one another as members of political parties, interest groups, trade unions, etc.;

(ii) the establishment of a tradition of popular sovereignty, with a democratically elected parliament performing essential legislative and general oversight functions;

(iii) the entrenchment of the independence of the judiciary to enable it to carry out its adjudicative role without fear of incurring the displeasure of an omnipotent ruler or of power-driven bureaucrats;

(iv) substantive decentralisation of powers and functions to local, grass-root institutions;

(v) enhancement of the financial, managerial, and decision-making capacity of the (local-level) institutions;

(vi) the development of a feeling of 'political efficacy' among the electorate by acknowledging that popular sovereignty is the basis of the legitimacy of government at any point in time; and

(vii) replacement of corrupt elites with development-oriented ones.

What is the relevance of all these to capacity-building? Where does good government fit into in the equation of development through systematic enhancement of human and institutional capacity? Whether the will of the people is frustrated by the cynicism of the political class or crushed by army tanks, Africa cannot but pay the developmental price. To begin with, where a government is not answerable to a larger public, it does not have to conduct its business in an open, transparent and accountable way. And once a government is not accountable, all ethical codes can be breached with impunity — including codes relating to conflict of interest, offer and acceptance of bribes and gratifications, diversion of public funds into private accounts, misuse of government property, diversion of food aid to groups other than those intended, destruction of case files and subversion of the judicial process.

Yet another danger of corrupt oligarchies trying to perpetuate themselves lies in potential oligarchies making a successful bid for power — either through subversion or by perpetrating large-scale violence. In other words, unless appropriate pre-emptive measures are taken, bad governments tend to replicate themselves.

The political instability (which is an integral part of a system based on force) is a threat to the durability of public policies and institutions. It is no accident that when General Ibrahim Babangida left office in August 1993, what could have served as his legacy in the political and economic fields, left with him. This is the story of the democratic institutions which he spent time, money and air waves building — the two-party system, the 'bottom up' strategy of demilitarisation, democratically elected assemblies and public functionaries, etc. It is the story of the SAP which he introduced at grave personal and political risk but which was temporarily reversed by his successors. His 1988 civil service reform is, according to inside sources, the next target of his opponents. Instability is therefore a destroyer, not a builder, of human and institutional capacity.

Capacity Building in sub-Saharan Africa: Practices and Problems

In examining the experience of sub-Saharan Africa in human and capacity building, it is necessary not only to assess the achievements recorded to-date but also to highlight what remains to be accomplished.

Preliminary Assessment of Capacity-Building Efforts

It is difficult to be precise about the status of capacity building process in the present-day sub-Saharan Africa. However, while making allowance for deviations from the norm, the first equation worked out in the first part of this paper about sums up the capacity building situation to-date, viz:

$$P = \frac{P_{x_1} P_{x_2} \ldots P_{x_n}}{E_{x_1} E_{x_2} \ldots E_{x_n}} < P_{y_1} P_{y_2} \ldots P_{y_n}$$

Although various attempts ($P_{x1} \ldots P_{xn}$) have been made to add value to indigenous capacity, factors which are traceable largely to the internal and external environment (E_{x1} $E_{x2} \ldots E_{xn}$) have persistently eroded the value of indigenous capacity and enhanced (some will say 'inflated') that of foreign capacity (P_{y1} $P_{y2} \ldots P_{yn}$). In a nutshell, sub-Saharan Africa is yet to build the critical capacity — i.e. the capacity to produce at minimum socio-political and economic cost.

Deviations from Pattern

Before discussing in detail the general pattern just described, it is necessary to look at some important deviations. First, capacities, as well as the measures adopted to build or enhance them, are unevenly distributed among countries, within countries, among different levels of government within the same country (say between central and local government), and between one office and another located next door. Even within the same office, technical, managerial and entrepreneurial skills are not equally distributed. Besides, capacity improvement efforts may co-exist with capacity neglect or outright capacity destruction.

The difference which is easily quantifiable is in the development of human capital. At any point in time, one can point to a mixed bag of efforts in human capacity building among SSA countries. Policies differ in the impact they have on:

(a) school enrolment (especially, the period of attendance);

(b) the ratio of technological/scientific manpower to total population; and

(c) level of literacy.

The second major difference among countries relates to the influence exerted by the domestic environment on capacity building. Certainly, capacity building takes a form in Mauritius, Botswana and Ghana that is different from what it is in countries where the capture and/or retention of power is the sole preoccupation of the elites. According to Grey-Johnson (1994:3), if any country in Africa has succeeded in transforming its economy within a relatively short period, that country is Mauritius. A coherent policy on capacity building and utilisation is one possible explanation for this feat. By contrast, Madagascar's problems in optimising the benefits of its natural resource endowments might not be unconnected with the lack of an enabling environment for the creation and nurturing of human and institutional capacities.

The third important difference examined in. this paper is the use to which foreign aid for capacity-building is put. Whereas some countries have established strong aid coordination and monitoring units, the rest prefer to let the structure, content and ultimate impact of capacity building programmes be determined by the donors, individual ministries and departments, and the public officials participating in overseas training programmes.

The General Trend

The differences discussed earlier notwithstanding, it is necessary to point out that as a region, sub-Saharan Africa faces a challenge of how to turn its huge development and capacity building deficit into a surplus. Due largely to internal and external environmental factors, the level of productivity in the region remains very low. This does not become obvious until the region is compared with other regions. According to UNIDO (1992:78), the SSA manufacturing sector not only failed between 1980 and 1990 to create employment, improve labour productivity and increase wage earnings, it also was unable to close the widening productivity gap between the Africa region and North America. Relative to the North American level, labour productivity fell from 12.6 per cent in 1980 to 10.0 per cent in 1990 (It was 15.7 per cent in 1970). In addition, wage earnings per worker fell to 8.7 per cent of the North American level in 1990, from 9.2 per cent in 1980 and 10.5 per cent in 1970.

Public Sector Capacity Building Measures : A Critical Review

In the preceding paragraphs, we undertook a general survey of the capacity building situation in sub-Saharan Africa. It is now necessary to focus on the public sector where formal, sometimes elaborate, efforts have been made to mobilise capacity for development. As Jaycox (1993) clearly stated: 'Human and institutional capacities are lacking in virtually all sectors and all countries in sub-Saharan Africa'.

The public sector in Jaycox's view, is no exception. Indeed,

> At independence most countries had only a handful of professional people, and institutions were weak. Post independence policies of state centralisation, coupled with personalised systems of governance fed these weaknesses. Poor governance, political instability and the continued deterioration of African economies also forced many talented Africans to leave their countries (Jaycox 1993).

One major explanation for the retarded growth of indigenous capacity is the tendency in many African countries to transfer the initiative for human and institutional capacity building to external bodies. It is true that indigenous leadership was behind a number of policies formulated in the 1960s and 1970s — e.g. policies on the introduction of one-party rule, the integration of party with state, token devolution of powers from central to lower level authorities, and the establishment and management of state-owned enterprises.

Yet, even where indigenous leadership yielded specific policies, the details of how to operationalise and generally follow-up the policies were left to be worked out by external advisers, donors, and technical cooperation agencies. This was certainly the case with the design of organisation structures, the recruitment and training of staff, and the installation of 'modern' management systems such as Management-by-objectives, programme and performance budgeting, matrix or project management, organisation and methods, and work planning and scheduling.

What is worse, even when foreign consultants designed and installed new management systems and procedures, their local 'counterparts' seldom learnt how to operate them (the systems and procedures) on their own. Either the consultants were not keen on accelerating their departure (through rapid 'technology transfer') or the policy makers and senior managers failed to provide an environment within which skills-acquisition by local counterparts could take place (Mutahaba, 1992). The refusal to deploy employees to jobs for which they have been trained represents yet another instance of wilful loss of capacity building opportunity.

So far, we have concentrated on the capacity building deficits in countries where attempts were made by policy makers to put their stamp on policy — if not on its implementation. In many others, policies, implementation, and institutional structures were controlled almost entirely by external advisers and/or agencies. The 'turn-key' approach enjoyed special favour in those countries which placed high premium on the acquisition of 'western know-how'. Such countries might have invested huge sums on the establishment of universities and technical colleges, but would rarely utilise the products of these 'local' institutions. The same group of countries would tend to construct 'modern' airport facilities (with sophisticated radar and air-control systems) but are likely to over-look elementary things such as air-conditioning and passenger welfare services. Countries which get carried away by 'modernisation' trends in the technologically advanced societies are wont to purchase, at high cost, state-of-the-art, computerised devices which remain idle most of the time due largely to the shortage of the personnel trained to operate, maintain, and/or repair the said equipment. An illustration is Murtala Mohammed International Airport in Nigeria where up to January 1995 the installed (electrical, electronic, mechanical) systems operated at least, 60 per cent below capacity. Outside Nigeria, but still in sub-Saharan Africa, it is not impossible to find that x-ray machines have, for want of a more appropriate use, been turned into brooms and brushes storage racks!

Sub-Saharan Africa's experience in the acquisition and application of 'modern technology' has been replicated in the area of institution building. In most cases, the practice was to 'start big and end up small'. Again, on the advice of foreign consultants, many African countries in the 1960s and 1970s embarked on ambitious development programmes. This resulted in the rapid increase in the size and cost of their public services. With the rapid decline in economic performance in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the bulk of the programmes administered by the public services were deemed unsustainable. So were public service explosion halted, institutions reduced in number, and a policy of privatisation inaugurated.

The lessons of Africa's experience in capacity building are clear. Instead of wishing to be a carbon copy of the former metropolitan power, the typical African state ought to have devoted time and resources to identifying and tackling its 'important problems'. This would almost invariably have led to a realistic assessment of options and resources, besides focusing on areas in which certain critical capacities ought to be developed. At the very least, an inward-oriented approach to development would have enabled the average African country to start the project of nation-building on a small, manageable scale, and, over time, grow big. This is how Mauritius and, to some extent, Botswana, seemed to have got their capacity building equation right.

Capacity Building for Economic Recovery and Self-sustaining Development: A Paradigm and a Summation

If at all SSA's experience in capacity building offers any important lesson for the future, it is that the initiative must come from within. Donor-driven programmes have a way of reflecting external preferences and biases, and of ignoring internal African realities and needs. Besides, in view of the fact that foreign aid tends to come with too many strings — particularly, strings tying SSA to specific procurement contracts and compelling indigenous personnel to learn to operate a bewildering variety of equipment or procedures — it might be advisable, at least, in the interest of long-term sustainability, to pursue a policy of collective self-reliance. As Jaycox (1993:2) observes: 'External development agencies failed ... to insist on full local participation in identification and design of projects ... In sum, the donors have done a disservice to Africa, and many African governments have participated blindly'.

The way forward, therefore, lies in the creation of a critical mass of development-oriented leaders — leaders who, besides being socialised to (i.e. trained in) peaceful and constitutional methods of seeking power, appreciate the need for the application of analytical techniques in development policy formulation and management. The reason for advocating a broad approach is clear: non-economic variables such as civil strife, ethnic conflicts, political instability, and ethical violations, have direct and immediate impact on SSA's economic growth and long-term development. These non-economic variables (E_{x1} E_{x2}...E_{xn}) have also been known to erode the benefits of investment in capacity building (P_{x1} P_{x2}...P_{xn}).

While the details of capacity building programmes for leadership and governance will have to be worked out in each country, it is possible at this stage to suggest the broad outline of such programmes. To begin with, the techniques or 'art of associating together' which are now patently lacking within the main social structures (the family, political parties, interest groups and professional associations) will need to be highlighted. It is tempting to blame the collapse of democratic experiments in SSA solely on the manipulations of 'sit-tight' leaders. What is seldom realised is that even within the opposition camp, the will to temper personal ambitions for the common good is sadly missing. So are the skills of persuading people from diverse backgrounds to cross ethnic, racial, gender, religious, and generational boundaries, and coalesce under one solid organisation. That is why political parties or interest groups inaugurated with fanfare soon break into splinter groups which in turn produce increasingly smaller factions.

In addition to the 'art of associating together', central elites and local community leaders need to be exposed to the technique of policy analysis and management. It is not enough to set up policy analysis units in selected ministries and departments. Political parties, employers' federation, trade union organisations, and consumer protection groups need to develop a strategic orientation and avail themselves of the services of regular think-tanks.

Building the remaining institutions from the ground up is the next logical component of the new capacity building programme. This entails identifying the distressed institutions and proffering solutions to their problems. Within the public sector, the obvious candidates for institutional rehabilitation are the following:

(i) the regular civil service;

(ii) the law enforcement and regulatory bodies (e.g. the police, customs and immigration services, licensing authorities, environmental control agencies and many other similar organisations);

(iii) local government and decentralised institutions; and

(iv) commercially-oriented public enterprises.

The capacity building problems facing the private sector can only be determined and tackled by each firm. On condition that the government does not place unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles in the way of private enterprise, and so long as the essential infrastructural supports are in place, it can be safely assumed that the 'invisible hand' which guides investment will also design and implement the private sector's capacity building programmes.

Supplementary Measures

We have thus far focused on the minimum preconditions for the creation and utilisation of development capacities. If the currently wide deficits in development are to be substantially reduced, it is essential that additional measures ($S_{p1}...S_{pn}$) be instituted. In particular, it is necessary for governments to earmark an increasing amount of resources for the rehabilitation of capacity building institutions and facilities. This will entail, among other things, reconstructing the decaying physical infrastructures, procuring new teaching devices (especially laboratory equipment), motivating the teachers through increases in remuneration and regular payment of their salaries, improving the general learning environment, and refraining from any action which might be interpreted as a devaluation of knowledge and skills.

In view of the incremental value of the constant application of knowledge and skills, it is also advisable that governments in SSA make increasing use of their human resources. Affirmative action and set-aside policies should now be extended to the implementation of development projects — including projects financed from external sources. An aid package which requires that resources be allocated to priorities solely dictated by donor agencies should be rejected outright, if for no other reason than that it stunts the growth of domestic capacity.

Above all, capacity building entails taking measures which promote organisational alertness and enhance productivity. First, the manning tables should be constantly reviewed to ensure that staff complements are in alignment with work-load, and that incumbents are properly trained to handle on-going and new responsibilities. Secondly, the present overwhelming bias towards hierarchy and red-tape should give way to innovative managerial approaches. Merit and excellence should be the guiding principle of staff selection and promotion. Thirdly, the issue of employee motivation, which has been brought to the fore by structural adjustment reforms, but over-looked in subsequent policy changes, should now be boldly tackled. To this extent, it might be advisable to begin to experiment with the installation of pay and productivity schemes in a small number of public service organisations which handle economic or quasi-economic activities. Depending on the results of pilot efforts, the schemes could be extended to other areas of public service management.

Role of Donor and Technical Cooperation Agencies

With the overwhelming bias towards an inward-propelled capacity building strategy, it is legitimate to ask where the donors and the concept of technical assistance or cooperation fit into all this. Does it mean that donor assistance is no longer required or that the idea of technical cooperation is dead? The answer to both questions is an emphatic 'no'.

First, donor assistance is, and for sometime to come will, continue to be, required in tackling the broad developmental and the specific capacity building challenges. At the same time, it will be naive to expect the donors to make resources available without considering the economic and political pay-off, and the impact their assistance makes on the life and well-being of the recipients.

However, while acknowledging the vital role of donors and their rights to determine for what purposes their resources should be allocated, it is necessary to come to a new understanding on how to maximise the benefits of foreign aid. To begin with, the present practice of ignoring the immediate and long-term capacity building implications of technical assistance programmes should be discontinued. In specific terms, donor countries should care as much about exporting their manufactures and cultural nuances to recipient-nations as assisting these (recipient) nations to overcome obstacles to growth and to develop along their own path.

Secondly, the tendency to offer aid in a truncated, and therefore, non-usable form, needs to be seriously reconsidered. It is not unknown for large sums of money to be made available for the procurement of computers, but not for the recruitment of the personnel required to train local officials in how to operate a computerised system. Providing assistance towards the development of indigenous technology is of course out of the question (Odhiambo 1992:127-128).

If foreign aid is to serve a useful purpose, it should at the same time be needs-based, problem-solving, and beneficiary-responsive. To this end, it is necessary for the UNDP, as the main global development agency, to provide a forum at which the basic issues could be resolved by the donors, the recipients, and technical cooperation organisations. In the light of their achievements to-date in the area of capacity-building, both the ECA and the World Bank should be closely associated with the new initiative.

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