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## Exploring the International Post-2015 Development Agenda Consensus: Divergence and opportunities

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### POST 2015 DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES IN AFRICA: A METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH FROM THE CASE OF CAMEROON, BASED UPON THE DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS CONCEPT

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The greatest challenge for the post-2015 agenda in Africa, in terms of development effectiveness, is transforming the existing development potential to meet the expectations of the people in their selected priority areas. In Cameroon, for instance, the subnational consultations in April and May 2013 identified these priorities as: Education, health, Employment and Environment, with Infrastructure, Governance (including legal framework to create an enabling environment) and human rights (including gender related issues) as crosscutting preconditions.

But current development strategies in developing countries are mainly based on the perception that decision-makers have of people's needs, rather than on a direct expression of these needs by the people themselves. The emphasis during the post 2015 national consultations in many African countries on requirements for quality, efficiency and morality shows that there is a great need for innovative ways and means for development. This appears as a potential success factor where the results of development efforts have not always been up to the expectations.

## **CHALLENGES AND ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN**

It has generally been observed that in the majority of developing countries, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are unlikely to be achieved. This represents a major challenge that calls for innovative approach in designing development strategies as well as organizing and structuring state services for the implementation of these strategies. By resolutely directing policies, strategies and programs according to the priorities of the people, better results could be achieved. Strategies in priority areas should first be considered, and then subsequently expectations and constraints as well as potential threats for other sectors would clearly emerge.

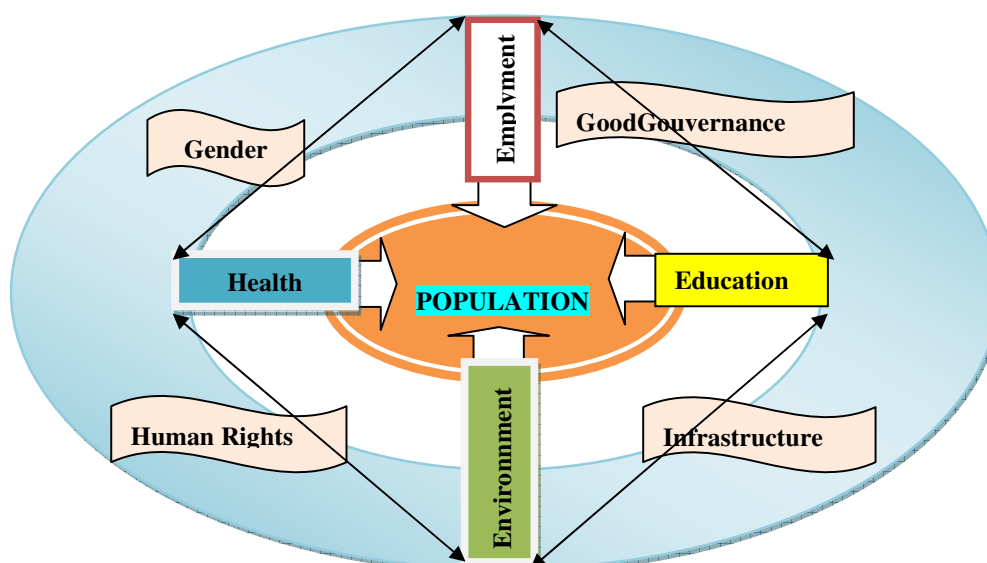
Subsequently, each key governmental sector or stakeholder in the National Governance System for Sustainable Development would be able to reasonably elaborate its strategies and action plans. The aim for all should necessarily be to show how it intends to organize and participate in ensuring that the priority sectors' needs are met. In the worst case it would be about contributing to reducing the constraints that are likely to threaten the achievement of expected results in priority areas.

## **ROLE OF ACTORS AND NEED FOR INCLUSION**

All development actors should cooperate in such a way that development partners (Donors and other support institutions), the private sector and the civil society effectively contribute to addressing the people's priorities. Non State actors would then have to shape their action plans accordingly, just like the public sector. It has to be no more about looking for how to symbolically get the people involved, but rather to work in a view to contributing to the satisfactory delivery of development services to the people in a sustainable pattern.

Thus one could really put the people at the core of sustainable development in an innovative scheme for efficiency with current priorities as major pillars (health, education, employment and the environment in the case of Cameroon and other developing countries at present). These pillars interact as "Access Point" in a " Development Effectiveness Circle (DEC)", with the people at its centre and taking into account the cross-cutting concerns of the people around, in order to ensure connection to the "access points" of the DEC (see chart).

## « The Development Effectiveness Circle (DEC) »



### **DEC Determining factors**

*The chart shows that the population must be placed at the centre of all development activities or process. In this case, they primarily need health, education/training, employment and environmental protection. The quantity and quality of development they receive in relation to these priorities are determined by the availability of infrastructure, taking into account gender approaches, human rights and good governance.*

## **CONDITIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEC AND RESPONSE TO RISKS**

Such a development scheme would ensure that all pillars of sustainable development including environmental protection, economic growth and social development are well anchored. They are actually located in the perfect combination of a sum of priorities and conditions or cross-cutting concerns that fully integrate. This, however, does not go without risks, because factors like the necessary requirement for peace and security must be taken into account.

In fact, regardless of the level of stability in a country (Cameroon, for instance, is a relatively stable and peaceful country), events in other countries may adversely affect its economy through migration flows and other factors such as trade. Instability, even for a very short period, constitutes a risk and can result in socio-economic development delay or backwardness. Long-term response to this kind of risk has to be sought through a constant search for stability and resilience, with special consideration to the sustainable development priority issue that affects most of the population.

In the case of Cameroon and many other African countries, that segment of the population consists of the youth whose major concern is unemployment. Employment could therefore be considered a top priority, because efforts to secure decent employment for the majority if not for all would necessarily imply strong action in education. The good quality of education in turn would enhance the overall capacity to protect the environment. The consequence of decent work being a guarantee for adequate income, resources would thus be made available for the majority to deal with health issues in a space where extreme poverty would then be eradicated. It is therefore crucial to seize all opportunities for economic transformation, including the effectiveness of sub-regional and regional integration.

## DEC RELEVANT FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

The conclusion by the UN High Level Panel on the post-2015 development agenda that inclusion is crucial and no one should be left behind is more than valid. But the major challenge for Africa and other developing regions will be how to finance the achievement of the new development goals. Bearing in mind the very negative long lasting effect of the international financial crisis on African people, who did not contribute to causing it, the international financial architecture and related reflexion processes need to be well adapted to the new global context. Here too, no one should be left behind. It is crucial to bring up the voices of grassroots in Africa, on the “**financing for development that we want for the future**”. There are a number of important points to consider in that respect in the very much necessary FfD reflection.

- 1- Any meaningful development agenda should have an effective financing component and there is no acceptable development that is not sustainable. The debate on whether to work for Financing Sustainable Development or to work for Sustainable Financing for Development is a false one, because the reflection is valid both ways.
- 2- The International FfD process achieved substantial gains in Monterrey (2002), Doha (2008) and New York (2010) that are embedded in related outcome documents. These need to be preserved and capitalise on, with sound consideration of the necessity to keep the discipline of a constant and holistic evaluation of the global financing for development process, in a view to undertaking sound adjustments when necessary. A narrowing or shrinking of the current Financing for Development agenda in the name of "sustainability" is to be rejected.
- 3- The efforts made by International Financial Institutions in considering possible avenues for reform or seeking the participation of the Civil Society (WB / IMF – Civil Society Policy Forum), although not sufficient, are commendable. But it is worth calling for more, in the spirit of effective regionalization as well as better sharing of decision and overview powers. This implies allowing more space to developing countries in terms of voting rights and Executive Boards membership.
- 4- A holistic Financing for Development process is capital to any new development agenda, in terms of pre-empting, avoiding or combating financial crisis that, as shown by recent history, would necessarily lead to economic and social problems (it is now known that there is a close link between democracy and populations' needs for better livelihood). The false dichotomy between the FfD reflexion process and the real development reflexion process should be avoided.
- 5- Ensuring coherence in the global Financing for Development process cannot be limited to just determining the needs, in accordance with the Rio+20 recommendations to be implemented through “Major Groups”. The whole set of reflexions and actions will additionally have to be integrated in a holistic overseeing scheme by making sure that the assets of the Monterrey consensus' implementation and evaluation are valued.
- 6- It is important to acknowledge the effort made by OECD and the G20, through the aid effectiveness dynamics that evolved from a marginal initiative with questionable legitimacy, to a more acceptable global consensus in Busan, on development effectiveness. This confirms

the fact that a better international financial architecture should be under UN supervision or at least should seek UN legitimacy.

- 7- While agreeing with the Post 2015 HLP's report on the matter of inclusion, it is necessary to allocate means and resources to facilitate a better representation of African Civil Society on reflection tables at national, regional and global level, particularly at the UN (including FfD). That is probably the only good way to ensure inclusion for grassroots people, who are supposed to be the beneficiaries of the better post 2015 development agenda presently at stake.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Despite the present reported generalized failure in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in many developing countries, regardless of the level of achievement that the World would have reached by 2015, the MDGs' advent at least marked a turning point in the global dynamics of development formulation and monitoring.

The global reflection that the UN Secretary General very appropriately initiated on the MDGs and the post 2015 development agenda, at worst has the merit to offer a framework for self-questioning and assessment to all development actors and especially to World Leaders on their actions to improve their people's living conditions. It is left to hope that each and all would bounce off his failures of the past, and work to ensure that the post 2015 development agenda truly meets the aspirations of the people. It goes without say that the People should be formally placed at the centre of development, relying on a more responsible and accountable civil society.

It is therefore crucial to set "**METHODOLOGICAL AND QUALITATIVE GOALS**" or development implementation conditions, for the post 2015 development agenda. This concept is closely related to international experience or knowledge sharing and effective cooperation on how to implement development.