



Current Path

Sustainable development and Agenda 2063

Jakkie Cilliers

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The impact of the Brundtland Report and the Earth Summit continues to resonate several decades later, first with the eight MDGs, adopted at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000, and more recently with the SDG 2030, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015.

An important tool for assisting in achieving this vision of sustainable development was international cooperation and solidarity, including the provision of overseas development assistance (aid). However, instead of increasing (when measured in constant dollars), aid levels steadily declined from their peak in 1990 to the Millennium Summit in New York a decade later. Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and the former Zaire (now the DR Congo) experienced some of the largest declines. These trends are reflected in Chart 9 that includes a forecast on aid to 2043.

Chart 9: Net foreign aid to Africa, in billion US\$ and per cent of GDP, 1960–2043



One of the reasons for the decline of aid from 1990 was a prolonged recession that began in Japan, a major aid provider, in 1991. A second reason was the resource pull exerted by transition economies in South Asia, steadily diverting attention away from Africa. But the most important reason was that the dissolution of the Soviet Union freed Western countries from the need to prop up African dictators as part of the efforts to confront the Soviet bloc in Africa during the Cold War. With the collapse of the Berlin Wall, Africa lost much of its previous geostrategic relevance and hence the external motivation to assist.

Aid only started to regain momentum with the 2000 UN Millennium Summit in New York. It was substantially bolstered by the support of international celebrities such as Bono and Bob Geldof, who campaigned for greater awareness about poverty and the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) crisis and helped to raise funds for relief programmes in Africa.

In addition, the post-2000 momentum was marked by various initiatives, such as the Report of the Commission for Africa, spearheaded by UK Prime Minister Tony Blair and the European Consensus on Development. The 2005 World Summit in New York called for increased aid transfers to assist in reaching the MDGs of halving poverty and hunger by 2015.

While progress was made on the MDGs, many goals were not achieved in Africa. There is a convincing argument that the MDGs were poorly tailored for the continent and set unrealistically ambitious goals. Even before the 2015 deadline for the

MDGs, governments began to look at the post-MDG development framework and what would ultimately become the SDGs.

Meanwhile, the Lagos Plan of Action and the African Economic Community initiatives had largely fallen by the wayside and been eclipsed by the establishment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in 2001. NEPAD departed from the Lagos Plan of Action with a greater focus on political reform as a core component of development. Efforts to improve the efficiency and accountability of member states were also strengthened by the institution of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). While remaining Africa-centred and led, NEPAD eschewed regional isolationism. It embraced global partnerships and has since been integrated into the AU as its core development agency. It now serves as the implementing agency for Agenda 2063.

Cooperation for Africa's development is now largely framed by the SDGs and, since 2013, by Agenda 2063. However, it is clear that Africa will not meet most of the SDG aspirations and, in its planning for the second ten year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 (2024 to 2033), the AUDA-NEPAD agency is already setting different and achievable goals drawing on the same modelling platform used on this website.

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Dr Jakkie Cilliers is the ISS's founder and former executive director of the ISS. He currently serves as chair of the ISS Board of Trustees and head of the African Futures and Innovation (AFI) programme at the Pretoria office of the ISS. His 2017 best-seller *Fate of the Nation* addresses South Africa's futures from political, economic and social perspectives. His three most recent books, *Africa First! Igniting a Growth Revolution* (March 2020), *The Future of Africa: Challenges and Opportunities* (April 2021), and *Africa Tomorrow: Pathways to Prosperity* (June 2022) take a rigorous look at the continent as a whole.

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