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Development Magazine

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The idea of South-South cooperation has been around for years already, but has it achieved anything significant in reality?

South-South Cooperation for Development & Peace

Fighting Ebola
“by the Grace
of God”

10 Grassroots
Environmental Justice
Campaigns from
Around the World

The Humanitarian
Crisis in Central
African Republic

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Global South Development Magazine is an international development magazine published by Silver Lining Creation, Finland. The magazine covers a wide range of developmental issues primarily of the developing world and is an initiative of freelance writers and development activists from different parts of the world.

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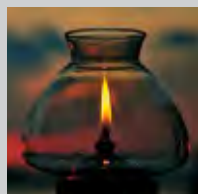
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Stop Refugee Queues to Europe!

It was very sad to see the horrifying pictures of the Syrian children. As the conflict is still ongoing, there is no doubt that many such pictures will be coming in the days to come. Thousands of refugees are fleeing Syria everyday and their future is uncertain.



Diego Cupolo's Syria diary was powerful. It fabulously depicts the hopes and despairs of a war trodden country.

The news analysis piece titled 'No welcome mat for Syrians in Europe' shows how indifferent the world is growing when it comes to protecting refugees and

asylum seekers. When it comes to refugees the truth is that taking a few hundred able refugees to Europe won't solve the problem in the long run. The problem is much more extensive and instead of dividing quotas for taking refugees, countries should think about creating a joint fund so that refugees' welfare could be ascertained, instead, in a neighboring country. In Syria's case,



refugees in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan could be supported on the spot instead of queuing them to never ending line that supposedly ends somewhere in Europe.

Hafsah
Cairo, Egypt

Climate Change and Gender Nexus

In GSDM's December issue, Tithe Farhana interestingly establishes a link between reproductive health

observed in so many countries that women suffer most when harsh effects of climate change hit hard. We are often blamed for looking for gender context in every development issue, but I firmly believed that gender



and climate change in the Bangladeshi context, but based on my experience of working with different NGOs and in different countries of the developing world, it's been a global phenomenon. I have

perspective must be taken into account while combating climate change and global warming.

Sarah
London, United Kingdom

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Let's Talk about South-South Cooperation



By MANOJ BHUSAL

"When the Ebola outbreak hit West Africa this year, Cuba sent 165 medical professionals to Sierra Leone and became the first country to respond. In Ethiopia, a group of IGAD delegates struggled to forge a peace deal between warring factions in South Sudan"

"South-South cooperation today expands beyond mere humanitarian assistance and goodwill endeavors. Trade and investment between countries in the South is huge. So is knowledge sharing and capacity building. Whether it's Brazilian Bolsha program, Lighting Africa campaign or Nepal's non-contributory pension system, there is a lesson to learn for other developing countries"



The idea of South-South cooperation is not a new concept in the international development discourse. Particularly, before G77's creation in 1964, developing countries in the South engaged in cooperation activities that were somehow limited to their neighborhoods. Nowadays, the practice has been much more extensive and wide-ranging. For instance, when the Ebola outbreak hit West Africa this year, Cuba sent 165 medical professionals to Sierra Leone and became the first country to respond. In Ethiopia, a group of IGAD delegates struggled to forge a peace deal between warring factions in South Sudan. IGAD- Inter-governmental Authority for Development- is a consortium of 8 developing countries from East Africa- Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda, Sudan and South Sudan.

South-South cooperation today expands beyond mere humanitarian assistance and goodwill endeavors. Trade and investment between countries in the South is huge. So is knowledge sharing and capacity building. Whether it's Brazilian Bolsha program, Lighting Africa campaign or Nepal's non-contributory pension system, there is a lesson to learn for other developing countries. In this edition of Global South Development Magazine, we critically review the practice of South-South cooperation and present a couple of remarkable case studies from the South.

In addition, this edition brings you other thought-provoking stories from around the world. Our Latin America Editor Diego Cupolo's travel diary A Mud Road to Peru carries you to a fascinating trip to Ecuador, and our Special Correspondent for Global Humanitarian Affairs Debora Di Dio's piece The Humanitarian Crisis in the Central African Republic gives you an overview of the fragile situation in the Sahel region.

Our newly appointed Development Reporters Olufunmilayo Akande and Antony Luberto have made their first contribution by writing about disability in development agenda, and discussing alternative ways of planning and conducting local procurement strategy in developing countries.

GSDM's guest contributor Helen Long's compilation Ten Grassroots Environmental Justice Campaigns from Around the World and Prasadha Khanal's photo story on child labor in Nepal are certainly going to make you think. Finally, Prof. Anupama Saxena's take on development and the tribal people of India calls for a rights-based approach to development and Diego Cupolo's reporting on drones' use in Latin America warns about the security threat imposed by the increased use of drones in Latin America.

Happy reading!

(The editor can be reached at manoj.bhusal@gsd magazine.org)



Afghan Former Refugee at UNHCR Returnee Camp

A close-up of a woman former refugee at the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)'s returnee camp in Sari Pul, Afghanistan. UN Photo/Eric Kanalstein.



Sierra Leone: into the Ebola epicentre

An Ebola treatment and isolation centre created in the district of Kailahun, eastern Sierra Leone. 4 in 10 Ebola sufferers recover from the lethal disease and try to pick what's left of their lives in a region now cordoned off from the world. Photo credits: ©EC/ECHO/Cyprien Fabre

Fighting Ebola “by the Grace of God”



Ebola has killed 4,867 people and infected more than 10,000 in Liberia and in neighbouring Guinea and Sierra Leone by 23 October, according to World Health Organization (WHO). Ebola’s spread is mainly being driven by some cultural practices among rural communities such as burial rituals, high population density around the capitals of the three West African countries, as well as cross-border movement, WHO said.

Panicked and shocked Liberian health workers who have seen their colleagues die of Ebola, which has killed thousands in West Africa since January, are abandoning their work stations, hoping to resume only when the disease subsides.

Their frustrations have been compounded by the lack of adequate medical equipment. Those who remain at work face a heavier workload. The authorities say they are conducting training and supplying equipment to bolster Ebola control.

“We have many challenges at this local health centre,” said McFarland Kerkulah, a doctor at Dolo health centre in Margibi County, some 50km northwest of the capital Monrovia. “We lack gloves, goggles, chlorine and other disinfectant materials. There is nothing that has been put in place by the government.”

“We are just managing by the grace of God. We are very scared because if you tell us to fight Ebola or prevent it, what materials do we use? None of us has been trained to fight the

disease,” Kerkulah told IRIN.

Ebola had killed 4,867 people and infected more than 10,000 in Liberia and in neighbouring Guinea and Sierra Leone by 23 October, according to World Health Organization (WHO). Ebola’s spread is mainly being driven by some cultural practices among rural communities such as burial rituals, high population density around the capitals of the three West African countries, as well as cross-border movement, WHO said.

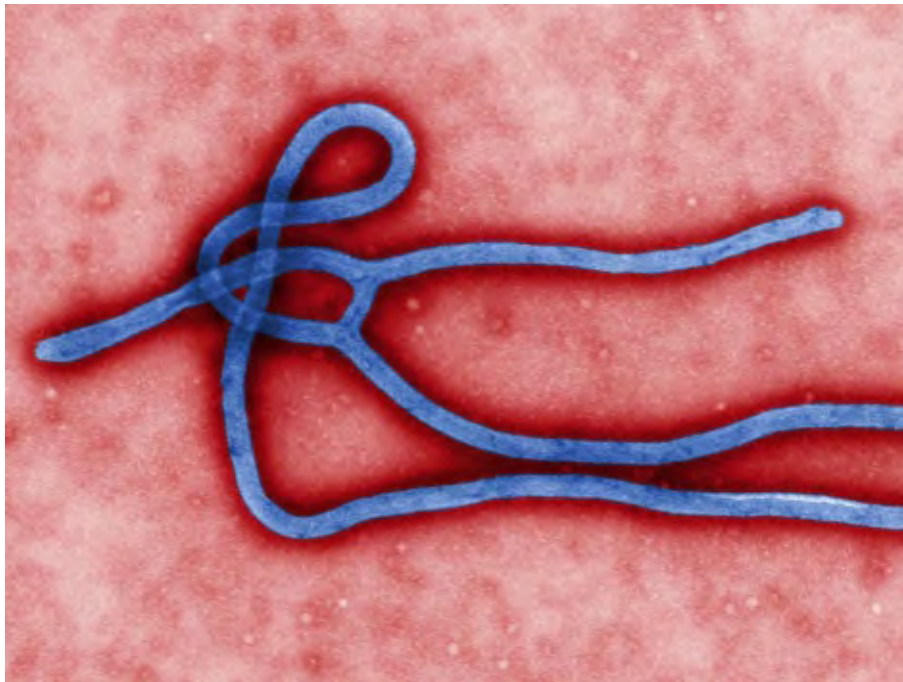
At least five major hospitals and health centres in Monrovia have reported a decline in manpower, but Tolbert Nyenswah, the assistant health minister for preventive services, said they were working to return to full service.

“The stay-away is affecting other ill people. They need to return to work. Things are getting better with the education and training we are providing. This will make them return. We understand their fears, but they need to come back to work.”

A nurse at Redemption Hospital, a referral hospital in Monrovia, said: “I am afraid to die. Our friends died and their families did not receive any compensation from the government. It means that if I die too that will be the end. I am very scared and have decided to stay home.” The hospital recently lost a nurse and a doctor to Ebola.

“To be frank, I am actually scared. I am a father of six and I don’t want to die and leave my children behind now. And so I have decided to stay at home with the family for now. When things improve, I will get back to my job,” said a laboratory technician who also spoke to IRIN on condition of anonymity. Larry King, head of Mamba Karba Health Centre on the outskirts of the capital, said nine of the centre’s 25 staff have stayed away.

“The workload here is heavy. My workers have refused to come to work since they heard the news of the death of some of their fellow nurses. This is causing a serious hindrance to the operation of the centre. There are



more patients coming in with other illnesses but the manpower is low. I hope the nurses can see the reason to come back to work,” he said.

Allaying fears

The Health Ministry says it is carrying out training and providing supplies to health centres in a bid to calm fears and boost control of the incurable disease. In Liberia, 2,704 people have died of Ebola and there are 4,693 confirmed, probable or suspected cases, according to WHO. Some 200 health centres have received training out of a total target of 500, said Nyenswah.

“The problem the health workers were faced with was the lack of training and lack of knowledge of the Ebola virus,” he explained. “As you know it is a strange virus in our region. So right now there is a robust training team that is moving to health facilities in both urban and rural Liberia to provide these trainings and protective materials. So once they have the training and information we are assured that the fear will be put aside and that they can take care of the patients.

The UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) said it is working with the Liberian health authorities to propagate health

“We are just managing by the grace of God. We are very scared because if you tell us to fight Ebola or prevent it, what materials do we use? None of us has been trained to fight the disease,’ Kerkulah told”

education aimed at countering denial and improving the understanding and prevention of Ebola.

“We want to make sure that the people know what the sickness is about,” said Shelton Yett, UNICEF’s representative in Liberia. “We understand the health workers’ fears, but those health workers have an important role to play in the fight against Ebola.”

In July, leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) agreed at a meeting in Ghana to set up a fund to deal with the spread of the Ebola in the sub-region. (Source: IRIN)

Iceland Tops Global Peace Index 2014

Iceland has been named the most peaceful country in the world for the seventh consecutive year by The Institute for Economics & Peace.

Iceland is closely followed by Denmark, Austria and New Zealand. Meanwhile Europe continues to rank as the most peaceful region, with eight of the top ten countries located there.

Factors the index takes into account are, among others: the proportion of the population in jail, freedom of the press, perceived willingness to fight in wars, access to weapons, violent

crime, gender inequality and political corruption. Despite its high standing, Iceland’s peace GPI has deteriorated slightly since last year, mostly due to increased defense spending.



Syria replaced Afghanistan as the least peaceful country in the world, following the escalating violence of the civil war that began there in 2011. Overall world peace has been trending downwards for the past seven years

with eleven nations, with a combined population of 500 million people, defined as being in absolute conflict. While external conflict between different countries has mostly decreased, internal conflict has increased greatly.

Girl Power: Nigerian Teens Invent Urine-Powered Generator



A group of 14-year-old school girls show off a urine-powered generator at an innovation fair in Lagos, Nigeria

Four African girls have created a generator that produces electricity for six hours using a single liter of urine as fuel.

The generator was unveiled at last week's Maker Faire in Lagos, Nigeria, by the four teens Duro-Aina Adebola, Akindele Abiola, and Faleke Oluwatoyin, all age 14, and Bello Eniola, 15.

So how exactly does the urine-powered generator work?

Urine is put into an electrolytic cell, which separates out the hydrogen. The hydrogen goes into a water filter for purification, which then gets pushed into the gas cylinder. The gas cylinder pushes hydrogen into a cylinder of liquid borax, which is used to remove the moisture from the

hydrogen gas. This purified hydrogen gas is pushed into the generator. And as for delivering the fuel itself? Well, we'll leave that up to the consumer.

The Maker Faire is a popular event across the African continent, drawing thousands of participants who travel to Lagos to show their inventions and other practical creations.

As the Next Web describes it, the Maker Faire is intended to highlight creations "that solve immediate challenges and problems, and then works to support and propagate them. Put another way, this isn't just a bunch of rich people talking about how their apps are going to change the world."

Is the UN peacekeeper selection process flawed?

Reports on Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Nigeria released in July 2014 at the Open Society Institute in New York reveal failures in human rights vetting for soldiers in countries that contribute to UN peacekeeping operations.

"These are four of the top seven troop-contributing countries in the world, so their policies and practices on

the ground are important to what happens when people are deployed in the field," said Jerry Fowler, senior policy analyst at Open Society Policy Center. There are currently more than 82,000 troops deployed on UN peacekeeping missions around the world. Vetting has been formalized recently. In 2012 the UN passed a human rights screening policy requiring that both troop-contributing governments and individual recruits attest to clean records as part of the onboarding process. Full report

Ebola could set back development, says UN



Beyond the number of casualties, the present health crisis will have lasting economic and social consequences in countries recovering from years of conflict and instability.

The UN says action will be needed to protect vulnerable communities and their development achievements from the potential long-term effects of Ebola in West Africa.

Declared an international emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO), the largest ever outbreak of the disease has now claimed thousands of lives in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, with a few cases occurring in Nigeria, Mali and a few Western countries.

Beyond the number of casualties, the present health crisis will have lasting economic and social consequences in countries recovering from years of conflict and instability. "Some of these countries were showing encouraging economic growth rates and development progress after long periods of turmoil," says Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, the Director of the United Nations Development Programme's Regional Bureau for Africa. "This could set them on a backward path. Emerging sectors such as tourism, agriculture and private sector investment could take a hit, and development programmes may have to be interrupted in the affected areas, which need them the most."

In addition, measures such as border containment, quarantine, airport screening, and appropriate protection for medical personnel could cost the healthcare sectors in the region hundreds of millions of much needed dollars". UNDP and UN country teams are working closely with WHO which is taking charge of the medical response, while UNICEF and UNFPA are leading on community outreach, mobilization and education. (source: UNDP News)

South-South

Cooperation for Development & Peace



When Ebola epidemic hit West Africa this year, Cuba, the tiny Caribbean island nation, outpaced global heavyweights by dispatching 165 medical workers to combat the disease in Sierra Leone. Today, Cuban doctors stand at the forefront of Ebola battle and are fighting it vehemently. This is not the first time Cuba has done so. It has sent tens of thousands of health professionals to other developing nations in the past. The country sent 2,500 health workers to Pakistan after its 2005 earthquake, and another 1,500 to Haiti after its 2010 earthquake. In addition, every year Cuba trains hundreds of foreign medical students for free so that they can serve their country when they

return.

While Cuban doctors are fighting Ebola in West African hinterlands, there is another remarkable scene in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa. A group of IGAD envoys struggle to strike a deal between two warring factions from South Sudan so that a transitional government of national unity could be formed and peace restored in the war-torn, newly independent East African nation. IGAD- Inter-governmental Authority for Development- is a consortium of 8 developing countries from East Africa- Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya,

Somalia, Uganda, Sudan, South Sudan- and works for trade, development and peace in the region.

These are just two examples out



of many such activities that are practiced in the global South today.

From G77 to BRICS Bank

While the term South-South cooperation is relatively a recent invention, practice itself is not very

new. Countries in the South have been cooperating for centuries in one form or the other. For instance, China-Africa trade is believed to be started as before as 200 BC.

Cooperation among neighboring countries in the South is historically not uncommon, but it was the creation of the G77 group in 1964 that brought developing countries together in a more organized way and paved the way for cooperation that expanded beyond their immediate neighborhoods. The 2002 Johannesburg summit on Sustainable Development emphasized on South-South Cooperation and adopted a Declaration and an Implementation Plan.

Rapid change in the global order has also resulted in an increased intensity of South-South cooperation. We have seen that the world has undergone a major political and economic transformation in recent decades. The dynamics of traditional North-South relations have tremendously changed, and many issues such as global poverty, environment, energy and climate change are global issues instead of merely Southern or Northern.

More recent developments have been rather rapid. South-South trade and investment have been massive and to fund mega infrastructure projects in developing countries, the emerging economies of BRICS have established a new bank which has been named the New Development Bank.

Some commentators argue that the changed relations are not replacing the already existing North-South relations, but supplementing them. Whatever the case, the dynamics of global order has come to a different mode and traditional dependency theories might need a thorough update in the near future.

In this edition of Global South Development Magazine, we look at different dimensions of South-

South cooperation that range from trade, investment, development aid, infrastructure to humanitarian assistance. We also analyze a few problems underlying the practice and present a few exceptional examples of South-South cooperation picked from throughout the world.

Trade & Investment: No Strings Attached

“Thanks to the Chinese we also rediscovered that Africa is not a continent of crises and misery but one of 800 million consumers,” once a French diplomat jokingly said.

A recent report by the United Nations estimates that South-South trade is now nearly equal to North-North trade as a proportion of world trade.

India's trade with Africa alone has jumped to \$40bn in the past few years.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development estimated that, between 1996 and 2006, developing economies

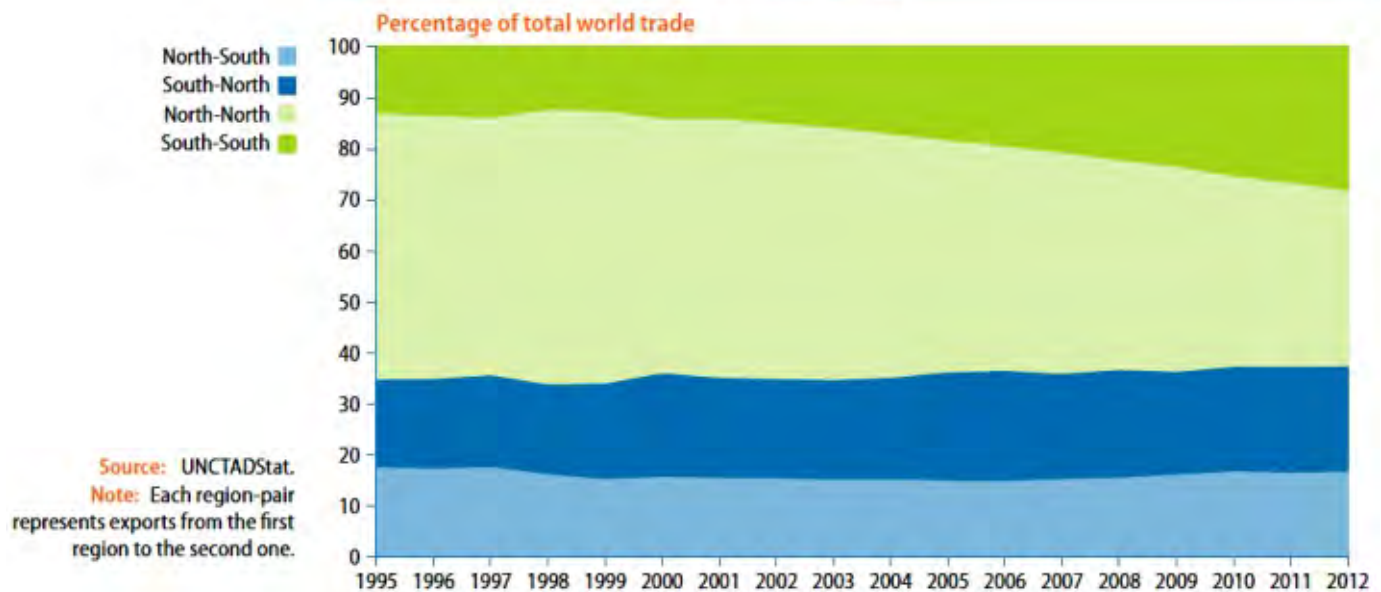
“Some commentators argue that the changed relations are not replacing the already existing North-South relations, but supplementing them. Whatever the case, the dynamics of global order has come to a different mode and traditional dependency theories might need a thorough update in the near future.”



A map indicating trading routes used around the 1st century CE centred on the Silk Road.

provided more than \$17bn of foreign investment in Africa and \$27bn of investment in Asia. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), South-South trade today accounts for almost half

North-South distributions of world trade, 1995-2012



of the total trade of China, and almost 60% of the total trade of India and Brazil. In addition, the south-south trade of each of these countries will continue to outstrip their trade with the rest of the world all the way through to 2050, according to IMF forecasts.

Emerging economies, primarily China, India and Brazil have substantially increased their investment in developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. China alone provides 20% of private foreign direct investment in developing countries. As of 2013, China's foreign direct investment to Africa was more than USD 12 billion.

As a result of increased trade, investment and technology transfers, it has been estimated that South-South cooperation amounts more than USD 20 billion. Foreign direct investment among countries in the South grew by 20 per cent each year 1996–2009. India, for example, invested about 65 per cent of its outward foreign direct investment in developing countries.

When living standards are improving and income levels are rising, many developing countries are seeking to build massive infrastructure projects. While they might lack capacity and the

expertise to do the job themselves, they turn into other developing countries who have come through similar experiences and are capable of building big infrastructure projects or making a multi-billion dollar investment. For instance, China has been investing to build several new roads, railways and telecommunication networks in other developing countries. A recent example includes a massive East African railway line that would connect Kenya with Uganda, Rwanda and South Sudan. In 2007 China initiated the China-Africa Development Fund that stimulates and facilitates Chinese investments in Africa.

For many developing countries, rising economies across their borders are sources of inspiration. “We view China's success as a source of hope and inspiration,” said Jacob Zuma, South Africa's President, while welcoming Chinese President Xi Jinping to South Africa last year.

“China will continue to offer, as always, necessary assistance to Africa with no political strings attached,” declared the Chinese President.

Chinese loans and investments are so popular in Africa probably because, like the Chinese president

“China has been investing to build several new roads, railways and telecommunication networks in other developing countries. A recent example includes a massive East African railway line that would connect Kenya with Uganda, Rwanda and South Sudan. In 2007 China initiated the China-Africa Development Fund that stimulates and facilitates Chinese investments in Africa”

A New Development Bank Opened



"Headquartered in Shanghai, China, the New Development Bank seeks to finance big infrastructure projects in the global South"

On 15 July 2014, the first day of the 6th BRICS summit held in Fortaleza, Brazil, the group of emerging economies signed the long-anticipated document to create the \$100 billion BRICS Development Bank, named the New Development Bank, and a reserve currency pool worth over

another \$100 billion. Unlike the World Bank, which assigns votes based on capital share, in the New Development Bank each participant country is assigned one vote, and no countries will have veto power.

Headquartered in Shanghai, China, the bank's primary focus of lending will be infrastructure

projects with authorized lending of up to \$34 billion annually. Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa will initially contribute \$10 billion each to bring the total to \$50 billion. The bank will allow new members to join but the BRICS capital share cannot fall below 55%.

said, they do not have any political strings attached. China doesn't seem to care whether the receiving country has transparency, democracy or good governance practices in place. Though free of political strings, Chinese offers in some cases seem to be lurking with a plenty of economic strings.

Development Aid & Humanitarian Assistance

Developing countries such as China, India and Brazil that provide development assistance to other developing countries today used to be recipients of development assistance from OECD countries.

According to a new report by a non-governmental organisation

called Global Humanitarian Assistance, aid (conservatively defined) from non-DAC countries rose by 143% in 2005-08, to \$11.2 billion, before falling during the financial crisis. Aid from the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India and China) more than doubled.

Between 1951 and 1992 India received about \$55 billion in foreign aid, making it the largest recipient in history. Since 2013, India has introduced its own international development agency- the Development Partnership Administration (DPA)- that provides grants to development projects in other developing countries.

India's strategic cooperation with its neighboring countries is nothing new. It has provided massive support to countries such as

Bhutan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal for years.

"We do not like to call ourselves a donor," says Syed Akbaruddin, joint secretary with India's Ministry of External Affairs. "We call it development partnership because it is in the framework of sharing development experiences. It follows a model different from that followed in the conventional North-South economic cooperation patterns, hence the designation of Development Partnership Administration, it is administering our development partnership projects."

According to a report published by the Economist, Brazil's foreign aid budget has increased fivefold since 2005. Turkey gives more of its national income in aid than the average Organisation for

Table 3: BRICS Foreign Development Support

Indicator	Brazil	Russia	India	China	South Africa
Launch of Foreign Assistance Program	1960	1955	1964	1950	1968
Estimated Absolute Foreign Assistance (2010)	US\$400M – US\$1.2B	US\$472M	US\$680M	US\$3.9B	US\$143M
Foreign Assistance Estimated Compound Annual Growth Rate (2005 - 2010)	20.4%	36.1%	10.8%	23.9%	8.0%
Central Assistance Agency	Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC)	None currently; RUSAID launch currently on hold	Development Assistance Partnership [oversees administration]; central agency to launch in 2012	None currently; MOFCOM manages majority of assistance projects	None currently; South African Development Partnership Agency (SADPA) planned
Foreign Assistance Regional Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Latin America Africa Lusophone countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CIS region Looking toward Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional neighbors [i.e. Bhutan, Afghanistan, Nepal] Increasingly looking toward Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Africa Asia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Africa
Foreign Assistance Sector Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Education Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Education Food security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure Information technology Training and capacity building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure Industrial development Energy resources development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peacekeeping Democracy promotion

Source: GHSi (2012)

Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) country, while the United Arab Emirates is the most generous of today's donors, handing over 1.25% of its national income for development assistance. Brazil, which is also thinking about setting up its own aid agency, gives up to \$4 billion a year of assistance, broadly defined.

China is equally influential when it comes to south-south development aid. The country itself received foreign assistance for years, but since 2005 the continuum has taken a different turn.

A database updated by AidData reveals that China has committed \$75bn in aid to Africa between 2000 and 2011, financing at least 1,700 development projects in the region.

Capacity Building & Knowledge Sharing

It's not all about trade, investment and infrastructures. South-South cooperation in capacity building

Foreign students in a Chinese university.



Cover Story | South-South Cooperation

and knowledge sharing is equally expanding.

“The emerging powers can offer alternative models of conflict management and development, shaped by their recent transition experiences that could be more easily replicated and adapted to the local contexts of other developing countries,” says Dr Anita Mathur of the UN Department of Political Affairs.

One remarkable example is of BRAC Bangladesh. The organization has branched out from Bangladesh to other parts of Asia and Africa. Its seed testing and multiplication farm has produced high quality rice seeds in Liberia. In Uganda, BRAC trains women farmers as community agriculture promoters that help grow seeds for nutrient-rich food crops.

The Brazilian Bolsha Familia Programme, a cash transfer model, has helped improve childhood nutrition and education in Brazil, and the system has been successfully replicated to different parts of Africa.

In the mid-1990s Nepal initiated a domestically financed non-contributory pension system and since then cash transfers have been provided to the elderly, disabled and widowed, and were delivered even during the Maoist conflict. The practice was adopted by other developing countries such as Lesotho, Kenya and Ethiopia.

Knowledge and experience sharing is promoted through different scholarships and scholar exchange programs operated between developing countries. Countries like China, India and Cuba provide numerous scholarships annually to students from other developing countries so that they can learn and contribute to their own society once they return.

Still a Long Way to Go

Recent statistics do show that south-south cooperation has reeved up, but there is still a long way to go. Statistics also show that the 29

member countries of the OECD’s development assistance committee account for 90% of global development aid and have decades of experience behind them; and south-south cooperation is certainly not going to replace these figures soon. For many, south-south cooperation is an ideological boost rather than something concrete in practice.

Despite ample willingness, ambitious mandates and an unprecedented passion, some south-south cooperation projects suffer from insufficient funding and are dependent on Northern donors for their action.

There have been concerns that powerful countries in the South like China and India might use the term south-south cooperation just to fulfill their vested interests. Some critics have labeled some of China’s actions in Africa as neo-colonialist.

These accusations do not seem to be totally baseless either. Just see the Ebola case. Countries like China, India and Brazil have done plenty of business in Africa, but when West Africa is suffering with the worst public health crisis in decades, these giants have shown little or no interest.

In addition, there appears to be a danger that south-south cooperation might become an exclusive club of rich and middle-income countries in the South, while least developed countries (LDCs) might be forgotten, isolated and in worst cases indebted to their powerful Southern counterparts. Some argue that south-south cooperation is a success story of Asia and doesn’t have much to offer for Africa. Criticisms regarding transparency, human rights issues and labor conditions are also common.

South-South cooperation certainly offers a promising chance to countries in the South to cooperate, assist each other, share, learn and grow together; but if countries focus merely on trade, investment, profit and their own exclusive benefits, the practice no longer becomes a cooperation.

“There have been concerns that powerful countries in the South like China and India might use the term south-south cooperation just to fulfill their vested interests. Some critics have labeled some of China’s actions in Africa as neo-colonialist”

“Some argue that south-south cooperation is a success story of Asia and doesn’t have much to offer for Africa. Criticisms regarding transparency, human rights issues and labor conditions are also common”

10 Powerful Examples of South-South Cooperation in Practice

1. Learning from the Thai ODA

The Thai International Cooperation Programme (TICP) began in the 1960s when Thailand was still a large recipient of ODA. In 1992, after many years of providing technical assistance, training, and scholarships to other developing countries, Thailand became a donor of ODA with support from Japan and other OECD donors. By 1996, Thai ODA totaled 4,250 million Baht or 170 million dollars. This amount has increased up to 5,927 million Baht in 2001-2008. With a wealth of experiences gained as a recipient of ODA, and its impressive socio-economic development over the past four decades, Thailand is actively sharing with other developing countries its own knowledge of what it takes to rapidly reduce poverty, improve health and education, and face the challenges of environmentally sustainable development. Much of its ODA goes to its neighbours: Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar.

In recent years, Thailand has also participated actively in other South-South cooperation arrangements beyond its neighbours and region. Currently, more than 50 countries in the Southern Hemisphere are beneficiaries of Thailand's technical cooperation under a variety of schemes.

2. Turkey: From a Recipient to a Donor

Turkey began providing ODA in 1985 as food aid. Since then, Turkey's ODA has continued and expanded into many fields. At the beginning of Turkey's South-South Cooperation programme in the 1980s, Turkey was an aid recipient and did not have a technical cooperation agency to deliver development assistance to other developing countries.

Therefore, the programme was implemented by the State Planning Organization (SPO) as the government agency. During the

implementation period of South-South cooperation programme, Turkey increased its capacity to deliver development aid. In 1992, the Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TIKA) was established. By 2004, Turkey was providing more official development assistance than it received.

3. Mexico-Chile Horizontal South-South Cooperation: Creation of a Joint Cooperation Fund

Mexico's Constitution has international development cooperation as one of the principles of its foreign policy. Therefore, Mexico sees its international cooperation as a basic tool to promote its foreign relations. Mexico is increasingly evolving into a dual player in international cooperation for development, as both donor and recipient. The Mexican Government has recognized that offering cooperation to other developing countries is a powerful instrument to promote development through the creation and strengthening of technical capacities.

Mexico is a true promoter of South-South cooperation (SSC). It recognizes that SSC can complement cooperation from traditional donors, enabling both the donor and the recipient country to better accomplish their own development goals. Mexico has also encouraged SSC as a means of showing its solidarity, especially with countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and maintaining a high profile in its bilateral relations with the countries in the area.

In 2006, Mexico and Chile established a Strategic Association Agreement (SAA) that included not only political and commercial components, but also promoted international cooperation. The SAA was conceived by both countries as a mechanism for deepening the bilateral relationship through the exchange of technical assistance, enhanced

dialogue, and projects that foster the development of technical capacities



taking advantage of each one's comparative advantages.

For Mexico, a path-breaking feature of the SAA was the creation of a Cooperation Commission and a Joint Cooperation Fund, through which each country provides US\$ 1 million dollars during a 3-year period to finance bilateral cooperation projects. Since Mexico's Congress approved the SAA with Chile, the funds are earmarked each year to cover cooperation programmes under this scheme.

4. Pro-Huerta Project (Argentina-Haiti)

Argentina provides technical cooperation through the Argentine Fund for Horizontal Cooperation (FO-AR) since 1992. At the beginning, the Fund worked in the neighbouring countries; its cooperation has now spread throughout Central and Latin America and to countries in other regions, such as Africa. Within the region, priority countries include Bolivia, Paraguay, and Haiti.

The Pro-Huerta project in Haiti started in 2005. It aimed at increasing production of fresh food for the Haitian people. Under the FO-AR, the project was implemented by the Argentina National Agricultural Technology Institute (INTA).

5. Pan African E-Network Project (India-53 African Union Countries)

Cover Story | South-South Cooperation

The Pan African E-Network is a joint project of India and the African Union. Its basic objective is to help Africa in capacity building by way of imparting quality education to students, through the best Indian universities and educational institutions, as well as to provide tele-medicine services by way of online medical consultations between African medical practitioners and Indian medical specialists in various disciplines. The project also covers Continuing Medical Education (VME) for practicing doctors and paramedical staff, with a view to updating and enhancing their knowledge and skills. The current total cost is about US\$ 130 million, which will be a grant from the Government of India. The project budget covers all the expenses, software and hardware, for establishment of a satellite hub. Learning centres, tele-medicine centres, VVIP linkage, training and capacity building, technical support and operation and maintenance (O&M) for 5- year period.

6. The PROMESA Project (Argentina-Peru-Japan)

The PROMESA project (Project for the improvement of animal health, whose name in Spanish means promise) was conducted from November 2003 to April 2007. It was conducted under the Partnership Programme between Argentina and Japan for South- South Cooperation, called PPJA. This project enabled the transformation of structures and processes within the Animal Health Service of Peru, which permitted the introduction of changes in traditional methods of operation. The project idea originated in the approach to problems and opportunities for animal health adopted by the government of Peru in 2003, leading to exploration of possible benefits from Argentina's experience with management tools, analysis, and development being carried under its Animal Health Policy.

7. Centre Songhai (Benin-Zambia-UNDP)

Named after a famous Catholic Archbishop of Kasama, whose dream

was to establish an agricultural skills training programme for youths, the Elias Mutale 'Songhai Model Training Centre for Sustainable Development' has been established through South-South Cooperation, to promote rural development and agricultural entrepreneurship among the youth.

This was inspired by a tour involving Zambian stakeholders to the Songhai Centre for Sustainable Development in Cotonou, Benin, West Africa. The Songhai Centre has over the years researched, trained and promoted the concept of zero entropy; the agricultural production process where nothing is wasted and everything gets transformed. For example, into compost, which is used as manure in crop production are fed to livestock, perpetuating the cycle.



8. Blindness Reduction Campaign in Niger (Tunisia – Niger - IsDB)

This programme was carried through five short period campaigns between 2003 and 2008. It aims at training ophthalmologists and technicians as well as examining, operating and rehabilitating patients from deprived social environment. It was implemented by Nadi El Bassar, Tunisian NGO. The programme has achieved results beyond expectation. Within six days the team of Tunisian Ophthalmologists and technicians has examined/operated/rehabilitated 1200 patients, transferred know-how and trained local doctors.

9. Dengue Fever Outbreak Medical Assistance to Cambodia (Thailand – Cambodia)

In 2007 Cambodia experienced a sudden increase in dengue fever cases especially in children. Unable to successfully battle the near epidemic, Cambodia made an emergency appeal for international assistance. Thailand approved a fund of \$580,000

to provide medical supplies, relevant equipment, and Thai medical staff. This programme was operated under the framework of the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS). This programme represents

Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. At the Second Summit of ACMECS in Bangkok in November 2005, \$2,900,000 was pledged as seed money to support activities under the Declaration on Partnership in Combating Avian Influenza and Other Infectious Diseases.

10. 'Laço Sul-Sul' (or Southern Ties Network Initiative)

The 'Laço Sul-Sul' (or Southern Ties Network Initiative) was launched in 2004 and is related to Brazil's commitment to universalize the use of first-line AIDS treatment. The initiative targets seven Portuguese-speaking nations and Latin American neighbours (countries within Brazil natural sphere of influence) committed to fighting the disease. In this way, the Brazilian Government seeks to contribute to the strengthening of other nation's domestic public and national efforts to support the universal access to antiretrovirals (ARVs) and their increased utilization, with a focus on pregnant women, adolescents, and children.

Countries such as Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Paraguay, São Tomé & Príncipe, and Timor-Leste have adhered to Brazil's leadership, and participated in the first meeting hosted in Brasilia. Agencies and funds such as UNICEF and UNAIDS have also joined the endeavor. *(Case studies mentioned here were cited from a UNDP commissioned report Enhancing South-South and Triangular Cooperation Study of the Current Situation and Existing Good Practices in Policy, Institutions, and Operation of South-South and Triangular Cooperation)*

A Mud Road to Peru



By DIEGO CUPOLO
Text & Photos
GSDM Latin America Editor



From La Balsa to the Peruvian border it's a slow, two-hour drive through the edge of the Amazon. The road's unpaved, prone to landslides, and floods often during rain season – the time of our crossing.

Ania and I flagged down a southbound truck near the bus station, threw our bags in the back, and jumped in front with the old man at the wheel. There was heavy raining and yellow water filled the potholes along the red clay road.

“So, where are you from?” Ania asked the driver.

“Me? I'm from here. I'm from La Balsa.”

“How's life in La Balsa?”

“Hard.”

“Why's that?”

“Everything costs more now,” the old man said. “Let me tell you, a liter of cooking oil used to cost eighty cents. Now it's two dollars. Do you know what kind of impact that has on a family? It's all Correa's fault.”

“Correa? The president changed the price of cooking oil?”

“Ever since he got elected, the price of everything's gone up.”

“But food costs more all over the world,” I said. “Gas prices are up so that means transportation costs are up and we, the consumers, pay the difference.”

“Bullshit! Esto es una mierda!” the old man yelled. His face red as the crooked road that tossed our bodies around the truck cabin. “We produce five million barrels of oil a day in this country. A barrel of oil costs \$100. Tell me, how much is five million multiplied by a hundred?”

“Five hundred million,” Ania said.

“Correcto! Five hundred million dollars a day is what we're making in Ecuador just from oil. And where the hell is all that money? When will it be spent for the people en los pueblos? We're the ones that need help.”

“Didn't Correa put a lot of money in education and health care, though?”

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Ania asked. "Some, but who knows if it ever gets there. Por ejemplo, let me give you an example, look at this road we're driving on, this muddy mess of potholes, es pura mierda! We have landslides and accidents all the time here. Look at those crosses over there."

He pointed at a cluster of white, painted wood crosses on the edge of the road.

"That was a bus. Sixteen people died when it went rolling down the mountain."

"Aye! When was that?"

"Two months ago," the old man said.

"But here's the best part, when Correa got elected he said he'd put aside one million dollars a year to fix this terrible road. But look at it! You see it, right? It's still mud. It's been years now and it's still mud! Where are the one million dollars a year going? Not here, obviously. The greedy politicians in Quito are keeping it all."

"Here in Ecuador," he continued.

"We have more corruption than we have money. That's the truth and that's why life is so expensive for the rest of us, those of us without brothers in the government."

The truck took a quick turn around a rocky bend. Ania pressed my body against the passenger door and I could see into the green canyon below where a violent river ripped trees from its banks and swallowed them whole in its thick, chocolate milk rapids.

"But Correa is better than your recent presidents, right? Ania asked. "Maybe this road isn't good, but all the other roads we saw in Ecuador were brand new. Correa is creating some progress

in this country isn't he? "

"No, son todos chanchos, they're all pigs and they're all corrupt. It's always the same. I'm tired of all these politicians talking about hope and change. They always say that crap and then they screw us. Correa's just like everyone else."

"Have you liked any of the presidents you've had in Ecuador," I asked.

"Yes, Aguilera. He was the only good one."

"Aguilera? When was he in office?"

"In the early eighties. He said the future of Ecuador was in the Amazon and we would use our resources here to pay off our national debts. He wanted to industrialize the country. He was going to make us into a profitable nation and raise the standard of living. In the twenty months that he was president he was able to pave the road from La Balsa to Zumba so Ecuadorians in the amazon could have easy access to the rest of the country."

"Why was he president for only twenty months?" I asked.

"Lo Mataron. They killed him and his entire family. That's what happens when you really want to change things in Ecuador."

We reached the Peruvian border, got out of the truck and got our passports stamped. The custom's officer played with Ania's golden hat and asked if he could keep it. She said no.

When we got back to the truck, the old man told us he'd stay in town for a while so we said our goodbyes and crossed a bridge over another brown, violent, jungle river and entered Peru. After so many years of injustice, faith can sometimes feel like a foreign language in Latin America.

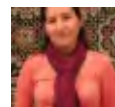
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The Humanitarian Crisis in the Central African Republic

A New Fragile Situation Affecting Peace and Stability in the Sahel Region



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The Sahel Region in Africa continues to swing between increasing instability and slow, timid recovery. In 2013, the humanitarian situation remained extremely fragile. According to the Regional Response Plan of the United Nations and the humanitarian community, millions of households across the Sahel struggled to regain their livelihoods and rebuild their assets in the aftermath of the 2012 food crisis. An estimated 11.3 million people remained at risk of food insecurity, and even worse some 4.8 million children were estimated to have been acutely malnourished across the region. In addition to a looming food crisis, with an estimated 20.2 million people, or one in seven inhabitants of the region, at risk of food insecurity in 2014, conflict and insecurity continue to affect the Sahel, causing death, displacement and destruction of property, health facilities and schools, and exacerbating structural and systemic poverty.

The region is host to an estimated 730,000 refugees and 495,000 internally displaced people. Recent events in the Central Africa Republic and Northern Nigeria have placed countries such as Chad, Cameroon and Mali under additional pressure to absorb thousands of returning third country nationals. Displaced populations alongside their host communities are particularly at risk of food insecurity, malnutrition and epidemics, and experience recurring shocks such as floods, drought or conflict.

Central African Republic: a Rapidly Deteriorating Humanitarian Crisis

The US-based organization Freedom House has defined CAR as "a failed state in need of long-term, thorough intervention to address a political, societal, and economic morass that was years in the making".

The CAR was once known for quite peaceful Christian-Muslim relations, but the current crisis has pitted communities against one another. Since the Séléka rebel group seized the capital through a coup d'état in March 2013, following the 10 January resignation of president Michel Djotodia in Central African Republic, the situation in the country has greatly deteriorated and the rule of law completely eroded. President Michel Djotodia, a Muslim in a predominantly Christian country, came to power through a bloody insurrection as the leader of the Séléka. He then appointed himself as the head of a three-year transitional government in addition to defense minister, suspended the country's constitution, and dissolved the parliament. While verbally committing himself to reconciliation and peace in the CAR, Djotodia has only aggravated the situation by naming fellow rebels to top government posts and disbanding the rebel alliance that enabled his rise to power, though the order had little practical effect.

The result of these events has been a security vacuum. Séléka rebels and subsidiary groups have taken over small pockets of the country and using violence—including looting,



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abductions, rape, and the burning of churches and government buildings—to assert their supremacy. Meanwhile, the national armed forces and police have collapsed, allowing criminal enterprises to prey on local populations all over the country. And Christian, anti-Séléka militias are emerging to reclaim their areas. Compounding the internal strife, other groups are taking advantage of the CAR’s porous borders. There are reports that the Lord’s Resistance Army, the predatory guerrilla band led by Ugandan national Joseph Kony, has set up its presence in the country without much opposition.

Political instability has led to an outbreak of inter-communal fighting and religious clashes with over a thousand people killed in the CAR capital alone, and residents of religiously mixed areas are now fleeing within the country or abroad. Women and children had been exposed to all forms of violence, disease and famine, while the risk of cholera and other infectious diseases is spreading in anticipation of the rainy season. On 06 January 2014 the United Nations Security Council highlighted the very real risk that the crisis could spread beyond the country’s borders and further destabilize the region. Killings continue daily and people remain divided along religious lines, with access to Bangui neighbourhoods controlled either by “anti-Christian”

or “anti-Muslim” checkpoints manned by armed civilians. In December, the anti-balaka carried out a major attack on Bangui, the capital, forcing the Seleka to retreat and regroup. The Seleka formally ceded power in January 2014. A new president, Catherine Samba-Panza, the former mayor of Bangui, was elected to head the government’s interim administration in the same month.

In addition, there are increasing security concerns for both displaced and humanitarian aid personnel. In Bangui about half the population still prefers to sleep away from their homes at night, either at the massively overcrowded airport camp (hosting nearly 100,000 people) or around churches, while the Muslim minority has concentrated in a few districts. The United Nation’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that 886,000 people are displaced in CAR, including 500,000 in Bangui alone. Over 2.6 million (half the population) now need humanitarian assistance, owing to acute poverty as well as widespread displacement. This displacement of farming activity as well as destruction and pillaging has meant that seeds and food stocks are in short supply: most people surveyed said their meal consumption has dropped from three times to once a day.

France is focused on disarming

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militias, and this is important, but long-term stability is not possible without the installation of a neutral transitional government that includes representatives from all regions and sects. Sectarian violence has contributed to a breakdown in the social fabric in a country that for decades has had corrupt governments and disenfranchised most citizens, especially the Muslim minority. The CAR was already one of the poorest countries in the world. Despite the crisis in full force, direct assistance from significant donors has been suspended and over half a million people continue to struggle, everyday, to obtain water, food, and medical care. The few aid organizations operating in the country are having difficulty reaching people in need due to the widespread and unpredictable violence.

The African Union (AU) and France have deployed a growing number of peacekeeping troops to stabilize the Central African Republic, but the peacekeepers have been unable to stop the downward spiral of violence. On February 10, 2014, the European Union agreed to provide troops to contribute to international efforts to protect the populations most at risk, but that force has not yet been deployed in the Central African Republic. Human Rights Watch has highlighted the need for an immediate and full-fledged United Nations peacekeeping force to be authorized and deployed and stop the terrible human rights violations still occurring. Until that force is on the ground, the AU peacekeeping force, known as MISCA, and the French Sangaris need to take immediate additional measures to provide greater security, as well as support and encourage a formal and democratic political process.

Continuous and Unmet Humanitarian Needs

As a result of the humanitarian and political crisis in the Central African Republic, substantial humanitarian action will continue to be required in the Sahel in 2014 and beyond. Over 20 million people are projected to be in need of humanitarian assistance, including life-saving food security interventions, protection from conflict and violence, strengthening household and community coping mechanisms and supporting longer-

term solutions for internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees. The exodus of approximately 296,000 people from the Central African Republic (CAR) into neighbouring Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Republic of Congo, is creating a regional crisis in countries that were already short of food.

United Nations agencies in CAR have reported that the scaled-up response by the international community since December 2013 has been unable to keep pace with the crisis, particularly the need to protect civilians and provide aid for the thousands of displaced people. The humanitarian situation had deteriorated at an alarming rate, with nearly half the population in need of assistance. Violence had forced one fifth of the population to flee their homes, a figure that had more than doubled since 5 December. More than 935,000 people were sleeping outside or in temporary spaces, and half the population in Bangui had sought refuge at one of the 55 sites for internally displaced persons. As many as 94 percent of communities report that they do not have enough seeds to plant for the next agricultural season" in March, according to the findings of a Multisectorial Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA) of humanitarian needs in CAR undertaken by several UN agencies. People's fields had been burned, they have lost their tools, their goats and poultry, and many women's groups have lost their milling equipment. The Executive Director of the World Food Programme has also denounced that the humanitarian response is not meeting the needs. Anthony Lake, UNICEF's Executive Director said that despite the incredible dedication and work under very difficult circumstances by the humanitarian community to deploy the required support to affected women and children, to help prevent or stop grave rights violations and to provide affected women and children with the life-saving assistance they are entitled to, the humanitarian plan for CAR is at \$247 million, and so far only \$30 million were received. Children have been killed, mutilated, subjected to sexual violence and recruited by armed groups. An escalating cycle of bloodshed has left tens of thousands dead and entire

"There is a distinct pattern of minority populations being forced to migrate"

"The situation on the ground is deteriorating at a much faster pace than the international mobilisation in response. And despite all efforts, the United Nations and the entire international community are struggling to fulfill their collective responsibility"

communities displaced and destroyed. There is a distinct pattern of minority populations being forced to migrate. The situation on the ground is deteriorating at a much faster pace than the international mobilisation in response. And despite all efforts, the United Nations and the entire international community are struggling to fulfill their collective responsibility to the people of the Central African Republic.

Let us hope, for all the children and youth of Central African Republic, that this already largely forgotten crisis doesn't become a neglected tragedy.

(The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not represent the views of, and should not be attributed to, the United Nations agencies or humanitarian organizations in CAR or elsewhere.)

Linking Disability & Poverty in New Development Agenda

Many of the world's one billion persons living with a disability remain excluded from development in areas such as education, employment and healthcare. As a result, they experience higher rates of poverty and unemployment, and lower life-expectancy than the general population.



By OLUFUNMILAYO AKANDE
GSDM Development Reporter

Martha sat perplexed at the back of the class as she waited for her name to be called. Her palms drenched with sweat from the thought of reading to the whole class with her stern-faced teacher watching her closely. She could be called on any minute now, making her stomach churn with anxiety. One by one each student was called on to read a paragraph in one of the chapters of the class book. Martha leaned over to the student on her right to confirm where they were in the chapter of the book when the inevitable happened. "Martha", her teacher called, "come and read the next paragraph". Martha slowly got up with her book in hand and walked to the front of the class like a sheep to the slaughter. She stood in front of the class with her face glued to the book trying desperately not to make eye contacts with other students who were busy muttering words under their breath; words Martha could not make out but knew all too well. She began reading the words one syllable at a time with a pace only typical to her but considered abnormal to others. Several minutes later, Martha was still on the second sentence of the paragraph when her teacher angrily called for her to seat down. Martha went to her seat overwhelmed with shame, a feeling she had become accustomed to. A student seated not too far from Martha saw tears trickling down her face and murmured "cry-cry baby" then another, "olodo" meaning stupid in Yoruba language and yet another "FFO" meaning For-Food-Only.

These were coming from ten to eleven year olds. Martha was sixteen years.

As a result of her learning difficulty, Martha could not continue her education. She had repeated classes so many times that her parents concluded there was no point keeping her in school. No one knew how to help her as she seemed physically capable but "her brain was just too slow", said her principal.

Ten years later, at the age of twenty-six, during a short visit to Europe, Martha's learning difficulty was identified by a specialist as dyslexia, a form of learning disability. However, with little to no support with her disability in her home country, Nigeria, Martha remains without any academic qualification, unemployed, largely unemployable, dependant on her family, vulnerable, discriminated, ostracised, relegated and excluded with a shattered self-confidence and self-worth.

This might not be everyone's story but most people with disability, particularly in developing countries who make up eighty percent of the world's estimated one billion people living with disability, could relate to this.

Disabled World describes types of disabilities as various physical and mental impairments that can hamper or reduce a person's ability to carry out day to day activities. Unfortunately, these impairments have forced many with disability into poverty.

The United Nations stated that,

"disability remains largely invisible in most mainstream development agenda and processes, both at global and local levels"

...

"Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) demands taking into account in development policies the needs and benefits of all persons living with disability"



Many of the world's one billion persons living with a disability remain excluded from development in areas such as education, employment and healthcare. As a result, they experience higher rates of poverty and unemployment, and lower life-expectancy than the general population.

Despite this fact and the adoption in 2006 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, it has been identified that disability remains largely invisible in most mainstream development agenda and processes both at global and local levels. This stunts the increase in inclusive societies as environmental and social barriers remain embedded.

In Nigeria, the World Health Organization's World Report on Disability (2011) stated that approximately 25 million Nigerians live with a disability with 3.6 million of them having very significant difficulties in functioning. However, with this high level of disability, little support is given to tackle the subject with the common intervention being charity related resulting in increased exclusion of people with disability in the society.

The United Nations General Assembly on the 23rd September,

2013 involving Nigeria and other Heads of State and Government, drafted an action-oriented outcome document supporting the aims of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. This gave the world leaders the opportunity to take decisions on bridging the gap between the commitments to include people with disability in development and what actually happens on ground.

The actions outlined in the outcome include taking into account in development policies the needs and benefits of all persons living with disability, developing specific plans such as amendment and enforcement of national legislation to advance their inclusion, recognizing their right to education based on equal opportunity, encourage increased understanding, knowledge and social awareness about persons with disability, ensuring their accessibility to health care services, taking sustainable measures to ensure they have equal, indiscriminate access to full and productive employment, and following the universal design approach in ensuring their accessibility to all services.

Following the high-level meeting, the Nigerian government in its effort to include disability in its local development agenda and commitment to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, is working towards passing the Nigerian Disability Bill into law. This is aimed at providing for "the education, health care and the protection of the social, economic, political and civil rights of persons with disabilities. In addition, the Act will provide for the establishment of a National Commission for Persons With Disabilities (PWDs), which will serve as the platform for the enforcement of all provisions of the Disability Act", said Dr Habiba Lawal, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development.

The Nigerian government is therefore implored not to relent in its commitments and efforts to build an inclusive society. Like the saying goes, the journey of a thousand miles begins with one step and the step in the right direction would change many lives of people living with disability. They could finally hope for a more equal, impartial and inclusive society with a poverty-free future.



Activism for a Cause

Ten Grassroots Environmental Justice Campaigns from Around the World



HELEN LONG
Guest Contributor
Global Environmental Issues

Reading the mainstream media we can easily get the impression that only middle class people are concerned about oil spills and illegal logging and mining, and that it only happens in industrialised countries. However, around the world tribal people are campaigning against these offences too, especially since it is often happening on their land.

1. Community Managed Sustainable Agriculture, India

Andhra Pradesh in India has been called the Pesticide Capital of the World. Pesticides cost farmers a lot of money. To recover these costs the fruit and vegetables the farmers produced had to be expensive too. This put them out of reach for many poor families. Not only that, but farmers themselves had been hospitalised due to pesticide poisoning. This is why Self Help Groups of poor rural women in 8033 villages decided to help farmers learn to reduce their costs by gradually reducing their dependence on pesticides. Farmers can support one another, since many in a village change their farming techniques at the same time. Some farmers have seen their profits increase by 100%, and the schemes have gained support from the state government.

2. Ekta Parishad, India

Where land is distributed unequally big business can easily get hold of it. This is why Ekta Parishad attribute the inequitable distribution of land in India as a source of environmental problems such as forest loss, nuclear or mining waste, and dams. In 2012

they organised a walk for land and social justice, comprising 100,000 people, and covering 350 kilometres from near the Taj Mahal to New Delhi. This federation of 11,000 community based organisations is dedicated to the principles of non-violent action, and has wings which concentrate on the inclusion of women, arts, and economic alternatives.

3. Global Ecovillage Network, Senegal

'In Africa, until recently, ecological villages have been the world as most rural people knew it'. The Global Ecovillage Network Senegal seek to combine modern and indigenous knowledge through community based associations. The organisation accredits ecovillages, promotes solar panels, micro credit, internet, cell

phones and offer sustainability training to Senegalese people, and 'opportunities that attract people from the industrialized countries to come and learn from and with Africa, the continent we all originally come from'.

4. Greenbelt Movement, Kenya

The Green Belt Movement was founded in Kenya by Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai. It is a network of 4000 community groups who plant trees, protect public spaces, create sustainable livelihoods and climate resilient communities. The organisation provides education for community, environmental and gender empowerment, and engage with policy makers at an international level.





5. La Via Campesina

La Via Campesina is an international movement led by small farmers, which popularised the concept of food sovereignty. Food sovereignty is 'the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. Food sovereignty implies new social relations free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social classes and generations.' The UN has declared 2014 the year of family farm, perhaps inspired by La Via Campesina.

6. Re-Greening the Sahel, Niger & Burkina Faso

We are often told that people are bad for the planet; that we inevitably cause desertification and erosion, drain water resources and bulldoze wildlife habitats. Sometimes the good news gets overlooked. In Niger, for example many villages now have 10-20 times more trees than 20 years ago. Farmers in both Niger and Burkina Faso farmers have restarted to practice traditional agroecology techniques. They look after trees which grew on their land, in order to benefit from services such as shade, food, fuel and nitrogen fixation. Development organisations have caught on, and are now helping too.

7. Sarvodaya, Sri Lanka

Sarvodaya is Sri Lanka's largest non-profit organisation, and a network of 15,000 villages following nonviolent

principles. They are engaged in relief efforts in the war-torn north as well as ongoing development projects. They responded to the 2004 tsunami, by constructing an ecovillage for displaced people.

8. Self Employed Women's

Association (SEWA), India

SEWA is a union of self employed women, based primarily in India, but also Sri Lanka and Afghanistan. SEWA help women improve their livelihoods through technical training, micro-credit, market linkages and natural resource



management. One service they provide is loans for energy efficient cooking stoves, which use less wood than the stoves most people have currently. This provides two benefits. Firstly, women spend less time collecting firewood. Secondly, they and their families inhale less noxious smoke; indoor cooking smoke leads to the deaths of over 1.5 million people worldwide each year. Cleaning the air has environmental benefits too.

9. Survival International

Survival international is a global movement for tribal people's rights. They work to help tribal people defend their lives, protect their lands and determine their own futures. Survival International publicise tribal people's voices and give them a platform to speak, as well as engaging in other advocacy work.

10. Transition Network

Transition Network supports communities to become Transition Towns. These self-organise to reduce their CO2 emissions, and create a healthy culture, which can provide livelihoods and leisure. Transition Towns are found around the world, including in favelas.



The Little Working Hands



By PRASIDDHA KHANAL
GSDM Guest Contributor



Nepal, the country of Lord Buddha, where the Everest stands to be the top of the world is also second largest country in water resources. The presence of rich bio-diversity, many endangered species in its dense forest makes it famous all over the world. The capital city, Kathmandu, is well known for richness in vintage artistic temples and palaces. Major cities like Chitwan, Pokhara, Lumbini are also well known.

But, on the other hand, Nepal is an undeveloped country full of corruption and an unstable political government. About 80% of population lives in villages and only 10% of total population have access to quality health. People lack quality education, sanitation, drinking water and food. And the condition of children is worse, whereas, 34% of population is under 15 year. Child labour is a major issue being raised in many developing countries and Nepal is not an exception. Many organizations work here in the name of helping and funding child related problems, but their impact and effectiveness is never

measured well. Many children are either forced or compelled to work and create livelihoods. Children are seen begging in gatherings like picnic spots, weddings and in big cities. They are kept as house workers and work in hotels as dishwashers and even as conductors in public transports. Children are even seen collecting woods that remain after pyres are burn. Those children are generally homeless and lack warm clothes during winter and shelter during rainy seasons, they don't even get food to eat. Many street-children die every day due to drug addiction and diseases.

Children who are said to be the future of nation are in such pitiful condition and are treated bad by everyone, everywhere, then it's not difficult to see the nation's future. The government is trying its best to eradicate child labour but actions taken are not so effective. Street children should be given food, shelter and education, and their parents should be provided with sustainable employment.

"Many organizations work here in the name of helping and funding child related problems, but their impact and effectiveness is never measured well"



The Dilemma of Development & The Tribal People of India



By Prof. ANUPAMA SAXENA
GSDM Guest Contributor

Mr. Raghva Bahal the Founder-Editor of India's largest media house, Network 18, in his book titled "Superpower? The Amazing Race Between China's Hare and India's Tortoise" writes that 'this is the best time to be an Indian'. Apart from his, there are predictions by many others that by 2050 India can share the super power status with USA and China. The credit goes to the comparatively higher economic growth rate that India could achieve during last two decades.

But amidst these data on growth rates a term has been continuously discussed with a lot of concern is 'inclusive growth'. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in his address at the release of Book: An Agenda for India's Growth: Essays in Honour of P Chidambaram on July 31, 2013 said 'our strategy must not only aim at faster growth but must also ensure that the growth processes are more inclusive. He further added "There are many policies that can help achieve this objective. This also calls for special programmes to meet the needs of excluded sections, especially the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the OBCs and the Minorities. We have many such programmes. These need to be expanded and made more effective.

Let us have a quick look over the comparative data on various indicators to learn the status of tribal population after the 65 years of Independence.

The World Bank report, published in January 2011, titled as India's Adivasis, cites 'In just over two decades, national poverty rates have fallen by more than 20 percentage points, from 45.6 percent in 1983 to 27.5 percent in 2004-05. The poverty rates of tribals are closer to where the general population was 20 years ago. Poverty maps of India show deep pockets of poverty in states with tribal concentration; worryingly enough these are also pockets where tribal insurgency movements have gathered force. Education indicators tell a similar story, with improvements but large and

persistent differences. Scheduled Tribe children lag far behind when it comes to educational attainment above the primary level. Tribal women fare the worst: even among younger age cohorts (ages 15-21 in 2005), they attain an average of just four years of education, three years less than nontribal women. The starkest marker of tribal deprivation is child mortality. Under-five mortality rates among tribal children in rural areas remain startlingly high (at about 100 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2005 compared with 82 among all children).

Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh conceded "There has been a systemic failure in giving tribals a stake in the modern economic processes that inexorably intrude into their living spaces...The systematic exploitation and social and economic abuse of our tribal communities can no longer be tolerated."

Let us have a look at some data related to Central Tribal Belt of India:

The Central India Tribal Belt stretches from Gujarat in the west up to Assam in the east across the states of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. It is among the poorest regions of the country. Over 90% of the tribal population is rural, with primitive agriculture. During the last few decades the governments of all states of the central tribal belt have adopted a development model that is based on rapid industrialisation based on exploitation of natural resources. There has been an intentional shift from forestry and agriculture based economy to industry based economy. What have been the results?

D.C. Sah and others, in their study conducted in 2008, titled 'Chronic Poverty in Remote Rural Areas: Evidence from Central Tribal Belt of India' have concluded that about 6 out of 10 persons in the Central tribal belt are poor and over a fourth of poor are chronic poor.

J.J. Royburman in his article titled

"Poverty maps of India show deep pockets of poverty in states with tribal concentration"

There has been an intentional shift from forestry and agriculture based economy to industry based economy. What have been the results?"

'Factors of Maoist Movement among the Tribes of Central India' published in Mainstream on November 23, 2013 writes: 'The Maoists are deeply entrenched in the tribal belt of central India. The Union Home Ministry accepted that 125 districts spread over nine States in central India and adjoining areas have come under the influence of Left radical groups, loosely called Naxalites.' The Hindu on October 22, 2010, quoted Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister, that Naxalism (or Maoism) and Left-wing extremism pose the "greatest threat to our national security".

Government of India Planning Commission report published in March 2012 provides the following data:

Poverty ratio for Social Groups: In rural areas, Scheduled Tribes exhibit the highest level of poverty (47.4%), followed by Scheduled Castes (SCs), (42.3%), and Other Backward Castes (OBC), (31.9%), against 33.8% for all classes. In urban areas, SCs have HCR of 34.1% followed by STs (30.4%) and OBC (24.3%) against 20.9% for all classes.

In rural Bihar and Chhattisgarh, nearly two-third of SCs and STs are poor, whereas in states such as Manipur, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh the poverty ratio for these groups is more than half.

Chhattisgarh is a newly emerged state of India. It was carved out from Madhya Pradesh in 2000. Chhattisgarh state has a predominantly 32% tribal population. It was expected that formation of a separate state would help in fulfilling the aspirations of the people especially of Tribals. But so far the results have been far from satisfactory. During the last ten years the historical displacement of people especially in the tribal regions of Chhattisgarh has taken place due to large scale land acquisitions by Industrial houses. According to a map provided by Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Chhattisgarh has been one of the most affected states because of displacement. At the time of its birth, out of Chhattisgarh's 16 districts, seven were considered hotbeds of Naxalite activity. After the formation of state, the naxalism has only taken a worse shape. During the last ten years, Chhattisgarh has been one of the fastest growing state economies and has also witnessed one of the most aggressive people's movements particularly in the areas dominated by Tribal population against the state over its policies of exploitation of natural resources. It seems that the benefits of economic development have not been distributed judiciously.

Recently Studies have also been conducted for other states that are located in the Central Tribal Belt and the studies present a very gloomy picture as far as the state of the tribals is concerned.

In their seminal book *Out of this Earth: East India Adivasis and the Aluminium Cartel*, Samarendra Das and Felix Padel say that 'the financial value of the bauxite deposits of Orissa alone is 2.27 trillion

dollars. Arundhati Roy in her book titled 'The Broken State' writes 'of this officially the government gets a royalty of 7 percent. There is an MoU on every mountain, river and forest glade'. Arundhati Roy questions 'where does the money go? and 'what is the provenance of the trillions of dollars secretly stashed away by Indian citizens in Swiss bank accounts? Where did the eighty – odd billion rupees spent on the last general elections come from? Where do the hundreds of millions of rupees that political parties and the politicians pay the media for the 'high – end', low end and live pre election coverage come from?'

Similarly, Alpa Shah, in her book titled 'In the Shadows of the State' written on the first ever state for indigenous people Jharkhand suggests that 'well meaning indigenous rights and development claims and intervention may misrepresent and hurt the very people they intend to help. While the realization of an independent Jharkhand was the culmination of years of local, regional and transnational activism for the rights of the culturally autonomous indigenous people living there.' She further argues that 'the activism unintentionally further marginalized the regions' poorest people.'

The sad fact is that even after 65 years of independence we have not been able to have a development model that has tribals interests in centre. There is an urgent need of a participatory approach to the process of development and a development agenda that is in accordance with the needs, expectations and local context of the tribal people can be helpful in initiating the process of empowerment of tribal communities. After independence there was a confusion regarding the approach to be adopted for the development of Tribals. There were two dominant approaches that time. Policy of isolation, a legacy of British regime and was usually described as a 'leave them untouched' approach. This policy was justified on the grounds that their traditional culture ought to be preserved hence there should be no interference by the planners. Another approach was known as Policy of assimilation of tribal cultural in the mainstream of national life as early as possible. In between these directly opposing views was developed a moderate view under the influence of Nehru. Nehru had said 'Wherever you live, you should live in your own way. This is what I want you to decide yourselves. How would you like to live? Your old customs and habits are good. We want that they should survive but at the same time we want that you should be educated and should do your part in the welfare of the country.' Nehru's vision for Tribal Development is still relevant. There is an urgent need to adopt a rights based approach to development where rights are not merely the subset of the whole process of development, but the process of development should be framed within the framework of rights-based approach.

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Planning and Conducting a Local Procurement Strategy in Developing Countries

By ANTHONY LUBERTO

(Contributed by SCHAEFFER DEARMOND & THOMAS CALDERWOOD)

Upon arriving in Port Au Prince in April 2013, my team was eager to learn and test a concept in development. When a Haitian business owner asked me in a not so friendly fashion “what can you do for my business,” it put the severity of the issue front and center considering the conditions there. We were blown away by the extent of poverty among people who only live only a short two hour flight away from Miami, Florida. When confronted with the brutal reality of despair on the faces of parents holding their sick children throughout the city, how could my team and I help the Haitian business owner or his employees in an ever changing global market? In a developing country such as Haiti, how could they possibly be competitive when their next door neighbor, the Dominican Republic, eclipses their economic potential?

Prior to our arrival in Port Au Prince, my colleague Schaeffer DeArmond and I spent two years helping the local procurement effort in Central Asia for goods and services destined for coalition forces in Afghanistan. Over this period and our concept development we began to notice parallel challenges of local procurement from international procurement entities. Combining our experience with over a year of analysis with Thomas Calderwood on other local procurement activities, we believe that although there are key challenges in developing a local procurement strategy, there are great rewards if planned properly and with host nation involvement.

The concept of local procurement is accepted by a range of internationally operating procurement entities, including the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), Department of State, the U.S.

Agency for International Development, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), among others. Local procurement presupposes that buying goods and services locally can have advantages over traditional methods of importing from the U.S. or other developed nations during humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) operations. Buying goods and services locally can produce significant time and cost savings. Expanding on these findings in the DoD arena, the case is made for local procurement strategies in HA/DR, and long term sustainable development initiatives that mitigate common pitfalls of past ad hoc efforts. The divergent experiences in Central Asia and Haiti provided useful lessons, which offer practical solutions to develop more effective local procurement strategies. These solutions span a range of challenging environments, including military engagements, development projects, and HA/DR operations.

Despite the benefits of a systemized local procurement strategy, implementation remains problematic, and identification and utilization of local vendors consists of ad hoc execution strategies. Although policy goals are designed to increase local procurement and engage in sustainable economic development practices, on-the-ground realities continue to undermine policymakers’ and organizations’ abilities to procure goods and services locally.

During multiple tours to the Republic of Uzbekistan, Republic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Kyrgyzstan from 2010–2012, supporting the local procurement strategy for U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), the many challenges to implementing local procurement policies were evident. Procurement

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entities were mandated to seek vendors in Central Asia before considering other countries, yet it was not uncommon to have items such as fruit juices, wood and shelf-sustainable subsistence products sourced from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Germany or even the U.S. While CENTCOM's mandate was simple in theory – procuring products and services from Central Asia before other countries (even the UAE, which is relatively close) was neither simple nor uniform in its execution. Procurement entities struggled to adapt, often failing to deliver on their mandate to locally procure goods and services.

The Manas Transit Center (MTC), located near Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan is the one of the gateways for U.S. and International Security Assistance Force service members transitioning in or out of Afghanistan. In a meeting between top officials in the DoD logistics arena, we personally observed a senior official specifically instruct a subordinate entity charged with procurement for the MTC, to procure all subsistence products, used to support MTC operations from local Kyrgyz vendors. This was a tall order as the MTC serves as a critical logistical point and also offers military personnel a needed respite from combat, as many incoming and outgoing personnel typically spend a few days at the MTC between flights. The MTC subsistence management subsequently provided us a tour of their large subsistence warehouse where many of the products served in the dining facility (DFAC) were stored. We were stunned to find that none of the products at the warehouse were sourced from Kyrgyzstan, or anywhere else in Central Asia. Despite the abundance of available foodstuff in and around Bishkek, not to mention the rest of Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia, why was the only example of 'locally procured goods' available at the DFAC, cookies? Why did the senior official's order, which outlined that the local procurement strategy should be executed 'without exception', fail?

Absent a truly systemized approach, ad-hoc systems continue to inhibit local procurement efforts in developing and post disaster economies. During the operation in Afghanistan, the U.S. Government (USG) bought lumber from German sources because it was priced far

cheaper than lumber in Central Asia. Yet after accounting for the costs of transporting the lumber from Germany to Afghanistan, the total procurement cost of the German lumber proved significantly more expensive than lumber available closer. When procurement entities sought out products in Central Asia, they often overwhelmed the vendor base. This was displayed through the myriad of procurement processes unique to individual organizations which unfortunately created a formidable barrier between buyers and local vendors. Procurement agencies had different websites, different protocols, different contracting officers, and thus a very different network of contacts. While there are inevitably overlaps between various agencies, their cultures and operating procedures led to an onslaught of confusion for the local vendor.

During our concept development visit to Haiti, local procurement among international procurement entities was also a difficult task to complete. The Haitian Ministry of Commerce (MoC) highlighted that crucial international aid efforts facilitate capacity improvement in support of sustainable local economic development efforts, which is critical to long-term development prospects. The wishes of the Haitian MoC could be fulfilled, in part, by perhaps the most surprising revelation made by my team during our concept development trip: the large number of local vendors that produced goods and provided services that could meet international requirements and specifications. Not only did a surprisingly large number of firms meet such standards, but their production capacity and the variety of goods they were able to provide were tremendous. They merely lacked the knowledge to identify and bid on contract opportunities offered by international procurement entities. However, those that were aware of bidding processes still had issues winning contracts.

Local vendors are often capable of meeting requirements more quickly and at a lower price than traditionally procured materials, yet procurement entities are too frequently unaware of this local capacity. Take Huileries Haitiennes, S.A (HUHSA), a Haitian subsistence and goods distributor for instance. HUHSA possessed sufficient

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ability and the capacity to stock the shelves of the subsistence warehouse for the United Nations' Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). This was not the case when we toured the UN facility and discovered rice from Pakistan, cooking oil from Belgium, juice from Cyprus, ketchup from the U.S., and other internationally procured goods. The unfortunate circumstance here is that the UN either lacked the ability to identify local capacity or simply stuck to what was easiest for them.

Development theories suggest that the better way to support a local economy is for an international procurement entity to not rely upon one large, easy service provider or goods producer. The underlying logic is that the procurement of one commodity across more than one vendor prevents monopolistic practices by the sole firm that was awarded the contract, increases competition, and helps decrease corruption. Yet we observed in both Central Asia and Haiti that procurement entities either stopped or never started looking for alternative, smaller suppliers upon discovering a large local vendor or they maintained current contracts with existing large international vendors.

While it is not simple to procure from local vendors in a developing country, it is also not impossible nor should procurement entities simply go with what's "been working," or the path of least resistance. Proposed approaches are extensive enough to address local procurement issues for not only DoD and other USG actors, but also key international actors, including the UN, the World Food Programme, and others. Agencies should consider a number of possible actions. Structured approaches that combine both a process and methodology for developing local vendors, supported by an implementation process when necessary, are paramount for success. Without taking the initiative to look into the potential areas you may need to procure goods and services from, ad-hoc reactive local procurement will surely miss a more extensive vendor base. Enhanced planning and effective local procurement strategies will prevent the failures of previous ad-hoc implementation efforts, thereby greatly improving the response effectiveness to a contingency or disaster scenario and

saving agencies scarce resources over the long-term. By asking questions in the planning stage, planners can understand the dynamic they are working in and work to solve issues before they arise. Imagine if a proper analysis and planning effort would have gone into local procurement strategies of Central Asia or Haiti. It would have contributed to enhanced regional partnerships, strengthened business models, higher employment, and created an environment in which the host nation could have addressed domestic programs.

Procurement entities, government organizations with heavy involvement from the host nation must supply an actual presence on the ground in the country or region where the local strategy is being implemented. For economic development to take hold, multiple vendors must equitably reap the benefits of procurement of quality goods and services, and an on-the-ground presence allows procurement entities to seek the largest feasible number of suppliers. Why not create local vendor handbooks that provide a solid, permanent set of instructions on how vendors can bid on solicitations? Depending on the location and the goods and services sought, these handbooks would vary in focus, language, length and content. If this is done properly and with adequate resources, procurement entities themselves could conduct "outreach and teach," programs to help connect local vendors with potential opportunities. Being on the ground and taking an active approach in the development of local vendors could also help them upgrade their capabilities or put them in contact with regional development banks.

Ad hoc approaches to meeting policy guidelines have produced an undesirable side effect, alienating the very vendors U.S., UN, and other local procurement policies sought to support. A systemized approach that harnesses a broker to identify the required local vendors is needed; this approach would have a broker work together with those identified vendors to assist throughout the bidding process. The goal is to help local vendors win solicitations that meet the requirements of both the procurement entity, as well as the local vendor. While helping to develop the local economy, local procurement policies concurrently help strengthen and transition the

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host nation's internal economic structure from dependency to self-sustainability. It offers benefits going beyond short or long-term economic gains: locally procured food, shelter, water, medical supplies, and other life saving goods can reach areas of need far quicker than importing them from abroad. Reducing extreme poverty, improving economies, and assisting host nations be self-sustaining compelled us to reach out the international procurement entities and government organizations through this article.

Disclaimer:

The LMI team met with several local vendors whose inclusion during the course of LMI's research in Port-au-Prince does not imply endorsement. Neither LMI nor its research team received any remuneration for their inclusion in this article. The information herein was taken from the team's meetings, provided by each company's respective website, and supplemented by the United Nations Procurement Division (UNDP).

Drone Use Soars in Latin America and Remains Widely Unregulated



By DIEGO CUPOLO
GSDM Latin America Editor



Over the last decade, drones have made headlines as tools for covert bombing campaigns in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. Yet remote-controlled warfare is just one of many functions Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) can provide as non-lethal models become less expensive and more accessible to countries around the world.

From aerial surveillance to three-dimensional geographic modeling of rugged terrains and even speedy pizza delivery service, manufacturers have begun to promote the infinite capabilities of domestic drones. At the same time, they are specifically targeting developing markets in Latin America for the martial use of drones in law enforcement and military operations.

In response, human rights groups have been raising concerns over these fast-evolving technologies, citing the potential for abuse by various state agencies. Recent advancements have allowed governments to adopt and, in some cases, begin building their own UAV fleets, but regulation on domestic drone use remains non-

existent throughout the Americas aside from preliminary laws adopted in Brazil, Canada and the United States.

"The biggest concern presented by drones is they will become a tool for routine mass surveillance," said Jay Stanley, a senior policy analyst for the American Civil Liberties Union. "Fleets of small, inexpensive self-launching drones could easily spread over a town, network together and provide comprehensive, 24-7 dragnet surveillance or a single high-flying drone could accomplish the same thing. This technology already exists. It's called Wide Area Surveillance and it's being used overseas by the US military."

Stanley was speaking at a hearing organized by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) in November 2013 where human rights advocates examined the implications of unregulated drone use in Latin America. In the first event of its kind, speakers aimed to spark a wider debate on domestic UAVs while calling for guidelines on the inevitable swarm of flying robots that

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"The biggest concern presented by drones is they will become a tool for routine mass surveillance"

will soon fill our skies.

Rise of the Drone Market

Drones are convenient, not to mention economical. Unlike helicopters and other manned aircrafts, they require less maintenance, less fuel, and less risk to human life in potentially dangerous operations – all while drone prices drop with each passing year.

“The most basic surveillance drones are small and cost about \$600 from a company in Mexico,” W. Alejandro Sanchez, senior research fellow at the Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA), said in a phone interview. “From there, the prices get higher, but not as much as most people expect, especially when compared to the cost of a helicopter. Anyone thinking drones are financially unattainable for less developed countries hasn’t looked at the latest models.”

The falling prices are opening new markets for multi-use drones around the world. Within the next 10 years, drone spending in the U.S. is expected to reach more than \$89 billion as UAVs take on more civilian tasks such as pesticide spraying for agriculture, emergency medical response and humanitarian relief, according to a Bloomberg report.

Speaking before the IACHR hearing, Santiago Canton, an Argentine lawyer and director of RFK Partners for Human Rights, listed off Latin American nations that have launched or announced plans to launch their own domestic drone programs.

“The Argentinean army has developed its own drone technology for aerial surveillance. Brazil is the country in Latin America that has the highest number of drones, both produced nationally and purchased outside the country,” Canton said. “Bolivia has only purchased drones for its air force, and it has signed an agreement with Brazil to have Brazilian drones identify coca-producing areas. Chile has sophisticated drones and they’ve bought Iranian [drones] for their borders and for surveillance throughout their country.”

In addition to the U.S., a total of 14 countries in the Western Hemisphere will soon use or develop UAVs, according to Canton. Many

are doing so using Israeli drones and production techniques, as the U.S. has strict regulations on sharing military technology with foreign governments.

In recent years, Israel Aerospace Industries has sold its large, 54-foot wingspan “Heron” drones to Mexico and Ecuador, where it has branches in addition to sales offices in Brazil, Colombia, and Chile. Other Israeli drone companies have made “strategic agreements” with Brazilian aircraft manufacturer Embraer to produce drones for “monitoring of ports, agricultural, forest and coastal areas, traffic, etc.,” the Christian Science Monitor reported.

Some Latin American countries, including several Caribbean nations, have been allowed to launch U.S. drones in cooperation with U.S. military and other U.S. agencies for drug trafficking and border patrol operations, Canton said.

“In addition to joint exercises with the United States, Colombians have manufactured and purchased [drones] and used their own technologies. They use them for their borders, operations against the FARC and also for intelligence gathering,” Canton said.

“Mexican Federal Police are using drones in security operations and anti-drug trafficking. Mexico City uses them for demonstrations,” he continued. “Panama uses them to monitor drug trafficking. The Peruvian army uses drones for the Apurimac area where the Sendero Luminoso [Shining Path guerrillas] operate.”

The list goes on. From Wide Area Surveillance along the U.S.–Mexico border to volcanic studies in Costa Rica and rainforest conservation programs in Belize, domestic drones are poised to play a growing role in future government and military operations. Still, Canton warns the large majority of drone usage remains under military control with no civilian oversight.

“We see the chilling effect that this can have on societies,” Canton said. “When people want to have public demonstrations drones can have a chilling effect and can intimidate people from doing this.”

Follow the UAV Leader

For the time being, a treaty to regulate drone usage does not exist anywhere in the world. Lawmakers

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"Currently, a treaty to regulate drone usage does not exist anywhere in the world"



have only begun to talk about the issue and according to Sanchez, it is unrealistic to expect an international agreement anytime soon.

“Supporters of drone technology argue that the drones operate under the umbrella of the Geneva Conventions, which were signed in 1949,” Sanchez said. “That was 64 years ago, more or less, and we have to keep up with the times.”

When legislation does reach senate floors, Sanchez said he expects Latin American governments to follow U.S., Israeli and European domestic drone programs for guidelines on how to form their own UAV policies. Yet a look inside the U.S. presents a mostly grounded domestic drone market due to restrictions from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which prevents the majority of personal and commercial UAVs from taking flight due to the threat of mid-air collisions with manned aircrafts, among other hazards. Still, current regulations are likely to change as the U.S. congress, acting recently under pressure from UAV industry lobbyists, ordered the FAA to speed up drone integration and draft new rules by 2015.

“There is a lot of pent up demand for this technology among police departments and federal agencies and, as the FAA loosens its rules, we can expect many police departments to begin using drones,” said Stanley of the ACLU.

At the time of publication, legislation on drone use has been

introduced in 42 states over the past year and the remaining eight states have enacted legislation. Most of these laws require police to get a search warrant before deploying a drone.

“These authorizations usually impose stringent criteria and conditions on the use of drones such as a 400 foot height limit and a ban on deployment over heavily populated areas,” Stanley said.

The main gray area in U.S. domestic drone regulation is along the Mexican border, where surveillance UAVs can legally operate within 100-miles of the physical borderline, Stanley said. In this region, the U.S. government employs a drone system called “Argus,” which can simultaneously videotape a 100-square kilometer area with the ability to automatically detect and follow moving pedestrians and vehicles anywhere in the surveillance area. “It’s not hard to figure out who somebody is from their movements and from their location and it’s not hard to imagine those movements and tracks could be logged into databases and stored for years,” Stanley said.

Some police departments have already begun experimenting with Wide Area Surveillance systems like Argus, in Philadelphia, Baltimore and Dayton, Ohio, Stanley added.

Inter-State Conflicts and the Prospect of Armed Drones

As with the U.S.-Mexican boundary,

drone use along border areas throughout Latin America could easily and repeatedly provoke inter-state tensions, presenting another problem with unregulated UAV use, according to Sanchez.

“What happens if they find some FARC commanders hiding in Venezuela and [the Colombian] government says they do not have the time to organize an operation, but they have an armed drone they can send to eliminate these people,” Sanchez said. “How will that exacerbate inter-state tensions?” Sanchez described a scenario in 2008, where Colombian troops carried out an operation inside Ecuador to assassinate Manuel Reyes, the commander of the FARC at the time. The Colombian government did not inform Quito of the operations and the move was seen as violation of Ecuador’s sovereignty, creating tensions between Ecuador and Colombia.

The same could happen with UAVs, Sanchez said. Once drones become widely established as tools for law enforcement and military operations, the probability of such incidents will only increase. The matter would be further complicated if and when Latin American governments begin deploying armed domestic drones. “Drone technology is regarded as useful to find these guerrilla fighters and, given the controversial success of armed drones by countries like the U.S., it is only a matter of time before Latin American militaries decide to

follow suit and utilize drones for search-and-destroy missions in the name of national security,” Sanchez wrote in a COHA report titled Latin America Puts Forward Mixed Picture On Use of Drones in Region.

“The US has been selling drones as this revolutionary technology that will make life easier, so it’s obvious that Latin American countries will be interested after seeing the hellfire missiles in Pakistan,” he added in a phone interview.

With surveillance drones, governments can only locate a target. They must still send helicopters full of armed soldiers to capture or eliminate the threat and this may require a high-risk military operation. Such deployments take time and planning, which may allow targets to get away. Sanchez said there is an obvious advantage to armed drones, but raises concerns over the prospect of such technology in the hands of dictatorial governments.

“There’s definitely a need for a technology that’s both cheap and can have some really positive results, but obviously there’s a possibility this technology can be used for all the wrong reasons and, unfortunately, throughout Latin America’s history, the abuse of power [has] tend[ed] to happen quite often,” Sanchez said.

The Future is Now

Approximately 7,500 UAVs are expected to begin operating in U.S. airspace within the next five years following the introduction of new regulations, said FAA Administrator Michael Huerta at news conference in November. He added the ultimate goal of the American drone industry is to establish a global leadership that will enable the U.S. market to set standards for the industry worldwide. Meanwhile, most Latin American countries are enjoying economic growth, which means militaries have larger budgets at their disposal to build new weapons or buy them from abroad. Security and military operations in Latin America are currently pushing global demand for drones.

“Countries like Brazil want to be known as a military power and they want to show they have a vibrant domestic military industry and they can build their own weapons and produce drone technology for sale to other countries,” Sanchez said.



Still, the proliferation of drone technology throughout the Americas is advancing more rapidly than regulations. After analyzing the future and present uses of UAVs in Latin American, the IACHR hearing convened with three recommendations to the international community.

The first two called on the U.S. to comply with international human rights principles in their use and development of armed drones around the world. The third recommendation set forth the need to “clarify and articulate” the legal obligations of states in regard to drone use, both armed and unarmed, and called for the drafting of legislation on the matter.

As time passes and falling price tags encourage more governments to employ surveillance drones, the use of armed drones will only represent the next step in the integration process, Stanley said in his closing statements. “From their uses abroad we know that armed drones can be incredibly powerful and dangerous weapons. When domestic law enforcement officers can use force from a distance it may become too easy for them to do so,” Stanley said. “When it becomes easier to do surveillance, surveillance is used more. When it becomes easier to use force, force will be used more. We have seen this dynamic not only overseas, but also domestically with less lethal weapons such as tasers.”

While there is currently a broad consensus against armed drone use in the Americas, Stanley said exceptions have arisen. U.S. police departments have suggested arming UAVs with rubber bullets for riot control. At the

same time, U.S. border patrols have proposed outfitting drones with “non-lethal weapons designed to immobilize targets of interest.”

“There is very good reason to think that once the current controversies and public spotlight on domestic drones fades away, we will see a push for drones armed with lethal weapons,” Stanley said.

Drone images from Creative Commons.

Diego Cupolo is an independent journalist, photographer and author of *Seven Syrians: War Accounts From Syrian Refugees*. He serves as Latin America regional editor for *Global South Development Magazine*. See more of his work at www.diegocupolo.com

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already unacceptable levels of acute malnutrition, stunting and anemia, particularly in children," the WFP and refugee agency UNHCR said in a joint statement.

UN Forced to Cut Food Rations to African Refugees

The United Nations World Food Program is reducing food aid to nearly 800,000 refugees in Africa, because of funding difficulties.

The United Nations World Food Program is reducing food aid to nearly 800,000 refugees in Africa.

The agency said the cuts of 40 to 60 percent will affect refugees in the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Chad, Uganda, Mauritania, Mozambique, Ghana, Liberia and Burkina Faso.

The cuts are "threatening to worsen

WFP spokesman Peter Smerdon told VOA that there are two main reasons for the cut.

"Mostly it is because of funding



difficulties. We have not got the money to keep full rations on for these people," Smerdon said.

He said security concerns and the difficulty of shipping food by road also play a role. WFP could transport or drop the food by air, but that makes the operation prohibitively expensive, Smerdon added.

Consequences of malnutrition

However, the long-term consequences of malnutrition are serious, Smerdon stressed.

"If a child from the first thousand days of conception does not receive the correct nutrients and nutrients that it needs to develop, that child will have lifelong consequences on its health," he said.

Smerdon said malnutrition lowers the gross domestic product of many countries by several percentage points.

The cost of the WFP aid programs is far less than the long-term costs associated with malnutrition, he said, adding that finding the money now is difficult.

"There are increasingly a large number of emergencies where people are not receiving enough food and being uprooted from their homes and are in need of food and other assistance just keep themselves alive," Smerdon said.

"So those emergencies suck up the money in the short term that would be better spent trying to fix the problem in the longer term."

The U.N. said 2.4 million refugees across Africa depend on its agencies for food.

The WFP said restoring the cuts to its food programs worldwide would require nearly \$200 million.

South Africa: University Introduces Mixed Bathrooms



The University of Cape Town in South Africa has introduced gender-neutral bathrooms for students who identify as transgender or who abstain from defining their gender

Nthabiseng Mokoena, a gender non-comfortist and the advocacy coordinator for Transgender and Intersex Africa, told Talk Radio 702's Redi Tlhabi that gender neutral bathrooms are a safe and accessible space for students who do not feel safe in traditional bathrooms. Mokoena said people who do not conform to gender binaries "don't fit the norms of what society thinks is a man or a woman" and therefore need spaces where they feel safe.

Nigeria Sacks 16,000 Doctors in Midst of Rising Ebola Concerns

President Goodluck Jonathan suspends medical training programme and implements mass firing during national doctors strike.



Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan reportedly fired 16,000 resident doctors, causing concern as the country fights a number of Ebola cases. The government also reportedly suspended the residency training programme in federal hospitals, citing the need to better address challenges currently facing the health sector.

The move comes as thousands of doctors are on strike throughout the



country, calling for better working conditions and increased pay. The Nigeria Medical Association (NMA) demanded the immediate reversal of Johnathan's decision, and encouraged those affected not to pick up their termination letters.

Online, many in Nigeria expressed concern over what the sacking meant for the country as it battles Ebola, with several cases confirmed

The doctors had been on an indefinite nationwide strike since July 1, in protest of Federal Government's non-implementation of some agreements it had with the union.

Other demands included immediate appointment of a Surgeon-General of the Federation and increase of hazard allowance to N100,000 monthly.

India brides leave husbands' homes for lack of toilets

BBC



Six newlywed women in a village in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh have returned to their parents because their husbands' homes had no toilets.

The women, all from Khesiya village in Kushinagar district, said they would return only after their husbands had built proper toilets at home.

Nearly half of India's 1.2 billion people have no toilets at home.

Campaigners say the problem is acute in rural India and it is the women who suffer most.

One of the brides, Gudiya, told BBC Hindi that it was very troublesome to go to the fields.

"My parents have a toilet at home, but there is no toilet in my husband Ramesh Sharma's home. Going outdoors was a big hassle, so I fought with him and returned to my parents."

A lack of toilets also exposes women to a risk of attack.

In his Independence Day speech this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi vowed to end open defecation.

"We are in the 21st Century and yet there is still no dignity for women as they have to go out in the open to defecate and they have to wait for darkness to fall," he said.

CHINADAILY Europe

China's geothermal energy could replace coal

China's geothermal energy potential roughly equals 853 billion tons of standard coal, and has the potential to replace coal in energy consumption, the country's energy regulator has said.

Current annual exploration of geothermal energy has reached only about three million tons, according to the National Energy Administration (NEA).

Exploration of geothermal energy will facilitate the restructuring of energy consumption as coal consumption amounts to about 66 percent of China's total energy consumption.

It will also reduce air pollution as one geothermal facility can replace 3,000 tons of coal each year, saving over 75 million tons of carbon dioxide and 30 tons of sulfur dioxide.



Geothermal energy could be part of the solution to China's emissions and energy problems.

"With the help of home-grown technology, we will use the clean energy more to produce electricity," said Chen Xiaoning, deputy head of the environment department under the Ministry of Land and Resources.

The government also has plans for low-carbon communities, according to Wang Jiyang of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS).

China has been taking pains to make the

best use of geothermal energy. In 1977, Yangbajain geothermal power station, the biggest of its kind in China, was established in Tibet. The

station is being upgraded to generate 7.2 million kwh of electricity annually for each unit, greatly slashing the use of standard coal and cutting carbon dioxide emissions.

Four geothermal wells have been approved by housing authorities in north China's Tianjin Binhai New Area, which can provide heating for 300,000 square

Africa: Beyond slums and safaris

Africa is an exceptionally diverse place, but you wouldn't always know it judging from how it's depicted in photographs. For too long, the same stereotypes -- swinging between safari and slum shots -- have plagued the pictorial record of the continent.

Berlin-based media artist Benjamin Fuglister wanted to change all that. The editor and founder of piclet.org -- an online, international directory of hand-picked



photographers -- found he was unaware of much of the talent documenting the region. "I started to notice that a lot of the photography coming out of Africa over the years was coming from the same pool of people," he says.

Eager both to discover new talent from within Africa, and get that talent recognized by the international photography community, he launched the POPCAP prize for contemporary African photography. Now in its third year, POPCAP received over 720 submissions from 88 different countries. More information about the project can be obtained from piclet.org.

Ghana's cocoa farmers turn to smuggling as profits dwindle

the guardian



Photo: Mark Anderson

Backbone of Ghana's economy weakened by soaring costs, tempting farmers to sell through illegal Ivory Coast networks.

Ghana's economic woes have hurt farmers, who say basic operational costs, including the price of fertiliser, have risen

sharply over the past three years. Despite this, Cocobod has not increased the price it pays for cocoa -- farmers still receive 212 cedis (£36.63) for a 64kg bag.

"The government should increase the price it pays farmers for their cocoa," says Enchi district commander Oscar Ofori Larbi, who oversees one of the most active cocoa regions in Ghana. "That would solve many of the problems here."

Ghana's ruling National Democratic Congress party said in its manifesto that Cocobod would "strive to pay the cocoa farmer at least 70% of the world market price of cocoa", as well as cover the cost of pest control, and improving roads and production methods.

But farmers in the region say they are receiving little help from the government, and, with rising production costs, they are borrowing heavily from credit unions to stay in business.

Under Ghanaian law, farmers are only allowed to sell their beans to purchasing clerks who act as intermediaries between them and Cocobod. Ghana's low cocoa prices and the depreciation of the cedi has led some farmers and purchasing clerks to smuggle their beans into neighbouring Ivory Coast, the world's largest cocoa exporter.

Ghana is the world's second-largest cocoa exporter, producing an estimated output of 930,000 tonnes last season, according to Ecobank. The country's cocoa sector makes up about 15% of GDP.

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