

## **Foreword Volume 7 (1999): Empowerment and Economic Development**

Volume 7 of the African Development Perspectives Yearbook on "Empowerment and Economic Development" goes in content beyond Volume 6 in presenting strategies of empowerment and programmes of assistance towards those groups that are important at local and national levels to strengthen governance systems and to make them more responsive to the civil society.

Unit 1 of Volume 7 presents an analysis of the empowerment potential for vulnerable groups, especially those in rural areas and of women. In this Unit a survey of empowerment strategies for rural and urban population groups is presented. Focus is on the self-help groups and the self-help organisations that are active in the field of housing. A further theme is the empowerment of female entrepreneurs. Survival strategies of small enterprises and the role of voluntary business associations are discussed. Further contributions relate the issue of empowerment strategies to the level of the macroeconomy of African countries. In these analytical studies and conceptual discussions related to empowerment of vulnerable groups we find cases for Kenya, Tanzania, and Sudan.

Unit 2 deals with issues of empowerment of small industrial producers, and with appropriate support mechanisms. Most important is the aspect of good governance towards the small industry sectors in African countries. The main issue is how good regulatory and economic policies can support the sector of small entrepreneurs. This is a new theme because for long the discussion was concentrating on more general aspects of good governance. In various contributions in this Unit we find a detailed analysis of the potentials of policy reform for improving the position of the small entrepreneurs in Africa. More specific are themes in this Unit that relate small industry development to the poverty question and to the sectoral issue of adequate finance for micro-enterprises. It is important to see that all the contributions in this Unit come to similar conclusions and messages - that policy matters, and that good governance can help to develop a vivid small entrepreneurial sector. A strategy for the support of the still small entrepreneurial class in Africa is presented in this Unit. The case studies cover countries as Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Cameroon, and Nigeria.

Unit 3 discusses the issues of empowerment of unskilled labour and human capital formation for skilled people, by focussing on the institutional reconstruction of labour market institutions, of the civil service, and of the capacity building activities in the African countries. In this Unit we find new insights on the relation between economic policies and structural adjustment policies to employment creation and social reconstruction initiatives in Africa. The new generation of structural adjustment programmes for Africa is outlined and its designs are related to the specific employment creation strategies that enlightened governments can implement. Focus is especially on the institutional aspects of employment creation and labour market development - how to institutionalise appropriate employment generation policies and the required labour market institutions. The issue of missing labour market institutions in Africa is the point which is discussed throughout the Unit with reference to a broad range of institutions that make up a labour market as a functioning entity. The role of the ILO in policymaking regarding labour and employment policies is presented. It is obvious that the ILO can contribute to a policy change regarding labour and employment, and that the ILO conventions and standards matter with regard to all aspects of policy and regulation also in Africa. Most important is the discussion on civil service reform in Africa, and the role of capacity-building initiatives as these are important elements of policy change in Africa. The analysis in the Unit presents elements of a strategy of institutional development in the context of employment generation, poverty alleviation, and social

planning. Case studies for African countries are presented and discussed, and specific focus is on civil service reform in Tanzania.

In Unit 4 the empowerment of the people in the former homelands of South Africa is the theme; infrastructure provision for neglected social and ethnic groups, and the role of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa are other issues discussed in this Unit. In this regard the most central aspects of good governance and empowerment of the vulnerable groups in the new South Africa are presented and discussed. Most important documents are presented. These documents highlight the position of the government and of the relevant social groups in South Africa, as the most important policy documents are the result of a broad discussion among government, business interests, and trade unions. The document on cooperative government in South Africa is of significance as we see the intent of power-sharing and empowerment of people at various government levels. The new economic strategy document for South Africa that has replaced the Reconstruction and Development Programme is of interest because it presents a vision for a growth strategy that is also employment-friendly. Empowerment issues are most central in all political and economic debates in the new South Africa - how to empower the people in the former homelands areas, how to empower social groups that had been discriminated during the apartheid era, and how to empower the groups most affected by the more recent liberalisation and deregulation policies. The role of the trade unions in the context of empowerment is discussed, especially regarding the homelands. The role of the new governments at the local and provincial levels is another aspect discussed concretely. By referring to the role of the new local governments in the areas where the former homelands were located, we can have a look at the meaning of good governance in this context. Another very important theme is the provision of infrastructural facilities in the urban areas. Most important is the role of the human rights associations and the groups that are active in the investigation of the human rights abuses in the apartheid South Africa. Issue is how to help those that had suffered most, and who cannot benefit now from the economic changes in South Africa because of their still weak position in the economy. Most relevant in this Unit is the discussion related to regions and areas which always suffered from a peripheral position in the context of South Africa.

In Unit 5 we find an analysis of conflict and crisis in the African Region by referring to the cases of Sudan and Somalia. Most important is the strategy of empowerment of those groups (CSOs, NGOs, and other local actors) that work for peace, development and state reconstruction. Empowerment of peace-preserving groups and of local development actors is a main aspect in this Unit. Most important is the fact that there is an increasing awareness about these issues at the international and regional African levels; sustainable social and economic development and empowerment of vulnerable groups and of local NGOs are considered to be more and more important objectives in the context of state reconstruction and peace-building efforts. The new African and international initiatives to relate peace, reconstruction and development in Africa are presented in this Unit. Most important are the case studies of Sudan and Somalia that highlight the necessity of a region-wide approach towards stability, security and development in and for Africa. This region-wide strategy needs to be supported by the international community, but nonetheless an own reconstruction and development programme based on African objectives, plans and policies is required. The case studies also show that peace-preserving strategies are most important, because later - after outbreak of conflict - all efforts are extremely complex to reconstruct society and economy, especially after civil war and a long period of ongoing conflict. In this context the new United Nations initiatives for Africa are of interest. The United Nations System-Wide Special Initiative on Africa is such a case in point - therefore the whole document is reprinted here.

In Unit 6 most important publications are reviewed, and books and publications received by the Research Group on African Development Perspectives are presented in short summaries. This Unit shows that the work of the Research Group is supported by an increasing number of groups all over the world and especially in Africa that share common objectives. The publications

reviewed and presented are related to the themes of good governance and empowerment in Africa. It is editorial policy to concentrate on those studies that may have impact on policy change and may further the design of visions and programmes. Important documents from African and international organisations are reprinted also in other Units of Volume 7 of the Yearbook. This is part of the editorial policy to present the readers with most important documents that give proof of intentions, plans and objectives for African development.

Complementary to Volume 7 is Volume 6 of the African Development Perspectives Yearbook. Volume 6 of the African Development Perspectives Yearbook is discussing the theme of "Good Governance and Economic Development in Africa". Good Governance has become an important subject in international development since the end of the 1980s, and since this time in the context of development studies, development policy as well as development cooperation we are confronted with the issue of how to improve the governance systems. Good Governance is a very broad theme, but the main issue is the relation between the government and the civil society, or still broader, the relation between the state and the private actors. In contrast to the 1960s and the 1970s much deeper conclusions are drawn from this discussion. It is not enough to improve the government machinery, or the public administration, or the civil service. It is not enough to work on a better local government or for a better provincial government, or even on a better economic policy-making process. The term "good governance" basically implies a holistic concept, involving all spheres of government, the private sector, and the civil society, and all the interactions between these three poles are relevant. Principles of good governance matter, as government needs to be based on the observance of human rights, equality, justice, equity, basic needs provision, effectiveness, and subsidiarity. Based on these principles, adequate policies and instruments are necessary at all government levels, and in the context of all segments of the private community so as to reach the private actors. In Volume 6 all these issues are discussed in detail.

In Unit 1 a general introduction is presented by highlighting the dimensions of good governance in the African context. It is important to note that Africa has taken up the discussion very early, and many documents give evidence of this fact. In Unit 1 we also find an important discussion on the causes, the consequences and the dimensions of corruption in Africa. It is made quite clear that African solutions are necessary. New modalities of strengthening the state in Africa and working for more adequate governance systems are discussed, and concrete proposals are made. Good Governance is seen in the context of national, regional and international development strategies. The role of good governance for economic development is highlighted. It is considered important to raise the reputation of government activity.

In Unit 2 national case studies are presented. Countries like Tanzania, Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Swaziland are taken as cases to show the diversity of conditions and the steps that need to be taken nationally towards better governance systems. It is made clear that good governance and the ability to design own economic programmes depend on each other. Good Governance implies that a country itself takes the initiative in reforming institutions and policies. Good Governance implies also that a country implements sound programmes and policies at provincial and local levels. International assistance cannot substitute for the capacity of own programme design.

In Unit 3 of Volume 6 the observance of human rights is discussed as a determinant factor of civil society formation and economic development. The observance of human rights is not only an intrinsic value but is also part of any meaningful definition of social development. Although there are particularities of an African understanding of human rights, there can be no doubt that the basic ideas of human rights are universal. It is made clear in this Unit that the relation between human rights and economic performance is relevant for all spheres of African development. However, the relation is not a simple one, and not a linear one. Various country cases are considered that show how different the relation between human rights observance and economic performance can be. It is of importance to highlight the implications for national development and

for development cooperation, and we observe that various cases require quite different policies and instruments to have an impact on human rights observance and/or socio-economic performance. It is also considered in this Unit how development cooperation and explicit human rights conditionalities can influence human rights observance and economic performance.

Implications of all this for the design of the new Lomé Convention are presented. There are chances to go with the new Lomé Convention far beyond the current situation by giving new guidelines for governance reform, human rights observance, and for accelerating economic development. In this Unit we also find a discussion why development cooperation is often not consistent in its attitudes and instruments towards regimes that violate basic human rights. Arbitrary decisions and strategic interests of donors often dominate the scene so that the impact on African countries that have a bad record on human rights and on basic needs provision is limited. Positive assistance measures to improve the extent of human rights observance and to impact on the level of social and economic development are discussed at length. Most of these positive measures however are relevant for countries that have already started the process of transition to democracy. Countries however where the state has already collapsed or is substantially weakened need other forms of assistance. Case studies on Rwanda and Burundi show that even for reconstruction and peace-making efforts minimum political conditions need to be there and adequate administrative and power structures have to be put in place. Local, decentralised and autonomous units and its populations may have to start with a modest reconstruction and rehabilitation effort in such cases. It may also be necessary to learn from experiments as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa to overcome the psychic dimension of the conflict in these countries.

In Unit 4 of Volume 6 very important case studies on local government and local development are presented, referring to countries as Namibia, Tanzania, Kenya, and Ghana. All these case studies on local government, local empowerment and local development show that central and local government units have a quite complementary role, and that development can only take place if implementation of central government policies is followed through at provincial, municipal and local levels. Such an implementation not only requires constitutional rights and competencies at the local level, but mainly also an appropriate allocation of funds and of skilled personnel. Good Governance needs to be related to all levels of government, and at all levels the interaction with the private sector and the civil society organisations is important. Many policies and programmes follow from the lessons we can learn from these interesting case studies. Assistance and support to local development actors can be given in various ways, and at various levels. Many successful experiments of local government reform also outlined in this Unit can be used as a reference for the paths towards improved governance systems at the local level.

In Unit 5 good governance and better environmental resource use are considered as a central theme. Improving the environmental situation and the resource use in African countries needs to be related more directly to the issues of good governance. Resource use management issues need acceptance at all government levels, especially also at the local government level, but the interaction with other government levels is crucially important. The involvement of civil society organizations at all levels of action is highly important; it is not possible to rely only on central government policy prescriptions to improve the state of the environment. On the other hand central government action is indispensable for a consistent path of environmental protection and natural resource development; there is an increasing necessity to link policies and programmes with neighbouring governments, and to broaden the general awareness of the environmental problems at stake in the civil societies of the neighbouring countries. In the Unit it is made quite clear that civil associations, local actors and environmental awareness groups play an increasing role in implementing Agenda 21 at the local African scene, and this in concert with enlightened governments. New instruments have emerged to plan for environmental protection at national and local levels, and empowerment of those groups that work for environmental protection is

increasingly important. Case studies, for example on Zimbabwe, present in-depth-analyses of conditions, restraints, and policies towards sustainable resource use and good governance.

In Unit 6 most important information on institutions and programmes regarding good governance reform and empowerment of civil society organizations is presented. This News and Information Unit gives evidence of an increasing interest in Africa's regional organizations to deal with these important issues. Promotion of civil society organizations at the national and regional levels has become a core activity in Africa and for Africa.

Most important is the presentation of very important documents in various of these Units; these documents show that Africa has taken the lead in the discussion on the issues of good governance, and that Africa is continuing the discussion by linking the issues of democracy, human rights observance and good governance to the requirement of long-term national and regional development in Africa. These documents are of great importance because of the collective will and effort of the Africans expressed in these statements.

Over the years the African Development Perspectives Yearbook has become the leading publication in Germany on Africa. An increasing number of policy and research institutions in Africa are cooperating with the Research Group in Bremen. African university teachers use the Yearbook in their courses. Officials of international and regional organizations make use of the analyses, projections and the documents reprinted in the various volumes of the Yearbook. Civil society organizations all over Africa benefit from the information and the analysis contained in the various volumes. The network of the Research Group in Bremen is still enlarging. Many organizations support the network by information, cooperation and encouragement. With seven volumes of the Yearbook a highly successful work period of the Research Group in Bremen on African development has passed since 1989.

For the coming decade of work of the Research Group on African Development Perspectives Bremen many important tasks are awaiting the researchers and the scientific network. The theme for Volume 8 of the Yearbook with the title "Africa's Reintegration into the World Economy" is reflecting on the future tasks. It is more and more necessary to work on realistic strategies of reintegrating Africa into the world economy, by better national and regional policies, and by a more facilitating international environment. Africa's links with the world economy and with the international public and civil community will occupy as themes and as a research agenda the work effort of the Research Group in the years to come. In its first decade the Research Group has discussed in the various volumes of the Yearbook such important themes for Africa as, human dimensions of structural adjustment; the role of agriculture for industrialization; the role of new energy policies; the importance of active labour and employment policies, and the role of regional employment strategies.

With volumes 6 and 7 on good governance and empowerment strategies, the Yearbook again covers important issues of African development today, and these are the issues that may shape the fabric of the economies and societies in Africa in the next century. In the next decade the Research Group in Bremen will focus on the new role of Africa in the world economy and in world society, in the context of the global informational and technological revolution, and on a future for Africa that is reflecting the demands of the knowledge society that is emerging globally. We need to express thanks to all supporters of the Yearbook for their steady encouragement and their assistance.

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