REPORT
SURINAM
The Amazonian

DOSSIER
Local governance
Grail of development?

DISCOVERING EUROPE
Scottish Highlands
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## Table of contents

**THE COURIER, N. 8 NEW EDITION (N.E.)**

### EDITORIAL
The State of grace 3

### TO THE POINT
“One of the most exciting things for me in Africa is the turnaround” 4

### ROUND UP
6

### DOSSIER
The new virtues of local governance
Supporting a growing process 12

### INTERACTION
Media and Development Forum in Ouagadougou
Words and commitment from the European Union and African Union 22

### DISCOVERING EUROPE
Scotland
Scotland’s Highlands and Islands. An exuberance of natural assets 47

### TRADE
EPAs “in the midst of a maelstrom” 28

### ZOOM
Photography. Prizewinners for Africa 30

### QUESTIONNAIRE
OUR PLANET
When Science Gets Involved 32

Launch of the EU-Africa partnership for science 32
Ghana undertakes to control timber exports to EU 33

### REPORT
Surinam
Fountain of life for all 35

### DISCOURSE
Surinam-EU Cooperation 46

### CREATIVITY
Africa in the Museums of Europe 55
Images of women 56

### FOR YOUNG READERS
Now we can be more efficient 58

### YOUR SAY/CALENDAR
64
The State of grace

Who would have believed, just three months ago, that the State would be freed from the purgatory to which it had been condemned for decades as recent history delivered a combination of a ‘free market revolution’, the collapse of the Soviet system, and the success of the so-called ‘golden boys’ who became for many role models of success? Moreover, it was not only the State and all that it stands for – multinational institutions and regional organisations included – but public service itself that had become synonymous with developments that served no purpose; obstacles placed in the path of prosperity and the protection of the lazy and the incompetent.

Nobody would deny the weaknesses and inherent clumsiness of any system that becomes too big. But to create the dogma of the State as inherently harmful is surely to give credence to the French philosopher Alain, when he says that “Nothing is more dangerous than an idea, when it is the only one we have”. Indeed, to deny the State control over certain key areas of human development to which it brings unequalled added value brings the risk of a democracy built purely for the strong, the gifted and the highborn.

The State is back and is being wooed and respectfully asked to come to the assistance of a vessel that has gone adrift. Without going as far as to ask it to clean out the Aegean stables of the financial world, everybody now seems to accept that it will have its say on matters where its views were previously unwelcome. However, even before the recent financial crisis, international institutions like the World Bank had already adjusted their concept of the role of the State by placing more confidence in them in the fight for future development.

Our guest for this issue’s ‘To the point’ column, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the Managing Director of the World Bank, explains that her institution is increasingly entrusting local government with managing the fight against poverty rather than creating its own units – a practice that was adopted by the European Union some time ago. Readers will also discover in an article on the return of Togo to constitutional order that between 2004 and today, the share of the European Development Fund allocated to budgetary aid – in other words that part managed entirely by the beneficiary ACP States – has doubled from one quarter to a half.

The result of the Accra ACP Summit shows that the viability of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States seems to be assured after 2020 and the expiry of the Cotonou Agreement. That at least is the commitment given by its heads of state when, just a short while ago, many believed it to be threatened. This too is a sign of the times.

The strength of States and of their component parts (the regions) or their groupings (federations and unions) have often been placed in opposition. To judge from this issue’s dossier on local governance this would seem to be a mistake and this holds true in Europe as well as in Africa. Spain serves as a good example. Securely anchored in Europe, it is at the same time perfectly at ease with decentralisation and has a significant development policy. At the same time, there are regions such as Catalonia which is seeking to achieve the target of devoting 0.7 per cent of its GDP to development aid by 2012.

Hegel Goutier, Editor-in-Chief
You’ve just got back from the Aid Effectiveness Forum in Ghana. Were you disappointed with the results?

As the World Bank, we were pleased with the outcome. It was incredible. In Paris three years ago there you had 600 participants. In Accra, 1,700 showed up from 130 countries and 40 institutions. There were delegations that had never participated before; non traditional donors, South Korea and China, Brazil and some of the new East European countries who are just starting to look at how to be a donor. And you had Foundations and before the meeting, a civil society forum. For the first time, developing countries had a strong voice. The holding of the Forum in an African country, Ghana, helped a lot. The meeting had several things that I think really made it stand out. First was the assessment of whether aid has had an impact on poverty and whether since three years ago in Paris we have made better progress in harmonising aid. Fifteen years ago two in five people were below the poverty line; now it’s one in four, though there are threats like the present Darfur crisis that can reverse this. In terms of donors harmonising, there’s progress in a couple of areas. One is in working to put developing countries more in the leadership; management of public finances by developing countries and also some progress on more working together of donors.

There have also been challenges. This fuel, food and fertiliser crisis - the three ‘Fs’ - where prices have doubled or tripled in the last few years depending on the commodity. In many countries this has impacted the poverty situation. This is why it is very important to focus on aid effectiveness; you have to make it real. If we don’t act, 100 million more people could be thrown into poverty. In Sierra Leone, for example, the incidence of poverty has increased by 3 per cent to 69 per cent because of the food and fuel crisis, so what does aid effectiveness mean in that situation?

What is it that was pleasing in Accra? Using the aid effectiveness angle to focus on real problems; putting attention on the fact that we have to work together to address this crisis and get away from the fragmentation. Let’s use country systems. So if a country has functioning financial management and procurement systems, why can’t we work through these rather than create our own separate units. Conditionality is old language; now what we want to focus on is transition where a county crafts its own programmes, makes its own benchmarks and we monitor…
A lot of the EU’s aid now consists of budget aid. Does the World Bank support this policy? The World Bank is very supportive. The WB has been giving budget support where the environment permits if the country is following economic policies that are reasonable and are carrying out reforms to its system, also where it is possible to have some reasonable financial management systems, so that when you give budget support it does not disappear and shareholders would turn around and say that the money is not being well spent. In those countries with weaker systems, we support the pooling of funds. For example in Afghanistan, we have been managing a fund to support the development of Afghanistan where donors have pooled up to US$2.5bn in resources and we help the Afghans - the ministries - to strengthen their budget. You will weaken the state more when you continue to use processes outside and you can strengthen it by using the system because you are forced to help them make it work. Coming back to Accra, we also agreed that we would be more transparent in aid commitments. If you are supporting a country, publish what you are funding so that parliaments, civil society and the citizens can be aware. Everything that the WB funds is out there.

Is the food crisis a blip or does it denote something deeper in that agriculture has not been paid enough attention? It’s a bit of all of these things. It is not a blip in the sense that it will disappear tomorrow. It will be another two to three years before it works itself out because a constellation of factors led to this. The entire global community took its eye off the ball of agriculture. Even the countries themselves did not prioritise agriculture in their development priorities. Why? Because it looked like the war with agriculture had been won. There was enough food being produced. You could move food around easily to places where it was needed when a crisis occurred. I think this happened, so the amount of financing going to agriculture dropped. I don’t think that this is what has precipitated the crisis. High fuel prices which have led to high fertiliser prices and the use of some of the land for food cultivation going to biofuels have been said to be contributory factors. You also have some external events on the climate change front; floods and drought in many parts of the world that have also affected production. All these things happened and some people would also add speculation making prices higher. It’s not one event but the coming together of a series of events that has done this. The reason why we say that it is not a blip is that you have to look at some of the events. Some of them are more structural in nature. There are structural and speculative factors underlying the price of oil. If this is the case, you have to look at the impact on fertiliser. The use of land for biofuels is not going to change overnight, although incentives have changed to stop subsidising such production. The other big factor is that there is an increase in demand from emerging countries and they are wealthier. The key issue is that you can respond by mitigating the price by encouraging more production and see the high prices as a bit of an opportunity in a way for farmers to benefit.

Were you disappointed at the collapse of the Doha trade talks? Absolutely. We cannot afford to accept any collapse. We must not just sit back. Many developing countries have a lot to do so that they can benefit from the agreement when it is finally reached. I’m talking here about aid for trade. There are a lot of things that developing countries still have to do; improve their infrastructure; strengthen their regulatory capacity; look at their trade policies. You can’t talk about advantages of trade if you don’t have the ports and the roads. Aid for trade has to get real. Countries have talked about it but there has not been action.

“"Aid for trade has to get real”"

Do you support the Diaspora becoming bigger players in development policy? It’s a good thing to include the Diaspora for several reasons. Number one, they are very strong in remittances. Many countries are getting a bigger sum from the Diaspora in remittances than they are getting in aid. Diaspora remittances to Africa are about US$11bn now annually of which US$3bn alone go to Nigeria. They have knowledge of their countries and are quick to get things off the ground. They are a totally under-utilised resource. The World Bank has proposed a Diaspora support programme drawn up in Brussels and in Washington; a Diaspora programme for Africa is being developed to support the Diaspora’s projects, ideas and send back their expertise.

During your tenure is there one single change you would most like to bring about in the African continent? I think that when you look at what is constraining growth now, one of the most exciting things for me for Africa is the turnaround. Just a decade ago, people had given up and said this continent was not going anywhere. Then, in this decade of the 2000s, you’ve seen African countries growing systematically at better than 5 per cent and even projections of 6.5 to 7 per cent and I’m not just talking of commodity exporting countries. There are 18 non-commodity exports that are growing at better than 5 per cent and have been doing so for some time. But because 5 or 6 per cent is still not good enough to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) you really need to push growth to 7 or 8 per cent - how can you do that? This is what drives any desire I have to see something different. When you do the analysis, you find out that the private sector is key to this growth and creating jobs. Foreign Direct Investment to the continent has increased to US$38bn a year but it is not always going into the sectors which are creating the most jobs. So what’s the problem? Many of them cite infrastructure constraints, so one of the things I’d really like to see is bigger investment in infrastructure and it has to involve public/private partnerships. One example is telecommunications. The cell phone revolution has really taken off in Africa. Before, there were hardly any landline phones; then the cell phone came in and in 2000 there were ten million mobile lines on the continent. Today, there are 180 million. This has been brought in by the private sector. Governments have created the environment to give licences and the private sector has invested. Can we get ports that function with the private sector, roads that connect rural areas to markets and railways? This is my dream. And can we do this regionally? Some countries are landlocked and their markets are small. We at the WB can catalyse some of this through our private sector arm, the International Finance Corporation. It is creating a US$100M fund for infrastructure and another one for health, so how can other donors also catalyse the private sector to go in and build infrastructure?

The full version of the interview will appear on ‘The Courier’s’ website: http://www.acp-eucourier.info/

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Nigeria’s first female Finance Minister and Foreign Minister © World Bank/Simone D. McCourt

Keywords
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Sixth ACP SUMMIT of Heads of State and Government CALLS ON the international community to honour its commitments

At the Sixth African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Summit of Heads of State and Government in the Ghanaian capital of Accra on 2 and 3 October, the ACP Group sent a clear signal to the international community and the financial institutions for them to honour their commitments and achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2020.

In connection with current negotiations with the EU to transform their privileged links into free trade agreements, in the form of the highly controversial Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), Summit President John Kufuor of Ghana announced the ACP Group’s decision to negotiate with certain European countries, including France, the United Kingdom and Germany, with a view to their revision. “What we want”, declared the Ghanaian President, “is a genuine partnership strategy and not agreements as they stand at present and that give the impression of continual dependence on Europe”.

> Saving the economy and the people

John Kufuor sought to place the Summit under the theme of “the need to ensure the security of people and of development”. While recognising present difficulties, the President stressed the need to focus especially on youth, “who should be nurtured into the mainstream of globalisation with competence and self-confidence”. He added that this demands a fair system of international trade to enable our economies to be sufficiently strong to permit appropriate education and health programmes, criticising the EPAs that “divide the solidarity between the ACP countries”. The EPAs dominated much of the debate (read also the interview with Ivorian African Integration Minister Amadou Koné and comments of Glenys Kinnock in the ‘Trade rubric’), together with the food and oil crises, now with the added dimension of the financial crisis that is sending shockwaves across the industrialised countries.
> An “almost apocalyptic” situation

“...The consequences of the international financial crisis will be disastrous for the ACP countries as a whole, given their fragile economies that are dependent on raw materials exports, and for the small and vulnerable countries in particular,” Arvin Boolell told The Courier. Known for his determination in defending the interests of the Eastern and Southern African countries in their negotiations with the EU on the new EPAs, the Mauritian Minister for Foreign affairs was adamant: “It is unfortunate that lessons have not been learned from the experiences of the past; today it is the weakest countries, those whose budgets had already been eroded by rising oil and food prices, which must pay the price for irresponsible management by the developed countries.”

He believes there is a real danger today of seeing a depreciation of the dollar coupled with an increase in production, oil and food costs: “In these times of great change, we will have to confront an almost apocalyptic situation.”

Rob Davies, South Africa’s Deputy Minister for Trade and Industry, noted for his part, as did his ACP colleagues, that the US Government is prepared to pay US$700bn to bail out its financial system and that the European central banks are doing the same, remarking that: “In this case they can find the money and apparently not for development.”

The minister was referring to the falling commitments of the developed countries in regard to the developing countries. By subscribing a few years ago to the MDGs, which included a pledge to reduce world poverty by 50 per cent by 2020, the industrialised countries undertook to allocate 0.7 per cent of their GDP to development cooperation. It is a goal that few countries have met; worse still, their commitments have in fact decreased over the past two years. “This attitude”, continued Mr. Davies, “is indicative of the priorities of the present governance of the global economy”.

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Australia makes its entrance

“It is the first time that a developed country, other than an EU country, has been invited to speak at an ACP summit”, one official told us. And not just any country, but Australia. Australia which, through the voice of its ambassador to the United Nations, Robert Hill, announced its intention to conclude “a strategic partnership with Africa” when it already has privileged relations with its neighbours, the 15 countries of the Pacific branch of the ACP Group. Finally, Australia, added Robert Hill, plans to “tighten its links with the 16 Caribbean countries, some of which are fellow members of the Commonwealth”. The ACP Group has understood that it can no longer place all its hopes in one basket. For some time now the EU has been working on the new architecture of its cooperation policy, a policy now open to the world and no longer confined to the countries originating in the former colonies of its Member States. At the same time, the presence of China, and also other countries such as India, is becoming increasingly meaningful within the ACP. This is most certainly the case in Africa, where natural resources are attracting a growing number of emerging countries.

What future for the ACP Group?

The Cotonou Agreement, which governs the preferential cooperation links between the ACP Group and the European Union, expires in 2020. So what about post-2020? The two parties will have to sketch an outline for this future cooperation within less than two years, when the agreement comes up for its mid-term review. The ACP Group is already preparing actively for this, as pointed out in Accra by Sir John Kaputin, Secretary-General of the ACP Group, who stressed the huge amount of work done by his “professional team that is working tirelessly, but whose activities are being impeded by a lack of sufficient financial resources”. He also stressed the key role of the Brussels-based Secretariat as interlocutor between the ACP countries and the EU on such vital matters – because they involve the commitment of European funds – as the facilities granted to key sectors such as energy, water, education and culture, trade, natural disasters, and science and technology. There is also the intra-ACP Migration Facility that, as the summit stressed in its closing declaration, must be maintained under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF). Sir John recognised that times are changing, taking as an example the new global approach adopted by the European Commission in the field of aid, “and it is certain that the Group needs reform to take account of all the changes”. The Group’s viability nevertheless seems assured. In their closing declaration, the ACP heads of state and government “reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring that the ACP Group becomes one of the leading organisations in formulating and defending the interests of the developing world, as well as a dynamic force on the international stage”.

The principal points of the closing declaration

In their closing declaration, the ACP heads of state and government call for:

- the strengthening under the 10th EDF of the EU-ACP Facilities for water and energy and note the undertaking given by the European Commission to grant an additional €180M for the Natural Disasters Facility;
- the holding of an international summit to draw up a global strategy to stabilise oil prices at affordable levels and to propose solutions for developing countries that are net importers of food products;
- the extension of the benefits of the Foodstuffs Facility proposed by the European Commission at the beginning of October to all the ACP countries whatever their level of economic development;
- sufficient financial means, in addition to the EDF, to finance the adjustment costs linked to the EPAs;
- the provision of other trade frameworks for ACP states that are not in a position to negotiate EPAs.
This was the fourth such meeting between all 10 AU Commissioners and on this occasion, 21 of the 27 European Union (EU) Commissioners representing a gamut of policy areas. European Commission President, José Manuel Barroso said the event was, “a regular and important feature on the political calendar allowing us to address the key concerns of the day whilst also mapping out our action in the agreed fields of our strategic partnership whether they be security, energy or climate change issues”, a view echoed by AU Chairperson, Jean Ping. All Commissioners and other officials taking part gathered in six thematic ‘clusters’ (whose highlights are below). These covered all areas of the Africa-EU strategy strategy; some more political than others such as peace and security; whilst actual projects are poised for funding in the science and technology sphere (see separate article in ‘Interaction’ section).

**Cluster One:** Institutional capacity building, administrative cooperation and Communication. This looked at how the Africa strategy is being administered and communicated.

**Cluster two:** Political affairs, Peace and Security, Democratic Governance and Human Rights. Here, the AU underlined all it is doing in Darfur, Somalia, Mauritania, the Great Lakes and Zimbabwe, whereas the EU spoke about its mediation of African crises and peacekeeping operations. The EU explained its concept of development in ‘fragile’ states.

**Cluster three:** Infrastructures, Energy, the Environment and Climate Change. The continent’s ‘Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa’ (PIDA) aiming to connect the continent in energy, transport, water and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to expand trade, economies and create jobs was in focus, also the EU’s respective roadmaps EU-Africa Infrastructure Partnership and EU-Africa Energy Partnership – and their future funding. There was dialogue on promoting security and safety, environmental standards and satellite navigation in African civil aviation and scope for further EU financing to arrest deforestation.

**Cluster four:** Social Affairs, Gender Employment, Migration and Health. The EU’s agenda for meeting Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for health was assessed by the partners, with the emphasis on universal basic health care for the continent. EU Development Commissioner, Louis Michel, spoke about plans afoot in the EU to assist the creation of an African Remittances Institute, also Migration Information and Management Centres (see ‘Interaction’ article on the opening of the first such centre in Mali). Both partners were concerned about the illegal trafficking of human beings and more protection of women and girls from gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict areas, recommending prompt implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women, peace and security measures.

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**Lisbon’s Joint Africa-EU Strategy**
- Peace and security
- Governance and Human Rights
- Trade
- Millennium Development Goals
- Energy
- Climate change
- Migration, Mobility and Employment
- Science, Information Technology and space

For more information:
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- www.eu2007.pt
- www.ec.europa.eu/development
**Round up**

**Cluster five: Trade Regional Integration, Economic Affairs.** The state of play of the EPAs (see article on the 6th ACP Summit); the EU’s proposed €1bn ‘facility’ to boost farming in developing nations and the recent EU paper on regional integration in Africa (see Courier issue no.7) were all under scrutiny.

**Cluster six: Science and Technology, Space, Information Society and Education.**

The spotlight was on AU/EU projects ready for funding in the area – termed ‘lighthouse projects’. In education, AU initiatives for an Education Observatory and an ‘International Centre for Education and Africa’s Women and Girls’ were explained, whereas EU action on meeting the MDGs in the sector was examined.

An AU-EU Task Force will move ahead with working on some of the areas until the next C-2-C meeting which is likely to take place in 2009, indicate EU officials. Funding for projects on the drawing board is expected to be raised not only from the European Development Fund (EDF) but also EU Member States, Development Banks such as the African Development Bank (ADB) and European Investment Bank (EIB), Private Foundations, Local Authorities, Civil Society Organisations, International Organisations and the private sector. The European Commission (EC) manages a special programme to strengthen the AU’s institutions (€355M for 2000-07). D.P. ■

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**Keywords**

Mali; CIGEM; Migration; Diaspora; Lisbon Strategy.

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**Mali’s ONE-STOP-SHOP for migration**

The doors opened 6 October on the Centre for Migration Information and Management in Mali (‘Centre d’Information et de Gestion des Migrations’ – CIGEM) - part of the EU’s strategy to manage migration as a force for development. The project could be rolled out in other West African nations.

Set up with €10M from the 9th European Development Fund (2003-2008) and with a staff of 30, this trailblazing centre will assist with legal issues, job seeking and training of migrants seeking to return to Mali, in co-operation with the country’s ‘Agence Nationale pour l’Emploi des Jeunes’ (National Employment Promotion Agency for Young People), the ‘Agence Nationale pour la Promotion de l’Emploi (National Employment Promotion Agency) and the ‘Fonds d’Appui à la Formation Professionelle et à l’Apprentissage’ (Professional Training and Apprenticeship Support Fund). It is eventually expected to become autonomous, without EU financial support.

Under the same roof, collated data and information on migration will assist the Malian government in drawing up labour agreements with third nations which, in turn, could lead to job opportunities for Malians in other countries, including Europe. Another of the Centre’s roles is to look at how to make the sending of the remittances of Mali’s Diaspora back home less costly. Of the country’s population of 12 million, 4 million are migrants; 3.5 million in West Africa and 200,000 in Europe, according to European Commission statistics. Links with Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other civil society groups working on migration are expected to be forged by the centre, also with other projects like CODEV-Mali, a joint Franco-Malian project which helps Malians wishing to return to their country of origin.

CIGEM comes on the heels of the adoption in 2005 by EU Member States of the paper, ‘Migration and Development: concrete guidelines’ which casts migration and its contribution to development in a positive light. Policy-thinking on how to stop demonising migration went further at a subsequent Euro-Africa ‘Migration and Development’ ministerial conference and in 2007, migration was established as one of the eight ‘partnerships’ of a new European–Africa Strategy launched at the EU-Africa Lisbon Summit in December 2007 (see previous article in ‘Round-Up’). D. P. ■

For more information: www.cigem.org

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* See box page 8.
Togo: back in the fold

A major international donor conference for Togo held in Brussels 18-19 September 2008, signalled confidence in the government of Prime Minister Gilbert Houngbo. Jointly organised by the Togolese Government, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the European Commission, Houngbo took centre stage to explain Togo’s reform process to the international community after being ‘orphaned’ for more than a decade due to political crisis in the country.

Between 1991 and 2005, the country’s average annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth was just 1.1 per cent, out of step with average population growth of 2.4 per cent. Poverty affects two out of three Togolese and in rural areas, three out of four, Houngbo told journalists. Togo’s Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2008-2010, was under scrutiny at the conference. Houngbo said that his country still had to overcome its big debt and listed some of the priorities as setting up basic services, reforming the justice system and police, improving the health service and encouraging private investment.

A political agreement in August 2006 between all actors led to free and fair elections on 14 October 2007. The EU normalised relations with Togo in November 2006 following a 13-year break in regular aid programming. The EU’s Development Commissioner, Louis Michel, said the country had met 22 reform criteria agreed with the EU. The EU’s €323M pledge for the country under its six-year (2008-2013) 10th European Development Fund (EDF) includes the maximum allowable amount of optional funding for good governance initiatives. A big slice of 10th EDF funds for Togo will at the country’s request, consist of budget aid, said Michel, who is a strong advocate of this type of aid for all ACP states. Michel said that aid going directly to respective ACP national budgets was, “a sign of confidence” in a government, adding, “we must stop telling our partners what to do”.

At the start of his tenure as EU Development Commissioner in 2004, 24 per cent of EDF aid consisted of general and sectoral budget aid in ACP states, Michel told a press conference during the event, whereas by the time his current tenure steering EU development policy ends in the coming year, nearly half of the EDF aid to ACP states is expected to consist of this type of aid. Michel said he would shortly launch an EU Commission publication on the benefits of budget support. D.P. ■
The new virtues of local governance

By Marie-Martine Buckens and Debra Percival

The return to focussing on the local level has become part of the main development strategies drawn up by the European Union and other international institutions such as the World Bank. The European Commission in particular believes that local authorities must become privileged players in cooperation. Does that spell the end of centralised state-to-state cooperation? Not at all; the central governments of developing countries should continue to receive the support of aid-provider countries, in particular funds contributed by the European Development Fund as budgetary support which are relatively significant sums.

Some of these funds are then redistributed to local government. The challenge is twofold – ensuring transparency as well as good governance at central and local level. In addition, there is often the problem of financial and human resources capacity for local authorities, especially if some powers have been decentralised, a trend which is prevalent on all continents. In Africa, Mali was one of the first countries to lead the way. Local governance also means an increase in the powers of authorities such as the regions and municipalities, issues that are tackled in the Commission communication on regional integration (http://ec.europa.eu/development/index_en.cfm).

This is true in the South as much as in the north. In the North, and in Europe in particular, the regions - like Catalonia in Spain or groups of regions like the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) – are at the forefront of a new type of cooperation with countries of the South. One of the central themes of the European Development Days 2008 in Strasbourg is local governance (http://eudevdays.eu/Public/Homepage.php).
There is the case of Catalonia, this region often cited as an example that, in the three years to 2007 alone, doubled its development cooperation budget to €60M, the aim being to allocate 0.7 per cent of its budget to development cooperation by 2012. There are also other more modest examples, but with an undoubted impact, such as the French town of Mulhouse that is advising the town of Majunga in Madagascar on rebuilding its market, or the small region (population 13,000) of Santa Croce Sull’Arno in Italy that put into place a system for recording births in five municipalities in Burkina Faso. Until recently such cooperation was limited to twinning schemes. Today, decentralised cooperation has become a new and important dimension of development cooperation.

“The growing participation of the local authorities, the volume of financial resources mobilised, and the diversity and growing number of actors involved in the process are such that it is necessary to define and quantify this development and lay the bases for a coordinated approach”, explains David Johnson, who is responsible for governance and migration issues at the European Commission’s Development Directorate-General. That is now a reality. At the beginning of October, the European Commission adopted a communication addressed to all the European institutions in which it proposes to put into place a structure within which local authorities can function as development actors.

Increasing influence of the Committee of the Regions

At European level, the Commission proposes putting into place “structured dialogue” under the auspices of the Committee of the Regions that would include local authority networks. The European executive proposes to draw up operating guidelines to enable these entities to pursue actions that are complementary to those of the Commission.

The EU partner countries in the South are currently engaged in a growing process of decentralisation. It is a difficult process but one which the Commission believes could be supported by the experience of local authorities in the North. David Johnson stresses that this is particularly true in the fields of governance and local democracy, but also in regional planning that includes local development within a broader context and makes it possible to stimulate synergies between the public and private sectors.

A platform for the ACP countries

Finally, to avoid fragmentation, duplication and a lack of information, the Commission is proposing to set up a platform for the exchange of information. Launched in November 2008 this will include, in addition to the powerful CEMR (Council of European Municipalities and Regions), and the non-state actors represented by Concord, the African, Caribbean, Pacific Local Government Platform (ACPLGP), set up on a modest scale in 2001 but which should be able to extend its actions through Commission financing. Its role? “To inform and network local authorities in the ACP countries, represent them in Brussels and Europe, and help them to strengthen their capacity thanks to technical support”, explains its head Lala Elisa Rafamatanantsao. “It is no small task”, she continues, “as the capacities of the ACP local authorities remain very weak.”

Increasing influence of the Committee of the Regions

In the communes of the Grand Sud, Madagascar 2008. © Marie-Martine Buckens

Keywords

Committee of the Regions; ACPLGP; Lala Elisa Rafamatanantsao; local authorities; David Johnson; Marie-Martine Buckens.
The **MISSING** link

The regions of Europe say the regional and local approach must be properly reflected in the forthcoming new development policies

Xavier Gizard, Secretary General of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR), believes: “The mobilisation of the networks of local and regional authorities is extremely important, otherwise much of the efficiency of development aid will be lost.” Xavier Gizard has been involved for many years in cooperation projects with the regions of the South, such as the cooperation protocols (17 in total) between the regions of the North and South launched at the beginning of the new millennium. He explained: “An excellent example is the cooperation between Guadeloupe and the Aquitaine/Brittany region which we want to reproduce in Haiti.” In June 2006, the presidents of the regions of the five continents met in the Azores together with José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, representatives of the OECD and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to look at ways of preventing the adverse effects of delocalisation. This was the start of the movement. The First International Convention for a Regional and Local Approach to Development was adopted in Marseille in March 2007. Xavier Gizard said: “The Marseille declaration was signed by 11 networks representing the voice of the regions at a global level.” Four networks signed later. The Forum of Global Associations of Regions (FOGAR) was established soon afterwards based on the structures of the CPMR. Xavier Gizard revealed: “The idea is for it to become autonomous in 2010.” Finally, the CPMR and UNDP met Soulaïma Cissé, President of the Commission of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) in Lisbon in 2007 with the aim of establishing a regional cooperation structure within the framework of development policy in cooperation with FOGAR.

There is no lack of initiatives, not least from the Secretary General of the CPMR. Supporting development cooperation also means cooperation on combating climate change and on food security in the event of global crises, two areas where Xavier Gizard is looking to mobilise the regions. He said: “With regard to food supply, the regions are particularly well placed as they also have rural areas.” The Secretary General believes the European Commission has until now overlooked the regional dimension, referring to programmes like URB-AL where the aim is to foster exchange of experience between local authorities in Europe and Latin America, but which are not programmes open to the regions.

> **A much coveted regional policy**

In response to the consultation launched by the European Commission on local governance, the CPMR stressed the importance of the local and regional dimension in development aid policy. The regions, active intermediary authorities, are not referred to in the general proposals presented by the Commission. Whether representing a province, region or administrative area, the regional institution, which by its very nature has a broader and more complete overview of all local visions, is missing. Xavier Gizard said: “You can’t imagine how our European regional policy, which has an enormous budget exceeding that of the Common Agricultural Policy, is perceived by people outside of the European Union. It’s a dream for everyone outside of Europe.” He was guarded about the process of decentralisation initiated by a number of developing countries. He said: “Decentralisation – which is necessary provided the players concerned have sufficient fiscal resources – is only adequate if coupled with the capacity to promote development strategy.”

**M.M.B.**

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**Keywords**

CPMR; regions, CPMR, WAEMU, regional policy, Marie-Martine Buckens.
BOLSTERING local government in KENYA with EU funds

The Rural Poverty Reduction and Local Government Support Programme (RPRLGSP), jointly funded by the European Development Fund (EDF) and Kenya’s government, is a multi-layered project shaped to strengthen the role of local government and its ability to provide services. At the same time, its funding for anti-poverty projects in rural communities is putting people in direct contact with government at the local level.

With €16.4M from the 9th EDF, the programme which got off the ground in 2006 and runs to the end of 2009, fits in with the Kenyan government’s own Local Government Reform Programme (KLGRP), and with its ‘Vision 2030’ for making Kenya, “a middle income country providing a high quality of life for all its citizens by the year 2030”.

The programme is funding technical assistance to the KLGRP; advising on debt repayments, boosting revenue, and how to deliver services at a local level. Kenya has 175 Local Authorities (LA), many neglected over 20 years and with little revenue. The technical expertise given is also helping with the efficient and transparent running of the transfer of government funds to local authorities through the Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF).

Another prong of the programme whose management unit (PMU) is headed by Wim Eising* of the German consultancy firm, GOPA, is supported through 11 locally-based technical advisers to selected rural authorities in the running of Country Councils, rural Town Councils and Municipal Councils.

Poverty Reduction Fund

A centrepiece is a €5.8M (Ksh 530M) Poverty Reduction Fund. This is currently backing 65 selected projects, in various sectors, for 63 local government entities who are posting good financial management. An initial group of 38 projects to a value of Ksh 518M**, with Ksh 281M co-funded by the EDF, started up in September 2006. It was followed by a second wave of 27 projects in October 2007 (Ksh 311M of which Khs 249M EU co-funding). Across the board, projects cover the upgrading water supply and sanitation, roads construction, school rehabilitation, agriculture, and the building of health centres and markets (see boxes).

“One of the aims of the RPRLGSP is the dissemination of lessons learned from our interaction with local authorities in implementing their programme interventions,” says RPRLGSP’s coordinator, John K Waithaka. Such information will be vital to the government in moving ahead with its decentralisation policy. Eric Van der Linden, Head of the European Commission’s Delegation to Kenya based in Nairobi said in the RPRLGSP’s quarterly newsletter for Autumn 2008: “Through this programme, the EU contributes to disseminating good practices in technical and financial management of projects as well as enhancing accountability and transparency in Local Authorities.” D.P.

* See www.acp-eucourier.info for an interview with Wim Eising
** 1 euro = 99.51 Kenyan Shillings (on 27 October 2008)
For more informations: www.RPRLGSP.go.ke

Suba County Council – market roads

Officially launched on 7 August 2008, the rehabilitation of the road network in Sindo market is partly-funded by the EU. Said Community representative Isaiah Odwiour: “We are happy to pay rent and taxes to the Council for the market since we have good roads and the environment is clean thanks to the partnership between the EU and County Council of Suba.”

Awendo Town Council – schoolrooms

A Ksh 4.6M grant under the programme has enabled the construction of 10 classrooms in five schools. The area Education Officer noted that since the introduction of free primary education, enrolment was up but schools lack facilities. The classrooms will go a long way to help children with big needs, including those orphaned by the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Keywords

RPRLGSP; Kenya; local government; transparency; ‘Vision 2030’.
**If the state does not change, the decentralisation reforms will lose much of their virtue**

**Interview by Marie-Martine Buckens**

Seen as the ‘father’ of decentralisation in Africa, the Malian Ousmane Sy has been concerned with this issue for 20 years, since the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) recruited him as expert responsible for local and regional planning back in 1987. In 1993, the Malian Government charged him with implementing its decentralisation reforms. In 2000, he was appointed Minister for Territorial Administration and Local Authorities. His work was honoured in 2004 when he was awarded the King Baudouin International Development Prize. Since then he has been advising states in West and Central African, as well as Haiti, in the framework of his Centre for Political and Institutional Expertise in Africa (CEPIA), which he founded in 2002. The Courier spoke with him.

In the general context of the crisis in public management in Africa, proximity, thus the local level, is a factor in lending legitimacy to governance as it places in a direct relationship the social need, as experienced by the actors, and the public decision or service that responds to this need. Governance is only good if it is able to take into account the diversity of interests of these groups of actors and to provide answers that are in line with the shared values. In general, it is a break in cohesion or balance that creates crises of governance that prevent or delay development.

The decentralisation of public management, thus the taking of public decisions as close as possible to the populations, offers many advantages, namely: better knowledge of their expectations, the possibility for direct dialogue and thus a more solid partnership, greater flexibility in responding to expectations, and better control over public managers by the citizens.

In Africa, public action in general and local public action in particular are in crisis. This crisis is linked to the break in the cohesion between societies and the institutions of public management. The reasons for this break run deep and, in my opinion, date back to the colonial experience that the accession to independence of countries and the creation of post-colonial nation states have not yet managed to absorb. One of the most evident reasons is the superficial nature of the state and its institutions that are not rooted in the day-to-day life of African communities. States, their institutions and their administrations are ‘running on empty’ and survive only thanks to the ‘crutch’ of finance and other support provided by donors. The way out of the crisis must therefore involve increased anchorage in the local level. The putting into place of decentralised authorities and their administrative freedoms as acknowledged in the current decentralisation reforms is just the first stage in this long process.

However, these reforms will only produce the expected effects if they are inspired by a political vision that revolves around a genuine desire for change. Unfortunately, this is still not very often the case. The decentralisation of public management in Africa to create the conditions for legitimate local governance is today based much more on the desire to have access to financing than on a real desire for deep-rooted change to the traditional logic of public management that is inefficient because it is illegitimate. If the centralising state that remains the principal characteristic of Africa does not change, the current decentralisation reforms will lose much of their virtue.

**What must be the response?**

The strategies that will lead to genuine change in the field of managing public affairs and thus...
Local government in Africa are: the building of a consensus as the basis of management; the organisation of competences, powers and the allocation of (human and financial) public resources on the basis that local legitimacy prevails; the search for a good relationship between the various legitimacies that co-habit at local level. This question remains of fundamental importance for the stability of contemporary African societies. Finally, the rooting of institutional constructions (the Constitutions and other laws and regulations) in the aspirations, references and experience of African populations.

What are the major challenges to be faced?

I am among those who believe that there can be no single and universal model of good governance. For me the first major challenge for building local governance is linked to the management of the change process that has to be long term as it must touch not only on the way people think but also on the way people act. Reform projects are designed and implemented in the short and medium term and respect for procedures takes precedence over achieving the goals. There is therefore a need to rethink the bases and the methods for implementing development cooperation.

To this major challenge I would add other challenges that are strongly linked to it. In particular, the need to support the actors and not impose models on them and also to bear in mind their diversity.

In its cooperation policy, the EU is granting increasing importance to budgetary support for the ACP countries. Is there not the danger that this will be a threat to the construction of local bodies?

One of the challenges of decentralisation in our countries is also to improve efficiency in the use of national budgetary resources that have to be transferred to decentralised authorities in line with their competences and responsibilities as recognised by law and of which they are the managers. In Mali, one of the indicators adopted for triggering ‘budgetary support’ is the increase in the percentage of public budgetary resources spent at the local level.

Some experts fear that the concentration on local entities leads to the central state failing – or failing even more in some cases – to assume its responsibilities. Do you believe this fear to be well founded?

My personal experience of public management in my country and in Africa and the lessons I have drawn from them cause me to believe that, on the contrary, it is by having local authorities assume greater responsibility that the central state can be saved in Africa. There is a need for a leaner model. The inefficiency and the failings of the African state are linked closely to its strong centralisation and its paternalist nature that relieves all the other public players of responsibility.

In a world that is growing more global by the day, the only pertinent, lasting and visionary response to the crisis in the African central state, which is constantly coming up against the reflexes of an identity that is rooted in communities (the seat of all the solidarities that save and keep alive), is to give more responsibility to the local level.

The responses to the major challenges that Africa must meet in terms of the creation of wealth and jobs for young people must involve the ‘redistribution’ of responsibilities between the central level and the decentralised levels for implementing development.
Incomplete decentralisation process creating risks

Interview by Marie-Martine Buckens

Local authorities can play their part only if the central state, which is enjoying a flurry of cooperation, can ensure a genuine transfer of resources, according to Anne-Sophie Gindroz, head of the NGO Helvetas Mali. A participant in the European Commission-sponsored consultations on local governance, she also warns against launching public-private partnerships that are of no real benefit to the population in countries of the South.
Do you think a development policy sensitive to local authorities is the answer to the problems being reported and if you do, subject to what conditions?

The key issue of centrally concentrated financial resources to be found in some developing countries is the outcome of budgetary support being built up as part of a partnership with the central state. Against the background of decentralisation, this kind of approach weakens the position of local authorities quite significantly, particularly if the centre-to-periphery resource transfer mechanisms are malfunctioning. The financial partners are then bound to look to systems that concentrate funds at central state level, even though key responsibilities have been transferred to local authorities. This is what has happened in Mali, where the municipalities have been tasked with policy-making in the areas of education, health and hydraulics but have not been offered enough resources to underpin these policies. In spite of this state of affairs, the financial partners involved in budgetary support initiatives continue to have dealings solely with central ministries while channelling funds in a central direction. Seen through this prism, budgetary support systems for decentralised local authorities should be an avenue to explore, until the mechanisms for transferring resources to local level are operating properly.

In the case of development, you express misgivings about the benefits of public-private partnerships. Could you elaborate upon that?

The main development model now being advocated is heavily biased towards promoting the privatisation not only of government-owned companies but also of public services. The framework in which a public service is privatised is often poorly regulated in practice, thus detrimental to the interests of consumers and of the general public, as the service is run on the basis of commercial principles: as the aim is to generate profits, the public service is focussed on demand. This is why peripheral areas often have poor access to water or electricity supplies. It is there that the poorest communities are concentrated. And the fact has to be recognised that it is very often companies from the northern hemisphere that occupy these markets in countries of the South. So one conclusion to be drawn is that countries granting aid use it to further their own economic interests. Radio France Internationale announced a while ago that the French Development Agency (AFD) had made an investment in Veolia, a French multinational. This transaction was presented as a “public-private partnership model to help Veolia to tap into the AFD’s expertise and be in a better position in the midst of the privatisation drives underway in the energy sectors in countries of the South.” A reference was made to Mali and the government’s decision to cancel the deal struck with a major French company for the privatisation of the water and electricity sectors. This was cited as an example to be avoided now as a result of this type of partnership. If the aim were to share expert knowledge, was this type of financial transaction called for? But the most disturbing thing is the fact that AFD funding is already being used to pay for surveys (undertaken by private consultants from northern countries) that call for public services in countries of the South to be privatised (without this process being underpinned by moves to consolidate the local private sector) and to organise calls for tenders. If a company in which the AFD now has a stake (in this instance, Veolia) were to make a bid, it would be reasonable to think there was conflict of interest somewhere along the line.

What is your assessment of the EU’s decision to review the procedures involved in the aid granted to developing countries?

Resorted to more and more, particularly by the EU, budgetary aid is not intrinsically good or bad. It certainly could be an effective instrument to use in dealings with a legitimate beneficiary state, whose development policy is the outcome of a large-scale democratic debate and is able to manage the aid in a transparent way. However, these three conditions are rarely met... hence the vital need to provide other aid systems on top of budgetary support. Decentralised cooperation is an option well worth considering, as a potential response to the growing social inequalities, in spite of the abundant material and financial resources. It could, however, repeat the inconsistencies of international cooperation if it unfolds outside a clear institutional framework and is not underpinned by the values of a mutually beneficial partnership and respect for “people’s sovereignty”. There is also a need to operate with a wider range of people active in the development process. Some of the shortcomings could be overcome to some extent as a result of the role played by community-based organisations.

Keywords
Anne-Sophie Gindroz; Local authorities; Helvetas Mali; NGO; local governance; public-private partnership; decentralisation.
Decentralised intervention mechanisms foster partnership relationships between bodies in both North and South hemispheres who are dedicated to eradicating poverty and placing greater value on human relationships. These few words sum up the stated aims of decentralised international cooperation in Italy. Some prefer to talk of “territorial cooperation”, as it is local authorities, specifically the Regions, the Autonomous Provinces and the towns who are at the very forefront of this initiative. Although the public is still largely unaware of it, this movement has gradually become a driving force in the development aid policy (DAP) being promoted throughout the Italian peninsula.

The figures speak for themselves

Decentralised cooperation saw a boom period in the 1990s. After the Italian parliament passed Law 49 on approved cooperation in 1987, the Regions decided to adopt legislation designed to promote technical-administrative and structural initiatives in support of economic, social and cultural development in southern hemisphere countries, including the ACP countries. Twenty years later, a survey carried out by the national Italian weekly, Vita Non Profit Magazine, estimates that projects financed by decentralised cooperation in 2006 passed the threshold of €44M. Lombardy (€5.8M), Tuscany (€4M), Lazio (€3.8M), Piedmont (€3.6M) and the Veneto (€2.8M) are among the most ‘generous’ regions. But first prize for decentralised cooperation goes to the Autonomous Province of Trento: €10M, of which 45 per cent went to Africa! Trento’s fund-raising efforts are a sure sign of the vitality of decentralised cooperation, in stark contrast to the difficulties that Rome has encountered for a number of years now. According to the report on DAP published in April 2008 by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Italy’s public aid as a proportion of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell below 0.2 per cent in 2007, and risks falling below 0.1 per cent if Parliament passes the current proposed budget for 2009. “It’s the global economic crisis” is the whisper in Rome… It is too early to tell whether the Italian regions, provinces and towns will also reduce their decentralised cooperation budgets. So it is worth focusing on the challenges that face the local authorities. Decentralised cooperation is distinct from other forms of cooperation due to its micro-development approach. Rather than launching interventions that require large amounts of capital that they do not have, the local authorities favour small-scale long-term projects involving direct collaboration with local partners. The logic that underpins this type of action is referred to as bottom-up. The condition sine qua non for this type of intervention is the identification of problems on the basis of local needs and the local players who communicate them. Each region, province and town then acts according to its own model of cooperation. In Italy, these models fall into four types: the one adopted by Lombardy is “open”, and looks to involve the private sector; the Veneto, by contrast, favours the ‘systemic’ model, which limits itself to regional activities focused on a very small number of countries. As for Tuscany, it opted for the ‘non-governmental’ model, much to the delight of the NGOs. And finally Piedmont, which backs the ‘integrated’ model, where the emphasis is placed on synergies between regional authorities, non-governmental players (NGOs, universities etc) and towns. When all’s said and done, diversity is one of the main characteristics of decentralised cooperation. It is one of its strong points, but also a drawback. That is why there is an umbrella organisation like the Interregional Observatory on Development Cooperation (OICS in Italian). “But there is still a lot to be done” says Sergio Marelli, president of the association of Italian NGOs. “In Italy, there is still too much distance between decentralised cooperation and state-run aid projects. There is such a bewildering profusion of ideas and initiatives at both local and national levels that it is hard to keep track of who is doing what.”

* Giuseppe Frangi is Editor-in-chief of Vita Non Profit Magazine. For more info: www.vita.it

Keywords

Italy; decentralised cooperation; regions; provinces; towns; Tuscany; Veneto; Lombardy; Piedmont; Trento; Interregional Observatory on Development Cooperation (OICS).
Are you looking at promoting links between the Diaspora and local governance in ACP countries?

Yes. This is based on first, the ADPC belief that advancing institutional knowledge, improvement of essential service delivery facilities in such areas as health and education sectors, upgrading and strengthening governance institutions, deepening democratisation processes and facilitating knowledge transfer (brain gain) are forms of development that should get proper policy attention.

Second, the recognition that the Diaspora organisations are beginning to initiate projects that cultivate its strategic bridge-building position through the kind of linkages being developed with institutions and organisations in host and homelands, whether formal or informal. These linkages become key strategic frameworks for fostering institutional links whose impact could immensely contribute to better governance at local authority level.

Third, it has been recognised that an increasing number of Africans abroad are seeking elected office positions in their home countries, either as members of the national legislatures or...
local authority or as presidential aspirants. These are developments which require further study to ascertain their respective potential for improved local governance.

**How can the Diaspora help build the capacity of local governance in African nations?**

Through the transfer of skills, experiences and professionalism gained over time in the host countries in Europe and America. A number of Diasporas in Europe are in leadership positions in several parliaments across Europe. There is even a much bigger number in local authority politics and public services. These experiences can be shared with local government authorities in their countries of origin to improve governance and service delivery to the people.

They can also help improve on the systems of local democracy and making local government accountable and transparent, inject new ideas and create strategic linkages for local development. The Diasporas are now in a strategic position to facilitate the process of trans-national activities and networks. They can now channel information, innovative ideas, intellectual capacities, new technological skills, smart and innovative business and trade practices, peacemaking tools and techniques and democratic political habits and practices from the West to Africa. This implies the transfer of values and best practices that they have gained and experienced in the host countries. Such inputs would motivate the local communities to re-engage with the local leadership through popular participation, and consensual decision making, based on democratic frameworks through which the local communities can express themselves, and contribute to the development agenda. Examples include participatory planning and budgeting. Through their social networks, the African Diaspora can mobilise through community, hometown associations and groups for community development. The networks can play a significant role in resource mobilisation for maintaining and extending public services such as schools and hospitals. Through their networks of professionals, researchers, entrepreneurs, and investors, the African Diaspora can also share much needed information on various topical issues affecting their countries and local communities, with their governments, peers back home, and develop frameworks through which they can employ their skills and expertise back home even is on short-term basis.

**Do you have any examples of any projects in African nations of the Diaspora working with local government in an African municipality?**

The ADPC has been documenting and providing a platform for Diaspora organisations to showcase experiences of Diaspora organisations as agents for development and best practices. Examples include: the Federation of Associations Franco-African Development (FAFRAD) which is involved in international development capacity building, institutional development, local governance and capacity building and covers such countries as Benin, Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); the Sikaman foundation which is a Ghanaian organisation based in the Netherlands providing training, capacity-enhancement and know-how to community projects in Ghana and the Kenyan Diaspora Network and its work on anti-corruption, civil society strengthening, and emergency assistance.

**What does the Diaspora stand to gain from such cooperation?**

The benefits that accrue from such cooperation are direct and indirect; short but also long-term. First, the Diaspora have close links with local communities such as members, families, relatives, friends, and they play a significant role in the lives of these people through other initiatives such as remittances, social capital as well as emotional ties, which shape the current functioning of most families whose members are in the Diaspora. Therefore improved local governance is likely to benefit the Diaspora directly in terms of less dependency. Many people in the Diaspora send back money for family maintenance, sometimes as an obligation and in most cases out of necessity to sustain immediate and extended family. Such responsibility puts a lot of pressure on the Diaspora, especially in cases where a Diaspora is also a student. Therefore improved living conditions through better governance and opportunities for upward mobility at local level are likely to reduce the economic burden the Diaspora have to carry.

Secondly, the Diaspora would benefit directly in cases where they may be engaged in paid consultancy services, or professional exchange programmes but here too, such benefits must be seen from a broader perspective. For instance, where they may charge for such services, the costs would not be exorbitant, which implies that their engagement is out of personal volition to make a contribution to the betterment of the local communities. However, one indirect benefit which is very significant and has long term impact on many lives applies to the local communities, to whom service delivery and democratic governance at local level would have improved. The involvement of the Diaspora in local governance would immensely contribute to the improvement in the way critical issues that affect such communities are dealt with. These include ways to improve health care, sanitation, and environmental management, provision of essential services such as water, infrastructure, and educational facilities among others.

**What sort of donor funding could encourage such links?**

In order to encourage linkages between Diaspora and homeland local institutions, donor funding needs to be structured and channelled under a multi-donor trust fund which can provide funding for specific programme activities targeting governance in local authorities. This would have specific focus on local governance at municipal, and county council levels, since these are the main areas where large populations in Africa experience deprivation, social, economic and political exclusion.

The other important area is funding for research and development. Research collaborations between Diaspora host institutions and home country counterpart research institutions could help provide local institutions...
with the much needed knowledge in order to be able to address the modern challenges to better governance. This is an area which could build capacity and empower the home countries’ local authorities to develop effective measures, and skills that would enable them to create institutional frameworks that improve service delivery. Improved services and infrastructure would consequently enable such urban areas to attract investment and to be able to compete in the national and global economy. It is also an area in which the home countries would benefit through exchanges and transfer of needed skills and information for policy formulation, generated by innovation and creativity in the process.

The other area is to fund technical expert networks of the African Diaspora; and Policy-relevant Action Networks. For example, such funding could go to joint (Diaspora and home country) expert teams established in strategic areas of focus and priority set by the Diaspora and home governments in order to improve local governance. The influence of these sectors and networks are immense and would greatly impact upon the type of governance system that are put in place at municipal level, since they will set the bar higher enough to force the local authorities to pull up, and meet those standards.

Lastly, most important of all is to create a fund (Marshall-type plan) that would specifically target self-reliance and sustainability of any donor funded activity, especially in areas that require constant financial injection. Relying on donor funding for programme activities is not sustainable, therefore local institutions can be assisted to generate their own funds which would maintain the existing or newly established programmes. This would also contribute to the local ownership of these initiatives and processes, since modern challenges in terms of governance and institutional responsiveness to global forces do not require a dependency culture as the main factor that determines alternative responses to people’s needs, especially in the developing countries in Africa.

D.P. ■

Keywords
Diaspora; local governance; Antony Otieno Ong‘ayo; African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC); brain gain; networks; Federation of Associations Franco-African Development (FAFRAID); Debra Percival.

Pov, Diaspora. Courtesy of the author
A Media and Development Forum organised by the European Commission and the African Union was held in Ouagadougou from 11 to 13 September 2008. The key result of this meeting (opened by the President of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré, the President of the Commission of the African Union, Jean Ping and the European Commissioner for Development, Louis Michel) was the commitment made by the two organising institutions to develop a road map to aid media development.

The forum – which brought together a host of media professionals and experts from Europe and Africa – looked at four key topics: media and governance; freedom of the media, the fight against African and European stereotypes and the role of local media. Each of these themes was the subject of a round table. The meeting was organised in cooperation with the International Francophone Organization (OIF) and the Commonwealth and the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP).

President Balaise Compaoré, while underlining the important role the media has to play in development, also denounced media involvement in some situations where it served as a channel for causes far removed from the public interest and where journalists abandon their real responsibilities. He said: “These failings have to be addressed. Africa must have a sufficiently professional media in order to strengthen democracy.”

During the opening session, EU Commissioner Louis Michel pointed out: “We are not coming here with recommendations because we have all the answers. These issues apply to Europeans in the same way as to Africans, and the same challenges have to be met – financing, independence, ethics, respect for the truth, protection in the courts and protection of sources, press specialised in political analysis and other areas.” Later, the President of the Commission of the African Union, Jean Ping, emphasised the progress already made, but he also pointed out that political power too often showed mistrust of the press. He said: “Much still needs to be done to consolidate the freedom of the press and to establish an irrevocable basis for the progress of democracy in Africa.”

Based on the forum’s conclusions, the European Commission and the Commission of the African Union drew up a ‘road map’ seen as a first stage by these institutions. This will be followed by specific proposals to their respective Member States, particularly on financing and legal protection for press organisations, the promotion of a pluralist press, the training of journalists and the fight against stereotyping. In the short-term, a charter of media rights and responsibilities will be drawn up, a pan-African portal will be launched for all media and a pan-African media observatory will be established.

The conclusions of the Ouagadougou meeting will be discussed at the global conference of the Global Forum for Media Development that meets in Athens from 7 to 10 December 2008.
The EU and China share objectives for the African continent; economic growth, integration into the world economy, pursuit of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), conflict management and peacekeeping. Both have recently individually set new parameters for relations with Africa; China and Africa sealing a new strategic partnership at a Summit in Beijing in November 2006, whereas the EU signed a new Africa-EU Strategy in Lisbon, December 2007, creating ‘partnerships’ in eight areas (see article in ‘Round Up’ in this issue).

The China-EU Beijing Summit on 28 November 2007 set the ball rolling on future trilateral cooperation. A statement then “welcomed more practical cooperation by the two sides through their respective existing cooperation mechanisms with Africa”. And further: “The two sides agreed to continue their dialogue on African issues, and actively explore effective ways and channels of cooperation among China, the EU and Africa in appropriate areas”. Subjects for future trilateral cooperation are outlined in the new Commission paper published on 16 October. Peace and security are singled out, as well as infrastructure. Sustainable management of the environment and natural resources is another area with the suggested participation of China in measures like the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), Forest Law Enforcement and the Government and Trade (FLEGT) and the Kimberley process which monitors the diamond trade. Another area is agriculture and food security, with the stress on raising productivity in the sector to move ahead with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and possible joint research initiatives into food staples, all within the ‘Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme’ (CAADP), which forms the long-term agenda for Africa’s development.

How?

To get the ball rolling, different possibilities for dialogue are put on the table, for example, in cooperation with the African Union Commission (AUC). And regional agencies in Africa could become possible nerve centres for cooperation of large energy and communications projects reaching beyond national borders. Annual meetings of senior EU/China officials are mooted to coordinate dialogue and visit and exchanges of personnel recommended so officials can learn from one another. Cooperation with Africa is expected to be on the agenda of the China-EU Heads of State Summit in December 2008.

The big question now is how to maintain the momentum and get the dialogue up and running. “The Communication does a good job in listing a few areas for collaboration and confirming that we are willing to develop a partnership that benefits Africa’s development, but in essence the difficult part still lies ahead”, says Jonathan Holslag, Head of Research at the Brussels Institute of Contemporary China Studies BICCS), a leading European think tank on relations with China. “Member States [EU] have to be persuaded of the need that they will now have to come up with a more coherent vision of their interests in Africa, if they want to be taken seriously”, he adds. He says that triangular projects should be put on track sooner rather than later. “If we do not manage to realise this, the communication will be nothing more than a paper tiger.”

“The Chinese Ministry of Commerce is keen on getting a part of its projects co-funded by the EU: in particular if Chinese companies are benefiting a lot in their execution. But such projects will not become much more than a small part in China’s overall economic cooperation [with Africa]”, forecasts Holslag.
**EU and China in Africa**

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<tr>
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<th>EU-Africa</th>
<th>China-Africa</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Trade</strong> (total 2007)</td>
<td>€232bn</td>
<td>€53.6bn</td>
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<td></td>
<td>23 per cent of EU imports from Africa are manufactured goods and 11 per cent, food and agricultural products. The EU is the biggest export market for African products; approximately 85 per cent of the continent’s cotton, fruit and vegetables are sold to the EU. In 2007, the value of oil imported by the EU from Africa was €62.3bn of which €18.9bn from sub-Saharan Africa. Top oil exporters are: Libya, Algeria and Nigeria. African Least Developed Countries (LDCs) benefit from duty-free access for ‘Everything but Arms’ (2001)</td>
<td>71.8 per cent of all imports from Africa are fuels and oils. In 2007, China imported 32 per cent of its oil from Africa (€19bn of which €17bn are from sub-Saharan Africa (90 per cent). Top partners are Angola, Sudan and Congo. China has abolished tariffs on 450 types of goods from 29 African LDCs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ODA (Development Assistance)</strong></td>
<td>2006: EU (Member States and European Commission) gave 62 per cent of all ODA to Africa</td>
<td>China does not publish figures but is estimated to be US$1.5bn to the African continent per annum</td>
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<td><strong>Peacekeeping</strong></td>
<td>Under its African Peace Facility, the EU’s budget for peacekeeping operations in Africa, 2005-2007, was €300 and a further €300, 2008-2010, currently allowing for eight operations to be funded at the request of the UN, AU or African nations</td>
<td>1,300 Chinese troops currently participate in all UN peacekeeping missions in Africa</td>
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Source: Directorate General for for Development, European Commission
For more information on the communication:
http://ec.europa.eu/development/index_en.cfm

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**AID EFFECTIVENESS**

Forum disappoints some NGOs

Seen as a success by donors but as not going far enough by some Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), the ‘Accra Agenda for Action’ on aid effectiveness agreed by developed and developing countries at the 3rd Aid Effectiveness Forum, 2-4 September in Ghana, agreed targets beyond those of the Paris Declaration of 2005 to make donor aid more effective. Organised by the World Bank and Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), it also gathered multilateral institutions, private foundations and civil society.

Commitments include:
- Donors to provide 3-5 year forward information on their planned aid partner countries;
- Partner country systems to be used to deliver aid rather than donor systems;
- Donor aid given in accordance with development objectives rather than their own prescriptive conditions of how and when aid money is spent;
- An untying of aid meaning that donors will relax restrictions preventing developing countries buying goods and services from whomever and wherever they can get the best quality at the lowest price.

“The actions agreed are not guided sufficiently by concrete targets and timelines,” notes Vagn Berthelsen, the President of Alliance 2015, a network of six European NGOs. D.P. ■

Websites:

**Keywords**

Aid effectiveness; NGOs; Accra; OECD; Alliance 2015; Vagn Berthelsen; Debra Percival.
OPPORTUNITIES for SMEs in Africa’s water and energy development

Africa’s energy and water was the subject of this year’s ‘Forum Eurafirc Partners’ held in Lyon, France, 21-24 October, bringing together Small and Medium-sized African and European businesses. Policymakers and development agencies from both African and European nations also took part in the event whose sponsors included the European Commission and France’s Rhône-Alpes region.

Jean Philippe Bayon, Vice-President of the Rhône-Alpes region, reminded participants that a third of the world’s population still has no access to drinking water and a half of this figure refers to sub-Saharan Africa. 2.6 billion have no sanitation. He said that water is the first cause of premature death and of present and future conflicts. Abdoulaye Kanté, Director of France’s Agence de Développement des Entreprises en Afrique (Agency of Development for Societies in Africa, in English) told participants that African countries shared an interest in developing such as the hydroelectric potential of the Congo river to cover Central Africa’s energy needs. Broad themes discussed included African nations’ respective national strategies and policies towards water and new technologies in the sectors. The pumping of water by solar power, rural electrification and the use of ‘carbon credits’ to offset climate change were other themes of the event, not forgetting the ‘hot’ topic - the development of bio-fuels (see box on Africa’s green gold). An exhibition gave SMEs participants space to display the latest technologies. 

Keywords

SMEs; Forum Eurafirc partners; Lyon; Rhône-Alpes region; Jean Philippe Bayon; Abdoulaye Kanté.

Africa–EU Energy Partnership Priorities

In September 2008, one year after the launch of the AU-EU Energy Partnership, the European Commissioners for energy and development and the African Union Commissioner for infrastructure and energy have set, by joint agreement, the following priorities: modernising energy infrastructure and interconnections, promoting the electrification of Africa, studying Africa’s sustainable renewable energy potential, improving energy efficiency and reducing waste.

Africa’s green gold?

The Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), the Mali-Folkecenter is successfully pioneering the use of jatropha (pourghere) for rural electricity and also for transportation. It is working with Mali’s Ministry for Mines, Energy and Water to develop the technology for such renewable energies and with other partners such as the Netherlands’ SHGW Foundation, to develop jatropha plantations. Jatropha is inedible but is well-adapted to difficult arid land, or edges of land, which are unsuitable for other uses, hence unlike some other biofuels, its cultivation does raise temperatures over snatching land which should rather be used to grow food. Villages are already getting electricity from jatropha and the Folkecenter is moving ahead with technology to produce fuel-grade pourghere oil (which is clear of all particles and larger than 5 microns) on a continuous basis.

www.malifolkecenter.org

Mapping of Ancient Megalake in Northern Darfur by Boston University Scientists - Catalyst for Global Humanitarian Outreach. Courtesy of Center for Remote Sensing (Boston University)
Since 2000, four Italian banking foundations have individually supported development projects in the South, closely guarding their autonomy. Today, following a lengthy exchange of ideas, they have decided to pool their experiences to launch a common project in favour of the refugees of North Uganda and the rural populations of Senegal. Scheduled to last three years, Fondazioni4Africa will have a budget of €10.5M, plus €600,000 financed by the Foundation Umano Progresso. International foundations have also expressed their interest in an initiative that could benefit from their support.

The thinking behind this project is subsidiarity. Each organisation and institution invests on the basis of the economic resources, managerial capacities and know-how it has acquired over the years, in the belief that a project’s success requires partnerships.

Fondazioni4Africa started up in 2007 at the time of organising work sessions with NGOs already present in the field and that made available to foundations their privileged relations with local partners. Together they identified the sectors and forms of intervention before finally deciding to set aside humanitarian operations so as to intervene in territories with a certain stability conducive to a long-term project.

North Uganda is distinctive for the presence of a weak associative network and the predominance of institutional actors such as the county and subcounty. In the field, Fondazioni4Africa intervenes in the framework of a Ugandan Government strategic plan that is designed to encourage persons housed in camps for displaced persons to return to their former villages, towns or transit camps in order to promote peace and development in the districts of Gulu, Kitgum, Amuru and Pader.

Work began officially on 1 October 2008. The field of action also implies both the development of rural areas and of economic activities plus water, health, education and the management of a sustainable environment. The project adopts a multi-dimensional and integrated approach to development that the promoters believe will be better suited to meeting the socio-economic challenges of North Uganda, namely bringing peace and reconciliation to the populations, establishing a solid community and social structure, and finally reintegrating former combatants (often child soldiers) into their communities.

The principal Italian organisations involved in the project are: the African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF), Associazione Volontari per lo Sviluppo Internazionale (AVSI), Cooperazione e Sviluppo (CESVI), and the Consortium CTM – Altromercato (with the stated objective of promoting the sale of local products in Italy and Europe).

In a second initiative that started up last November in Senegal, the principal protagonists are associations of Senegalese immigrants resident in Italy. The involvement of these migrants is part of the diasporic philanthropy’s concept, a new field of intervention that the foundations are promoting. The choice of Senegal is not by chance: the Senegalese are the largest sub-Saharan African community in the regions of origin of the four Italian foundations. The project aims to improve the economic and social conditions of the populations living in a rural and semi-urban environment and this in key sectors for the development of Senegal, such as responsible tourism, microfinance, fishing, production processes, fruit processing and marketing, and dairy products.

This initiative also seeks to understand what could be the most appropriate types of aid and organisational methods for ensuring the smooth running of projects within which migrants associations become a factor for co-development alongside the NGOs. The former were involved from the initial phases of drawing up the project, showing particular interest in responsible tourism, the promotion of typical Senegalese products, the fish processing industry and, in Italy, activities for development education that include inviting Senegalese instructors to schools and colleges.

Finally, the foundations are setting great store on the possibility of understanding and strengthening the link between the provision of funds and micro-finance activities, especially in a rural environment.

**Keywords**
- Banking foundations
- Italy
- Compagnia di San Paolo
- Fondazione Cariparma
- Fondazione Cariplo
- Fondazione Monte Paschi di Siena
- Migration
- Senegal
- Rural world
- North Uganda
- Refugees
- Conflicts
A seminar on the future of the Seychelles’ constitution was organised on 7 October 2008 in Brussels by the European Parliament’s Constitutional Committee. Participants included Jo Leinen, the Chairman of the committee, Francis MacGregor, President of the Court of Appeal and the President of the Seychelles’ Judicial Committee on Constitutional Review, as well as experts including Pr. Markus Kotzur of the University of Leipzig.

Issues such as the length of the constitution were addressed. Having a short text is seen as giving greater freedom to the judges responsible for interpreting it, even though some parts may be elaborated more than others, therefore opting for “variable geometric precision” following the example of the American constitution. The relevance of incorporating the method of electing the President of the Republic into the constitution was also debated in depth. The seminar considered the benefits of not confining the system within the constitution. Other issues dealt with included the position of the jurisprudence of the United Nations Human Rights Committee and constitutional guarantees against discrimination.

In an interview with The Courier, Francis MacGregor outlined the circumstances in which the President of the Seychelles had decided to create a committee to prepare the draft of the new constitution. The current constitution, which was adopted 15 years ago by referendum, has laid the foundations for establishing democracy following a period of instability. Mr MacGregor explained that the future draft, which will be decided upon by the people, is intended to adapt to the requirements of a stable country that is politically well established and is enjoying relatively strong economic growth. A major debate has started within the island in the Indian Ocean which could result in a popular referendum. Various consultations are being carried out, in particular with countries in the region such as Mauritius.

Mr MacGregor added: “It is ultimately the people of the Seychelles who will decide. But we want to know how such changes have taken place in other countries. As head of the committee responsible for constitutional review, I opened the debate within the country. I also believe it is appropriate to benefit from the experiences of other countries. When the Seychelles’ ambassador to Brussels explained the interest of the members of the European Parliament in our procedure, I jumped at the opportunity.”

The conclusions of the Brussels symposium will be made public in the near future.

H.G. ■

Francis MacGregor Head of the Delegation of Seychelles and Hans-Gert Pottering President of the EP
© European Parliament

Keywords
Seychelles; Constitution; European Parliament’s Constitutional Committee; Jo Leinen; Francis Mc Gregor; Hegel Goutier.
Held on 2 and 3 October in Accra, the 6th Summit of Heads of States and Governments of the 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group served to confirm the concerns being expressed: the ACP States are struggling to work out a joint stance on the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) being offered by the European Commission. A meeting with the Ivorian Minister for African Integration, Amadou Koné, whose country has concluded an EPA with the EU, and comments by Glenys Kinnock, Co-President of the ACP-EU Joint Assembly.

Keywords
Amadou Koné, Côte d’Ivoire, EPA, Glenys Kinnock, Ghana, Nigeria, Marie-Martine Buckens.

EPAs “in the midst of a maelstrom”

Côte d’Ivoire on the defensive

Amadou Koné sought to present a persuasive argument: “my country, along with Ghana and Nigeria, provides the dynamism in the region in a bid to raise its level.” The Ivorian Minister for African Integration denied acting alone by signing an interim EPA. Almost alone, that is, because Ghana also followed suit. He explained that “Côte d’Ivoire accounts for 70 per cent of all West African exports to Europe – not including oil – or a volume of goods whose value is put at €700M. Bearing this in mind, as well as its status in the region and its commitment towards its people, was it not right to conclude an agreement?” Exporting a volume of goods put at €240M, Ghana is the second largest exporter, when petroleum products are not factored in, followed by Nigeria (still excluding petroleum products) with €100M. Amadou Koné also denies the pact is not in the interests of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which comprises all the West African countries due to negotiate a ‘regional’ EPA with the EU. “What we have actually done is to offer our region a breathing space thanks to a clause in the interim agreement allowing the ECOWAS to pursue the negotiations with equanimity.”

“The EU should show flexibility”

“Contradictory to the numerous commitments to trade justice made by the EU.” This is how the MEP Glenys Kinnock described the economic partnership agreements (EPAs). She was speaking during the opening of the Accra Summit. She added that: “From the outset the European Commission approached EPAs as if they were conventional free trade area agreements focusing on market opening rather than tools for development.” She stressed that: “Several years later there is still the relentless repetition of the mantra of reciprocity - as if that were a word which automatically denoted fairness. It only denotes fairness when the reciprocity is between equals. In fact in other circumstances it can mean the opposite of justice – the contradiction of equity... I make no semantic point when I say that that is the case now.” Glenys Kinnock suggested that even in the midst of the global “financial maelstrom”, civilised facilitating treatment of the poor by the super-rich poses no additional threat to them. Consequently, the MEP urged differential treatment on a case-by-case basis.

First for CARIFORUM

It’s sealed. After a Summer of uncertainty when fears were raised in the region and by civil society on the effects of an EPA agreement, 13 countries of the CARIFORUM grouping signed the new European Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union (EU) in Barbados on 15 October. Guyana added its signature on 20 October in Brussels.

Two additional clauses; to review the EPA every five years and allow for adjustments in the event of any adverse impacts, cleared the way for Guyana’s approval. Haiti has asked for more time to consider the EPA’s content given that its new government has been battling the effects of four consecutive hurricanes.
Malick Sidibé was in his ‘studio’ when I caught up with him, relaxed, surrounded by friends. Only one thing, his studio had moved and he was welcoming his ‘models’ at the European Parliament. And not just any models at that, but the Euro-movers and shakers... European Parliaments (MEPS), lobbyists and an assortment of other visitors. The reason for all this? The European Parliament was organising its first Africa Week from 8 to 12 September and a studio had been made available for this guest of honour. A studio where he could frame his models and project their images onto a giant screen in real time. Everyone wanted to pose for this genius of a photographer, now aged 75, and revel in the company of this jovial character who exudes laughter, warmth and humour.

Sidibé has more than 40 years of professional experience behind him and more than 15 years of international recognition. The first major milestone came in 1995 with an exhibition of his work at the Cartier Foundation of Contemporary Art in Paris. Then in 2007 came the Venice Biennale and the exhibition, ‘Think with the Senses Feel with the Mind’, where he was awarded the Golden Lion for his life’s work. This was followed, in May 2008, by the Lifetime Achievement Infinity Award from the International Center of Photography (ICP). Some years earlier, in 2003, he also received the much coveted Hasselblad Award. More than that, this Malian photographer has had his work exhibited at some of the world’s most prestigious venues, such as the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, the Guggenheim in Bilbao and the Kunsthalle in Vienna. A grand total of 66 exhibitions between 1996 and 2008.

Malick Sidibé spoke about his personal journey, his vision for Africa, of art and above all of mankind, in the course of...
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Please fill in the Survey online (www.acp-eucourier.info) or send your completed form to our address:

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Fax: + 39 051 6790117
For any informations, you can also contact us to: progetti@laimomo.it

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   - The library of an educational institution
   - A friend
   - A public body
   - A private company
   - An association
   - Other (specify)

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    - Poor
WEB
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READER’S PROFILE

Country of residence
- [ ] ACP Africa
- [ ] ACP Caribbean
- [ ] ACP Pacific
- [ ] European Union
- [ ] Others

Country

Sector of activity
- [ ] National Institution
- [ ] International Institution
- [ ] European Union Institution
- [ ] Non State actor, NGO
- [ ] Embassy
- [ ] European Union Delegation
- [ ] Research Centre
- [ ] Local Authority
- [ ] Finance and banking
- [ ] Culture
- [ ] Libraries
- [ ] Media
- [ ] Education
- [ ] Other
Level of education
☐ Primary education
☐ Secondary education
☐ Technical secondary education
☐ University or equivalent

Gender
☐ Female
☐ Male

Age
☐ 15 to 30
☐ 30 to 60
☐ Over 60

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a long day that started early and ended late. He was overjoyed with his reception at the European Parliament seeing it as a mark of recognition from the whole of Europe for the value of Africa. “It fills me with great emotion and joy,” he enthused. “There is a proverb in my country that says when someone is overjoyed you must not ask him to light the fire because he has so much saliva in his mouth that he will put it out. So I do not have so much to say to you, except to say that after the Golden Lion in Venice that paved the way to worldwide recognition and the trophy I received in the United States, the European Parliament is the crowning glory.”

Venice was just last year. Do you not believe that this recognition of your work has come rather late, even if you appear to be a young 75-year-old?

Everything you do, in your life, in your old age, you must prepare for when you are young and when you have strength, vigour and a clear conscience. It is with this spirit of youth that you can keep alive until the age of 80 that you must prepare for your old age. That is the advice I give to young people. You have to sow and after you will harvest.

For Sidibé, life is pure happiness. His face is forever alive and cheerful and he tells of how he came to photography as if it were a fairytale.

I didn’t do anything special for that. It’s life. I’ve never studied photography. I came to it late in life. I was a designer at first, trained as a jeweller at the Sudanese School of Crafts. It is design that gave me my opportunity, because for an African in 1952, being helped by the governor general who chooses you to go to the African did not want to look at, is now being awarded due recognition. We were lucky; we had nothing to do with art as such we simply just made it. Now today the experts have evaluated and attached value to this art that is earning money. It is just that we have seen that the African is in the process of moving up to varied forms of art and that he is going to reach a high level when it is primitive art that is being seen as of value. We must not return to what has been done but continue moving forwards.

Apart from photography, how do you judge the dynamism of art in Mali and in Africa. Is it a good time now?

It is a good time for us because this art that people wanted to reject, this art that the African did not want to look at, is now being awarded due recognition. We were lucky; we had nothing to do with art as such we simply just made it. Now today the experts have evaluated and attached value to this art that is earning money. It is just that we have seen that the African is in the process of moving up to varied forms of art and that he is going to reach a high level when it is primitive art that is being seen as of value. We must not return to what has been done but continue moving forwards.

I have a fear today, since Europe entered Mali through the image and the notion of contemporary art. With money, you can be led astray and away from the path of your life. I say to young people not to try and pursue money. Do your work as a painter or a photographer. Be yourself, act on what you think. That is what you must do, not follow people who want you to do things a certain way or follow certain ideas that do not suit you.

So, you were a kind of permanent reporter of life in your country and today your work is regarded as a historical archive on Malian youth in this period.

I am pleased to have worked in this way and for my work to have achieved this. It also contributed to correcting the image others had of our way of life as outsiders to word trends. You have seen photos of young people dancing the twist in 1972. I was pleased to show that what people said about the Malians, about Africa, was not true. But of course there are the unfortunate everywhere.

I wanted to photograph the Malians where they lived: in the streets, in the shops, the jewellers. I am pleased that as the world has changed my work has come to be regarded as having archive value. That young people seem pleased to see through my photos that not all of Africa was behind the times. We may be behind the times materially but psychologically we were already very much up with the times 30 years ago.

I was already busy with images. When you are involved with photography, you are engaged in drawing on something that is to do with events, with the media. People came to me to be photographed. At that period, in the years 1958 to 1960, it was young people above all who had changed. And it was not politics that brought people together, it was dancing to European or Cuban music. And I took pictures to fix these moments of joy experienced by these young people. I was in demand all the time. Young designers dressed the girls and they dressed the boys. You had to be in the swing of things to dance the tango, the cha-cha-cha.

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I have a fear today, since Europe entered Mali through the image and the notion of contemporary art. With money, you can be led astray and away from the path of your life. I say to young people not to try and pursue money. Do your work as a painter or a photographer. Be yourself, act on what you think. That is what you must do, not follow people who want you to do things a certain way or follow certain ideas that do not suit you.

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How can the brain drain from developing countries to industrialised countries be halted? By involving this expertise in field projects, but what’s still needed is money. This is what the new ACP Science and Technology (S&T) Programme is providing.

The Artemisia plant, whose leaves are used to produce Artemisinin, a powerful antimalarial drug, is among the best treatments for malaria. Increasingly grown in China, India, Vietnam and East Africa, it helps boost farmers’ incomes. But there are still many issues to resolve. The World Health Organisation is taking a long time to approve drugs derived from medicinal plants as it is concerned about their possible toxicity and the risk of pathogen resistance development. It is also a question of guaranteeing their sustainable cultivation and ensuring that forest communities continue to profit from these crops. Raising these barriers entails the participation and networking of stakeholders from various backgrounds: local authorities, research institutes and NGOs.

There are many other projects involving researchers and technicians working alongside businesses and civil society: reducing pollution and traffic congestion in major urban centres in developing countries; developing, according to local needs, renewable energies, such as solar and wind energy; and ensuring ‘sustainable’ commercial agreements, etc. All that is needed is funding. This is where the ACP programme comes in. With a three-year budget of €35.35M, its aim is to finance (by up to 85 per cent) projects with an interdisciplinary approach and to enable ACP countries to establish and introduce S&T policies that will help ensure sustainable development and reduce poverty, by encouraging economic growth and progressive integration into the world economy. The programme is aimed at institutions (political and administrative) and research centres, private companies and civil society.

M.M.B.

**Keywords**

ACP Science and Technology (S&T); Marie-Martine Buckens.

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Food security and Internet expansion are featured among the six priority projects identified by the African Union (AU) and European Union (EU) as part of their new strategic partnership for science, information and communication technologies (ICTs) and space.

Janez Potocnik, European Commissioner responsible for research and development, and his African opposite number, Mr Jean-Pierre Onvëhou Ezin, met on 1 October, in the presence of other European Commissioners, most notably Development Commissioner Louis Michel. The outcome was the adoption of a joint statement serving as a framework for implementing the AU-EU partnership for science (the ‘8th partnership’, agreed at the AU-EU Summit in December 2007 in Lisbon) and presenting 19 flagship projects. They also agreed that six of these projects should be a priority and would receive immediate attention.

The European Commission stressed that this joint statement is in line with the spirit of partnership inherent in the common Europe-
Africa strategy that involves working ‘with’ Africa and not only ‘for’ Africa. The 19 pilot projects were selected and developed by the African Union Commission to meet certain African needs. They must help the continent to develop the science and technology that will enable it to meet the goals of the other partnerships concluded between the two parties, namely to eradicate poverty, combat disease, reduce the digital divide, stem the deterioration of the environment and improve economic competitiveness.

> Pilot project in the Nile Basin

The six priority projects include two projects that are designed to improve the dissemination and use of the Internet in Africa (the ‘African Internet Exchange System’) and to extend the reach of the high-speed network for research and education, GEANT, to sub-Saharan Africa (‘Africa Connect’).

Two other projects seek to help the African Union to develop its own scientific resources. The ‘African Research Grants’ project will help the African Union Commission to put into place an African framework programme for research. In the framework of the project on water and food safety in Africa, the Nile Basin will serve as a pilot case for research and demonstration activities designed to combat problems of food supplies and encourage efficient water and land management.

In the field of space, the GMES-Africa project (GMES is Global Monitoring for Environment and Security) aims to strengthen the use of remote sensing by Africa and its contributions in this field, in particular by implementing operating systems. A second project should make it possible to improve the African Union’s capacities in the geospatial field. The transfer of technologies to the African Union will be made possible in particular through the duplication of the Africa Observatory for Sustainable Development at the European Joint Research Centre that provides scientific information on natural resources, food safety, crisis management and renewable energies (see also The Courier no. 6, page 33). The 13 remaining projects include, in particular, an African leadership initiative in the field of ICTs and research and development for the expansion of African SMEs and an AU initiative on climate change.

The joint statement calls on the 27 EU Member States, the 53 African Union Member States, the private sector and civil society to coordinate their commitment to the 19 projects, and in particular to define the suitable financing instruments, the source of financing possibly being community, national, regional or private. For its part, the European Commission pledged that Africa would be encouraged to participate to a greater extent in the EU’s Seventh Framework Programme for Research, especially in the fields of health, the environment and climate, energy, agriculture and food, the information and communication technologies and space applications.

M.M.B.

Keywords
FLEGT; voluntary partnership agreement; tropical timber; illegal trading.

Ghana undertakes to CONTROL TIMBER EXPORTS to EU

At the beginning of September, Ghana signed a cooperation agreement with the European Union to combat illegal trading in timber felled in its forests.

The first of its kind, this agreement commits Ghana to put into place a production tracking system by 2010 while Europe – the leading importer of African tropical timber – must step up its border controls. The result of three years of negotiations, this “voluntary partnership agreement” (VPA) is the key element of the FLEGT Action Plan to “improve the governance and application of laws concerning logging and trading in timber products” adopted by the EU Council of Ministers in 2005. By the terms of this VPA, no export of Ghanaian timber to the EU will be allowed unless accompanied by a licence confirming its legality. For its part, the EU is offering Ghana technical and institutional assistance.

Other countries that export tropical timber have shown an interest in the FLEGT process. Assisted by a number of Member States (Germany, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France), the European Commission is engaged in informal discussions with producing countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville and, most recently, the Democratic Republic of Congo. Formal negotiations with Cameroon commenced in September 2007.

M.M.B.

Keywords
R&D; EU-AU partnership; priority projects; Internet; GEANT.
Surinam is a little-known country. The last time it hit the newspaper headlines was in the early 1980s with the ‘coup d’etat’ that followed independence. As with Botswana or other countries of the South, the lack of attention is a sign that things are not going too badly. It is also an encouraging sign for the genuinely curious traveller who does not wait for the green light from the tour operators before exploring new horizons.
Surinam is one of those countries made up of a rainbow of ethnic groups and cultures living together, if not in perfect harmony, then at least in a spirit of tolerance, courtesy and friendly relations. The close proximity of the Grand Mosque and the Grand Synagogue in the capital Paramaribo is just one example of this. What is more, not a single guard is to be seen protecting either building, a notion regarded as unnecessary and seemingly unthinkable. This cultural syncretism is deeply ingrained in many areas of Surinam’s society. While Dutch is the official language, the genuine lingua franca is Sranantongo, a language of the ‘Black Maroons’ that is also rich in African influences. In addition, English is widely spoken as Surinam was previously colonised by the British Empire that exchanged it with the Dutch for the city of ‘New Amsterdam’, later renamed New York. There are also eight important Amerindian languages, Saramani (the local Hindi), Javanese, Chinese, Portuguese, Lebanese and others.

Surinam can pride itself on having been one of the first, if not the first, South American country to have included Amerindian ministers in its government, immediately after independence. The current government has four Amerindian ministers. The country is generally regarded as providing a good model, with a well-established democracy, growing economy, social peace and ecological awareness. The ancient city centre of Paramaribo is a UNESCO World Heritage Site with its colonial houses and wooden buildings, one of which is the cathedral, the most imposing example of this architectural style to be found in South America. In addition to this notable homage to man, there is also a homage to nature in the form of the Central Surinam Nature Reserve located in the Sipaliwini region. Amazonian vegetation covers almost the entire country and the focus is very much on green tourism. The country has made a brave choice for eco-tourism and it is one that is certainly destined to bring rewards in the long term. This is not its sole resource, however, and Surinam also has reserves of bauxite, gold and oil. Last but not least is the ‘joie de vivre’ of its inhabitants and Parimaribo is very much the centre of nightlife for the three ‘Guyanas’.

History of a fountain of life for all peoples

Covering 163,000 square kilometres, Surinam is one of the smallest countries in South America. Neighbouring Amapa, Brazil’s southernmost state, it nestles between Guyana on its Western border and French Guiana to the east. Surinam is a basin with four major rivers flowing up from the South to their river mouths in the North and many others flowing in every direction towards neighbouring countries. Before colonisation, the country was in fact known as Amazon. As for Surinam, that is the official name approved by the United Nations, also in foreign languages. The inhabitants are Surinamrs, while the adjective is Surinamse. In the karayib language, Surin means ‘all nations’, while ‘ame’ is the contraction of Amazon that means ‘fountain of life’. A literal translation of Surinam would therefore read: “land of the fountain of life of all peoples”. The Amerindian populations who lived in the Guyanas were known as the ‘Surinen’. In Surinam, these people today represent almost 500,000 inhabitants, 85 per cent of whom are concentrated in the coastal strip and almost half of them in the capital Paramaribo. In addition, there is a Diaspora of 200,000 living in the Netherlands. These are no longer purely Amerindians and many other Surinamrs have since joined them. One of the close colleagues of Christopher Columbus, Alonso de
Ojeda, travelled to the coast of present-day Surinam in 1499, shortly after the explorers arrived in the Caribbean in 1492. At the time the country was inhabited principally by Caribs and Arawaks. The Arawaks made up the majority of the population of the large islands in the Northern Caribbean and were the first to settle in Suriname, in around 500 A.D., followed 50 years later by the Arawaks. However, traces of life in Suriname go back almost 10,000 years.

In 1593 the Spanish, by way of Domingo de Vera, took official possession of Surinam. The Dutch arrived at the beginning of the 17th century. These were then followed by the English who arrived in neighbouring Barbados in 1662, led by Lord Willoughby of Parham. In 1667 the Dutch, led by Abraham Crijnssen, conquered the country. At the beginning of the XVIII century Paramaribo was already a flourishing centre.

Surinam quickly became a prosperous colony with more than 400 plantations developed in the 18th century. As elsewhere, these exploited African slave labour. The slave population of Surinam proved to be notably rebellious, however, and fled the plantations in their droves. These ‘Bush Negroes’ and the Amerindians established a relationship based on retaining their distance and non-aggression. The Maroons defined a new culture made up a various elements introduced from many different parts of Africa.

After slavery was abolished in 1863, there was recourse to foreign labour, from India, Indonesia and China in particular. The contract workers took over the work on the plantations, most of them choosing to remain in Surinam after their contracts expired. The discovery of bauxite deposits later gave a new emphasis to the Surinamse economy. After the Second World War, the calls for independence grew louder. A first step was made in 1954 when the Netherlands granted the territory the status of an autonomous territory. But this was not enough to satisfy the large Amerindian and Black (Creoles and Maroons) communities. Full independence was proclaimed on 25 November 1975 after three centuries of Dutch colonisation and two centuries of autonomy, to the great displeasure of the East Indian community who did not want this break.

The new democracy soon encountered a number of problems. The middle classes of principally Indian origin started to desert the country in their droves, moving to the United States even before independence was declared officially. This was followed by the departure of the Dutch industrialists who left the companies in the hands of unqualified personnel. The deteriorating economic and social situation brought the temptation to seek salvation in a strong leader. This presented itself in the form of a young officer, Sergeant Major Desi Delano Bouterse, who launched a coup d’etat in 1980, making convenient use of the Marxist phraseology of the time and winning the support of a large section of the Surinamse population, especially the Black and Amerindian communities. A decade later he was to stage another coup. In the meantime, he remained in power between 1980 and 1987, accused of having established a dictatorship and of executing in 1982, 15 prominent members of the opposition intelligentsia, including journalists and union leaders. He later yielded to international pressure and an internal revolt, agreeing to hold elections in 1987 and to install a new democratic government in 1988. The 1980 ‘coup d’état’ had in fact caused the Maroon Negroes to engage in a guerrilla war between 1986 and 1989, headed by the former soldier Ronnie Brunswick. In retaliation the government army destroyed many villages used as rear bases by the insurgents. This is the period referred to as the ‘civil war’.

Bouterse’s second coup was launched in 1990 and lasted a year. In 1991, Ronald Venetiaan was elected President of the Republic. A year later, he signed a peace agreement with the Maroon and Amerindian rebels. Since then democracy has been respected. In 1996, the coalition government headed by Venetiaan lost the elections. In 2001, Venetiaan was returned to power and then again in 2005.

Jewish Savannah

The first colonialists to arrive in Suriname were mainly Jews from Europe and Brazil. They settled on the banks of the Surinam River, mainly at the place known as the ‘jewish Savannah’. The first imposing synagogue ‘Beracha ve Shalom’ (Benediction and peace) dates back to 1695 and the ruins are open to the public.

‘Communautarism’ recycled as good democratic practice

Suriname has a lot of political parties, most of them founded on a community or denominational basis. There are several Hindu and Javanese parties and also parties rooted in the Maroon Negro, Amerindian and Creole communities. As none of these parties is able to command an absolute majority, they work together within coalitions. These coalitions are notable for the fact that they always include parties of all religious denominations and represent all the communities. Within these coalitions, different ideological persuasions are apparent. Sometimes liberal, and sometimes more conservative, these coalitions therefore recycle as democratic practice the risk of ‘communautarism’ or clannishness.

The present opposition leader is Desi Delano Bouterse, a man who cuts a dashing figure and who has never lost his great popularity, broadening his electoral base across various communities. The coalition he leads stands a good chance of being returned to power with him as leader. In terms of democracy, the recycling is working.
The history of Surinam as told by the former colonialists is apparently full of falsehoods if one looks at the information handed down from generation to generation among the Indian communities. The first of these untruths is that the Amerindians were too weak and died and that is why Blacks were brought in from Africa. In fact it is rather that the Europeans who occupied the country forced the inhabitants to work in inhumane conditions; conditions against which the revolt was immediate. When Alonso de Ojeda arrived in 1499, he didn’t remain. In 1593, Domingo de Vera, received fittingly by the Pyai, king and spiritual leader of the indigenous population, attacked his host and cut off his ear because he judged the water he was offered to be undrinkable. But de Vera and his men had to make a quick retreat, many of them losing their lives. After that the European presence was reduced to some furtive visits. Until the arrival of Lord Willoughby in 1662 who had been given the territory by the Prince of Wales. “Another big lie”, says Henk Tjon.

In fact, recount the Indians, de Vera had asked their ancestors for permission to set up a trading post. “He therefore arrived in the country like a snake.” De Vera then surreptitiously allowed foreigners to enter in small numbers. When his deviousness was revealed, he was expelled. He returned after having made amends and promising to change his ways. It was the Dutch who finally established a colony but the Indians never gave up their resistance, and this until independence was won in 1975.

Tjon explains why, for the Amerindians, among the territories of South America that of present day Surinam was a symbol to defend at any price. The Indians believed in the virtues of the Sun King and Amazonia was regarded as his privileged domain. Surinam is the place on the continent where the sun’s rays are already to be seen when the sun is positioned over Africa. The Gonini (Harpy eagle), Anuwana in the Karib language, was venerated because it represented the spirit of the rising sun. That is why Surinam, place of pilgrimage for the South American worshippers where they were assured of food and shelter, acquired its name of ‘nation of all nations’. To become of this land, one must pledge oneself to the earth by burying one’s umbilical cord that was often guarded and protected since birth.

Well before the arrival of Christopher Columbus, the Pyai had had a vision of huge birds arriving, carrying on their flanks white sea monsters. This heralded a period of 500 years of death, wars and desolation. There would be suffering and genocide. And afterwards, the people would be freed. What shocked the Indians of Surinam was that the new arrivals had settled without their umbilical cords, without pledging themselves to the earth. If they had, they would have become Surinen. “Like everybody”, concludes Tjon.
The government’s priorities for Surinam’s development.

The essential point is that we have to develop our country with our own energy and capabilities. We will use our own country’s human resources to the maximum. We are trying to make good use of funds but besides funding, we also need know-how and technology that we currently have to import. We have taken measures to upgrade the salaries of civil servants and those of senior persons. There are now more facilities for agriculture and the fisheries sector and also for schoolchildren. In the country’s interior, where the situation is very difficult, fuel can be obtained without tax.

Implementation of development policies.

Six months ago, we signed an agreement with China for renovation of our asphalt roads and construction of 500 kilometres of roads involving contracts with local firms. We are constructing a road stretching from the North to South of around 250 kilometres. Our priority is to give people of the interior access to educational and other facilities.

Surinam inside CARICOM.

In spite of our own capabilities, energy resources and own achievements on the development front, attention is also being given to forging regional links. We are moving ahead to become an increasingly active member of CARICOM. We are also part of the Cotonou Agreement between African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and the European Union (EU) and making good use of its European Development Fund (EDF), having committed all funds allocated to our country. We also have bi-lateral relations; firstly between Surinam and the Netherlands. Currently, we are busy with committing the final part of monies made available by the Netherlands in 1975 on Surinam’s independence.

Geopolitics and Surinam.

In the bilateral sphere, there are good relations between Surinam and China, also with India and Indonesia and with the US, France, Brazil and Guyana. Venezuela is supporting our oil industry.

On EPAs and why the ACP agreed to negotiate EPAs.

At the time I was a member of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (1998-2005), EU countries wanted to change their development policy. I got the impression that they are now taking backward steps as far as the responsibility of EU countries to ACP
countries goes, having divided ACP countries into six regions in drawing up an EPA. We are in CARICOM and are moving forward on EPAs. The EU is under pressure from other countries. There are differences between CARICOM countries but in general, CARICOM is trying to take steps forward on an EPA (Editor’s note: Surinam signed an EPA with the EU along with 13 other CARIFORUM countries on 15 October). Other ACP countries are not so far on with talks but they do not have possibilities to refuse. (Editor’s note: ACP states made the commitment within the Cotonou agreement to negotiate EPAs). They had to accept the principle of EPAs because of their economic situation and interest in ensuring a new agreement with the EU. At the time (2003–2004), when I was co-President of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, we had to accept. We now have to work together to defend our own interests. We must not wait for the Europeans to come to us. We have to make choices and take decisions. ACPs must come together.

Surinam's economy.

World Bank (WB) statistics this year show that we will achieve growth of approximately 8 per cent. In 2005, 2006 and 2007, it was around 5 per cent. This means that there is a steady growth in the economy and lately there has also been improvement in our Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Based on our economic performance, official debt is still below international criteria. We have been repaying our debt and have acquired a certain economic discipline which is important for the country. For the past two years, a surplus in the national budget has been achieved and this might also be the case for 2008. So, in economics terms, yes, we are doing well.

The main assets: oil, tourism or minerals.

The majority of the country’s income comes from mining activities, of which gold is the biggest contributor and secondly, oil. Due to increased prices for oil, government revenues are fast increasing. We are also seeing that tourism is an upcoming sector. The latest statistics show that more people are visiting Surinam from our neighbours such as French Guyana, most of these visitors coming to shop; we have also lots of people from Europe who mainly come for eco-tourism purposes.

What about the country’s weaknesses. Is Surinam language-locked and is this an impediment?

I would not used the word “locked”, but my personal view is that we will be much better equipped if we had English or another language with which to communicate with other people within the region, but language itself should not be a big barrier - look at the Netherlands. Surinam must advertise itself much better. For several years now, Surinam has realised a certain degree of economic development and it is important that we are more closely linked to the world.

Integration of Surinam in the region.

We have tried to integrate into the Caribbean community but we have to look at the history of CARICOM which is more a get-together of the old Commonwealth members of the English-speaking Caribbean countries. Surinam and Guyana are two countries that are members of the Caribbean but which belong to the continent of South America and this also makes our situation different. It is more important for Surinam to look more southwards towards our neighbours in Mercosur, Brazil and some of the other Latin American countries.
A SMALL economy with HUGE potential

Joyce van Genderen-Naar*

Surinam has a small, diverse economy but one with huge potential. Its micro-economic climate over the past five years has been characterised by positive growth, whereas its macroeconomic performance has strengthened markedly in recent years. The government has taken measures to guide the country on the path of sustainable economic development.

Over many centuries, Surinam had a plantation economy with a predominantly agrarian structure. It was a well-known sugar plantation colony, described by Voltaire in 1759 in his complaint in Candide ou l’Optimisme against the cruel slavery system in Surinam: ‘c’est à ce prix que vous mangez du sucre en Europe’ (‘This is the price you are paying in Europe for eating sugar’).

A fundamental change to the mining economy occurred during the two World Wars in the 20th century. Exploration of bauxite grew for the U.S. war economy. In 1941, American troops were stationed in Surinam to protect this strategic raw material from attacks. 71 per cent of Surinam’s total earnings between 1941 and 1950 came from bauxite. Today, 22.5 per cent of the country’s revenue comes from the bauxite, gold and oil export sectors.

On the micro-economic front, Surinam’s has seen an average real growth, 2000-2005, of 4.4 per cent. But the economic weight of agriculture now accounts now for around 5 percent of the country’s GDP and 7.4 per cent of its exports. It exports both rice and vegetables; 50 per cent of its rice being exported to Europe. Rice and bananas account for 11.2 percent of employment. The fishing industry in Surinam operates mainly for export. Its major export destinations are Japan, the U.S., Europe and its CARICOM neighbours. Surinam’s private sector companies are active in the fishery sector and employ over 5,000.

The tourism sector is a priority economic sector and employ over 5,000. The mining sector is still Surinam’s most important economic sector, led by Suralco, the Surinam Aluminium Company linked to Alcoa (Aluminium Company of America) and Billiton. Although the mining sector is an important foreign exchange earner for Surinam, it contributes little in employment terms (3.5 per cent). Surinam has a long history of gold exploration. Nowadays the Canadian company, Cambior, is the market leader in gold exploration. Gold mining is also an important source of income for more than 20,000 Brazilians living in Surinam.

Oil production is mounting, explored by the State Oil Company ‘Staatsolie’. In 2005, production amounted to 4.4 million oil barrels of crude oil, an increase of 5 per cent compared to 2004. Production is to be increased to 15,000 barrels per day. Fuels are the biggest category of exports to CARICOM countries. ‘Staatsolie’ intends to meet Surinam’s total domestic demand for diesel and gasoline by 2012. The country’s forestry sector has a potential net production capacity of approximately 2.5M hectares. This area can produce annually 1-1.5M m² round wood with a minimum value of U.S. $40-45M.

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* Journalist and Lawyer (born in Surinam, based in Brussels).

Keywords
Surinam; economy; CARICOM; bauxite; mineral resources; oil; tourism.
**Foundations for SPATIAL PLANNING: forests, ecological tourism and plantations**

Clear skies with some clouds on the horizon.

**Surinam has decided firmly in favour of a policy of sustainable management of its territory. Forestry, banana plantations and eco-tourism are key sectors in implementing such a policy. Placed under the control of state foundations, they have benefited greatly as a result – although there are some clouds on the horizon when it comes to the forests.**

Virgin forest covers almost the entire surface area of Surinam, the management of which is entrusted to the ‘Foundation for Forest Management and Production Control’. René Somopawiro, acting Director General, spoke to *The Courier* of the governance now in place for sustainable management. Of the 14.8 million hectares of virgin forest, representing 90 per cent of the national territory, 4.5 million is destined for timber production. At present, less than half this area is logged. The logging is regulated by means of a system of concessions granted by the government for a given surface area and period, after which (50,000 to 100,000 hectares for over 10 years) it is parliament that grants the concessions. Approximately 3 per cent of the forest area is allocated to the communities who inhabit them, principally Amerindians and Black Maroons. The rest is in the public domain. Sophisticated technical means have been put into place to control fraud or any irregularities. But what nature conservationists criticise is that this foundation, with its makeshift offices, lacks the financial and technical means to match its ambitions and that the forestry management authority with the powers to collect its own financial resources, promised eight years ago, has yet to see the light of day. Such an authority is regarded as essential in managing a sector that offers so many opportunities for violations.

Surinam essentially exports two plant products: rice and bananas. The former is in the hands of private producers while the latter is managed by the ‘Foundation for preservation of the Banana Sector’ (SBBS), set up in 2002 after the collapse of a large company that dominated the sector. The foundation, with its headquarters in the Saramacca Region, manages the plantation as well as two major production units, the ‘Jaribaka Estate’ also in Saramacca and another in the Nickerie Region in the northwest. Productivity has increased threefold since 2002 and currently stands at over 40 tonnes a hectare. The Foundation is headed by Managing Director Philippe Dury, a French expert, and Deputy Managing Director Pierre Marie Defo, originally from the Cameroon, the specialist who worked on the banana plants to increase their resistance and yield. This project to reinforce the sector has benefited from European Development Fund aid since 2001. The banana sector currently employs 2,200 persons and this year will earn approximately US$35M.

The problem here is external not internal. The quantity which can be exported tax free to the EU market is limited due to the WTO commitments of the latter. Also, Surinam is having to pay rising customs duties for its off-quota quantities.* The question *The Courier* put to the SBBS director was the following: Why did Surinam decide to concentrate on the banana after 2002 following the WTO warnings in Doha in November 2001? The answer: “But why did the EU help a sector to become competitive if it was only to clip its wings afterwards?”

Spatial planning also takes into account the promotion of ecological tourism. Many of the roads planned to open up communities living in the interior have been designed with this purpose in mind. Teaching programmes at all levels with accompanying attractive technical manuals and audiovisual supports have also been adapted to include tourism. These not only seek to increase awareness among the population but also to provide the technical skills needed to help develop the sector. School buses visit communities to instruct private individuals on how to build traditional pavilions that meet the necessary standards and prepare food that meets health standards. Sector professionals such as Armand Li-A-Young, Director of SurinamTourism, have expressed great praise for the government’s choice of eco-tourism. In this sector at least, there do not appear to be any clouds on the horizon. H.G.

* Under the new EPA agreement with CARIFORUM, bananas from Surinam can enter the EU quota and duty-free although a new challenge looms in a proposed EU tariff cut for bananas from Central America (see this issue on page 29).

**Keywords**

Hegel Goutier, Surinam, rice, banana, forest, tourism, René Somopawiro, SBBS, Jaribaka Estate, Philippe Dury Pierre Marie Defo, Armand Li-A-Young.
Good economic situation but too much bureaucracy and sectarianism, according to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry

According to Robert L. A. Ameerali, President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Surinam’s economic situation is stable and sound, but with excessive state bureaucracy that is a burden on companies. He stresses that economic growth is based largely on bauxite. He condemns the government for having used profits from the high price of mining exports, namely bauxite, gold and oil, to employ an army of civil servants. “So it is not a productive government”, he declares. Among other problems, he draws attention to the administrative red tape involved in obtaining land use rights. This has a significant impact on many branches of industry. As for government, “there are a lot of words but no results”. There is thus no real planning of Surinam’s development or concerted implementation on the part of the public authorities and the private sector. Any entrepreneur who has to invest for the coming decade is therefore compelled to take a risk. “It is a master performance to survive in such this situation.” Where Mr Ameerali does acknowledge that the government has done a good job in expanding infrastructures and roads in particular. But he also says that: “There is no development planning but development with no plan.” Why is this? “Because of all the communities, to stay in power each has to be given its share of the cake. ‘If you don’t give this to my region, I will leave the government.’” H.G.
A certain **balance** between good governance and community-based allegiances

There are dozens of political parties in Surinam. Each ethnic community and every religious confession has several of them. So what is the impact of this ‘communautarism’ on democracy and good governance? One would suppose it to be negative, but in practice, despite some shortcomings, the system has been able to find a balance that provides for generally effective governance.

There are many potential subjects of discord between Surinam’s different communities. Yet this discord is contained and everything is settled by means of discussion and a subtle balance of political power. Although Surinam has seen a coup d’état and period of civil war, the communities were ranged against each other. Desi Delano Bouterse, the man behind the coup and today’s opposition leader, has always headed a trans-community party. He has found, and continues to find, his supporters and his detractors in all the country’s ethnic and religious groups. The aberrations of his government were not rooted in **communautarism**.

Hans Breeveld, a political scientist and professor at the Anton de Kom University of Surinam, explained to us that when it comes to the ordinary citizen there is the tendency, whether in a private business or state administration, to choose as a colleague someone from one’s own group, be it Javanese, Hindustani, Black Maroon, Amerindian, Chinese or whatever. But at government level the situation is more complex. Everybody looks at the attitude of the colleague and Breeveld believes that “officially, there is a good harmony at the high level, among the party leaders, but the officials are attentive to the interests of their ethnic group and watch those who ‘hire too many people who look like them’. In the coalitions, you find a multi-ethnic balance between parties built along ethnic lines, with one important exception, the party of Bouterse”.

The balance in the system is based on a subtle interplay within a complex set of political parties. For example, the New Front (NF) coalition, which won the last election, includes President Ronald Venetiaan’s National Party Surinam (NPS), an essentially African party that nevertheless includes many white or mulatto leaders and which over the past decade has sought to recruit members from other communities. The coalition also includes Vice President Ramdien Sardjoe’s Progressive Reform Party (PRP), which is Hindustani, and a Javanese Party, the Pertjaja Luhur (PL). Within each ministry a balance is generally struck between the different departments. The result is a subtle system guaranteeing good global governance despite or thanks to a harmonious spread of allegiances.

**Keywords**

Hegel Goutier; Surinam; Hans Breeveld; Anton de Kom University of Surinam; communautarism; Ronald Venetiaan; Ramdien Sardjoe; Desi Bouterse; National Party Surinam; New Front; Progressive Reform Party; Pertjaja Luhur.
The virgin Amazonian forest is almost intact in Surinam with its long rivers whose calm waters suddenly give way to rapids and waterfalls and with its rich wildlife. Although the alluvium carried down to the sea gives little scope for fine sandy beaches, the river banks and lakes offer ample compensation. The towns, all on a human scale, are ideal for the stroller, the affability of its colourful population being an invitation to curiosity and complicity.

In the early 1970s, before the country acceded to independence and ecology was in vogue, a decision had been made already for nature tourism. Today more than 50 tourist operators suggest every day a variety of walks, excursions, adventures and breaks, including to the neighbouring countries of French Guiana and Brazil that, together with Surinam, offer the first ‘all-in tour of Amazonia’.

The first contact with Surinam for the visitor is with the unique colours of the Amazonian sky, especially if arriving in the late afternoon on international flights and in the autumn just ahead of the rainy season when the storm clouds threaten the fine weather, painting in the firmament a spectacular patchwork of flaming reds and dark greys.

Before setting out in search of nature in all its wildness, a good idea is to start by immersing oneself in the fantasies of Paramaribo. It is more like the set of a romantic film than a major city, with its colonial buildings, magnificent 18th and 19th century residences and above all its wooden houses that are straight out of a fairy tale. Entirely in white, save for a few dark-painted window or door frames, they are often laid out in avenues or alleys like an endless litany.

Surinam’s coastal towns are also well worth a visit. From Paramaribo to Nickerie on the border with Guyana, the cultural heritage of the peoples of Surinam is on display. There are the mosques of the inhabitants of Indonesian origin, known here as Javanese, the Indian temples of the ‘Hindustani’, and the magnificent little wooden churches of the various Christian faiths, including Anglican, Roman Catholic and Moravian. One first passes through the district of Warnica with its vegetable plantations before crossing the River Saramacca at the entrance to the region of the same name, with Catharina Sophia, a pretty little town with a primarily Javanese population with its cemeteries with roofs on the tombs as the dead too are in need of shade. Not far from here lies the country’s first ever synagogue, in the Jewish Savannah. Between Saramacca and Coronie there is a vast expanse of wilderness where monkeys, anacondas, ocelots and other wild animals wander across the road. Coronie is home to the descendants of the British, but also to the Javanese, the Black Maroons and the mixed race Black-Chinese. The marine nature reserve of Bigipan is also well worth the detour, if only for its bird populations with 120 different species. This is the land of rice fields stretching almost to the horizon, crossed by equally endless canals and polders. It is the tropical flatland. The Hindustani make up almost three-quarters of the population of this region. Also not to be missed is the small town of Groot Henar with its footbridges over the little canals that flow past each of its houses that are home to the fishermen and rice growers. The town of Nickerie, the region’s capital, has retained the easy charm of a provincial capital despite being an important port.

If one sets out early in the morning in the direction of the border with French Guyana in the West, one can admire the first rays of the sun penetrating the romantic mist that swirls around the suspension bridge over the River Surinam as it leaves Paramaribo, offering one of the most beautiful views of the capital. The town of Moengo in Commewijne, a centre for bauxite mining, is a place of clean streets, lawns and flower beds with beautiful houses with their tennis courts, pools, basketball courts and gymnasiaums. It is the flat country of Holland, Miami Beach and a Florida town all rolled into one.

You arrive at the River Marowijne by way of the town of Alma, opposite St-Laurent de Guyane. From here, the best and the quickest way to discover Surinam’s nature is to descend the river for one or two hundred kilometres in the dug-out canoes that change tack constantly as they weave their way through the succession of sandbanks.

On the French side, the halt at Armina gives the visitor the chance to experience a town inhabited by Amerindians who divide their time between the two banks with the tacit agreement of the two countries that recognise the right of continuity of their territory. On the Surinam side it is possible to stop at the Indian villages of Patamaka, Langatabiki or Bigiston to buy their jewellery or amulets or at the Black Maroon villages such as Lemikbond where the craftsmen build the dug-outs that flow down the river.

Keywords

Amazonian forest; Surinam; tourism.
This story was told to us by Rinaldo Klas, the head of the Nola Hatterman Institute, a centre for art, a school and a museum all rolled into one, which is located in an elegant townhouse along a riverbank in Paramaribo. It is primarily about the life and work of a woman of passion. As a young Dutch artist, Nola Hatterman was swept away by the charm of Dutch Guyana. She sold all her possessions to go and live there. One section of her home there was earmarked to set up a school, the ‘New School of Fine Arts’ (NSBK), with the quite straightforward aim of ensuring that a young person from any country should be able to study an artistic discipline at a high level.

The first class comprised four students. Rinaldo Klas was in the second one. The various subjects available in the four-year curriculum included painting, calligraphy, sculpture and philosophy. Talent was the sole requirement for admission to the school, while successful students would be able to take a higher education diploma away with them when they left. Thanks to the school’s prestigious reputation, several of them were awarded grants to study abroad. A primary school with artistic leanings was also set up for children aged 8-10.

Nola Hatterman decided in 1977 to hand over the school to one of the previous graduates and withdraw into the hinterland, from where she continued to keep a close watch on her creation. The school suffered badly during the political turmoil of the 1980s, having to make do with increasingly cramped conditions, until the institute finally ceased to exist. Then came the day when Carlos Andres Perez, the President of Venezuela, fell under the spell of a painting by Rinaldo Klas. Thanks to the relationship that developed between the two men, the artist ended up heading a Venezuelan arts centre and became a director at the Ministry in charge of youth policy.

In the meantime, Nola Hatterman, on her way to the capital Paramaribo to attend a private view of an exhibition, died in a bus accident in 1984. This event was one of the factors that persuaded Rinaldo Klas to do his utmost to convince the government to help revive the art centre in the spirit and according to the example set by its creator. This bid to pay tribute to her turned out to be a success. H.G.
Surinam gained access to ACP-EU cooperation in 1979. But the start-up of the works contracts for the main project was delayed until 1996 because of the political turmoil in 1980, which was followed by the Government’s difficulty in complying with the Financing Agreements criteria. But since 1996, the implementation can be considered rather successful.

Surinam was allocated €23M from the 8th European Development Fund (EDF) (1995-2000) and €19.3M from the 9th EDF (2000-2007). The 10th EDF runs 2008-2013. For the ‘focal sector’, namely transport, the contracts for two main projects were signed in 1996 (€28.4M for the Port and €10.9M for the transport sector). The main projects are: the refurbishment of the Port of Paramaribo and the refurbishment of 137 km of the road from Meerzorg (close to Paramaribo) to Albina (border with French Guyana). After the necessary studies, these projects have recently started.

In the non-focal area, priority is given to reinforcement and capacity building of economic actors and civil society. Under the 9th EDF, financial agreements were also approved for sustainable capacity building of the private enterprises (tourism sector, banana industry and Surinam Business Forum), the NGOs, and for a technical cooperation facility. The project was conducted in the framework of the National anti drugs master plan (2006-2010) which “gives the guarantee that the support will continue into the future” according to the final evaluation of the project. As far as support to the private sector is concerned, all the projects can be considered successful. As an example, the Surinam Business Forum is now giving major support to the private sector. Exports are growing in the banana sector. The EU has also provided support to safeguard cultural patrimony. The restoration of the Paramaribo wooden Cathedral, an Unesco patrimony site, is nearly completed.
Scotland’s Highlands and Islands

An exuberance of natural assets

A report by Debra Percival

The Highlands and Islands hardly need any advertising to the potential visitor. Its attractions are magnetic. Occupying the top left edge of the European Union’s (EU) map and the size of Belgium, this region of Scotland is ruggedly beautiful, sectioned by deep lochs which hide many a mystery. Its islands are individually dramatic. Stark monuments to their history litter the landscape from Celtic crosses of the island of Iona, symbols of Celtic Christianity, to the chapel on Orkney built from scrap metal and junk by Italian prisoners of war interned on island during World War II.

There are 90 inhabited islands and many more untouched by human settlement; from the dramatic mountain scenery of Skye to the Shetlands - a cluster of over 100 islands huddled in the Atlantic between Orkney, Iceland and Norway. Fairies seem to hold the secret to the pristine island of Islay in South West of this region, sprinkling their dust at night over the sweeping shorelines.

Our look at the Highlands and Islands is primarily economic. Its traditional industries, food and drink (including its world-famed whiskies) and tourism continue to grow. We also look at how the region is branching out to become a world leader in lifesciences and renewable energies. In this year of “Celtic chic”, with tartan designs based on the kilt of the Scottish clansmen gracing the world’s catwalks, we look at how the region’s confidence in its natural assets is growing, propelled by the Scottish National Party (SNP)-led government which believes that eventually bringing about independence for the whole nation is in its best interests.
Scotland gained its own Government and Parliament in the wake of a referendum on the issue in September 1997. Its ‘devolved’ powers – those transferred from the United Kingdom’s (UK) central Westminster government to the seat of the Scottish Parliament - ‘Holyrood’ - in Edinburgh, are enshrined in the Scotland Act of 1998. Roughly, these cover 50 per cent of the country’s public spending such as education, agriculture and fisheries, the environment and health. ‘Reserved powers’ still retained by Westminster are mainly those with an impact on the UK such as social security spending and the bastion, foreign policy, although an international development budget has been created (see interview with Linda Fabiani in this report). Elections to the Scottish Parliament were first held in 1999. We spoke with some MSPs representing the Highlands and Islands in the 129-strong chamber.
Rhoda Grant, a Labour MSP, says there is a “a myriad of inequalities” in the region which she puts down to distance. She wants to see better rural health facilities: “No one should die because of where they live”, also more affordable housing. Ferry trips between the islands and mainland Scotland have recently come down in price with the piloting in the Western isles of a ‘road equivalent tariff’ structure. Whereas getting over to the mainland is now cheaper for those from the western isles, the measure could prove more costly for those toing and froing from the more distant Shetlands.

Conservative MSP, Jamie McGrigor, is a voice for the recognition and preservation of the region’s rich heritage. The livelihoods of 13,000 crofters (small hill farmers) are under huge threat, he says, due in part to EU regulations which mean that farmers now receive a single payment for sheep farms instead of per head meaning that Austria gets €121 per hectare whereas Scotland, just €7. “Please don’t give us any more regulations for agriculture and fisheries without first finding out what the effects will be”, says McGrigor.

There is general concern, says McGrigor, about the 50 per cent drop in European funding programmes under the current European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) compared to the previous one (2000-2006). Both funds have greatly assisted the region’s development in the past, acknowledge MSPs. The cuts have followed membership of Eastern European countries to the EU with lower per capita incomes. D.P.

Keywords
Scotland; Highlands & Islands; ERDF; ESF; international development.

EU support for Highlands & Islands (2007-2013)

ERDF: Priority 1 - Enhancing Business competitiveness, commercialisation and innovation - €47.53M; Priority 2 - Enhancing key drivers for sustainable growth - €41.43M; Priority 3 - Enhancing Peripheral and Fragile Communities - €29.25M.

ESF: Priority 1 - Increasing the Workforce - €15.12M; Priority 2 - Investing in the workforce - €20.34M; Priority 3 - Improving Access to lifelong learning - €15.12M.

Tartan - alive and kicking

If you have designed a tartan, or if there’s one in your family, the keeper of the newly created ‘Scottish Register of Tartans’ is waiting to hear from you. Tartan, a cloth woven into patterns of coloured checks and intersecting lines traditionally has family associations although it is now very much in fashion and designs are proliferating globally. In October 2008, MSP Jamie McGrigor won his six year battle to get the Bill passed in the Scottish Parliament. “It means people across the world will be able very soon to use the Register as an on-line resource to research, design their own family tartan and have it woven in Scotland - the spiritual home of tartan”, he says.
Foreign Policy is not a power devolved to Scotland, so how and why has the country secured a development budget from Westminster (the seat of the United Kingdom’s government)?

Scotland gets a bulk grant from Westminster. International Development is a ‘reserved matter’; not something that would normally be funded under the budget but under the last administration we had a joint agreement that Scotland should have an international development programme, first agreed in 2005 but on a much smaller scale. We (the SNP government) also felt strongly that it was such an important thing for Scotland because it has always felt a social obligation to other parts of the world. This had to go through the Parliament in the usual way but there was absolutely no concern raised at all about the development budget from Parliamentarians.

How are funds being spent?

I’ve completely revamped the development budget. Scotland has a very special relationship with Malawi including also the Catholic Church of Scotland. We have ring fenced a minimum of £3M a year for Malawi. We have also decided to look at its neighbours; Zambia, Tanzania, Rwanda, also Sudan, for obvious reasons. Because Scotland has quite a large immigrant population from the Indian sub-continent, we are also looking at a programme for the Indian sub-continent. Another strand of our cooperation is emergency aid.

Exactly what projects are in line for Malawi?

We have a joint agreement with the government and meet regularly at ministerial level once a year. We will not do anything in Malawi that has not been agreed with Malawi’s government but we do not give money directly to the government. We also run anything that we want to do in Malawi past the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID). We generally fund Scottish-based NGOs to carry out work in Malawi. We also want to capacity-build institutions in Malawi. For example, our own Scottish voluntary organisation has links with Malawi’s civil society body, the Council for Non-Governmental Organisations in Malawi (CONGOMA), helping it build capacity to represent civil society on governance issues. Another strand of our policy is health, especially pre- and post-natal care for women and then education. One thing we are very keen on is vocational education; providing a pathway to work, earning and entrepreneurship. This leads to another strand - business development and business partnerships with Scotland. We also work with joint programmes institutions like universities.

How far on are you with planning for other countries?

We are just at the stage of having completed a funding round for Malawi and once agreed, will look at the wider picture for other African countries. We are looking for people in consortia with themed bids. Perhaps one of our NGOs will say, look I have a project plan for Zambia or Tanzania. We want people to show imagination because when you’re talking about small amounts of money you have to be very, very focused. I wanted the policy to have very firm criteria for applicants. For example, we will not fund container-loads of equipment unless related to one of the wider programmes and you cannot source locally.
Donors are now clubbing together to avoid project duplication. What about Scotland?

We rely on the expertise of NGOs and also institutions in Scotland. We have been working with countries for decades. The expertise is there and we must tap into this and work as partners. Perhaps one of the larger donors might say, that is a great idea but we don’t have the expertise. There are a couple of projects where we’ve been able to get match-funding from donors to allow a project to go ahead.

Would Scotland like to become more involved at the development policy-making level in European and international fora?

I think that this is something that incrementally we can look at. There is no reason at all why our ministers could not be helpful to the UK’s strategy and positioning. International development is an area where nobody wants to try and cause any political division. I would like to build up the relationship so that if were jointly felt that such an approach would be helpful, then we would be more than willing to take part.

What about other links with developing nations, say at local governance level?

One of the really interesting links that is not government-funded is that between the Scottish parliament and Malawian parliament which is a whole separate programme and has been going on for a few years now. Officers and members of the parliament have come over from Malawi to see how our systems work and meet with committee members and committee chairs. We also have active links with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Forum. Glasgow City Council has links with Malawi, and the Glasgow charity, ‘A Caring City’, provides funding. My strategic group for Malawi includes the Provosts of Scotland’s cities.

London-based Caribbean High Commissioners (to the UK) recently visited your Parliament…

It was really good to see them. They met with the First Minister, Alex Salmond, and myself. We spoke about the links that are there between the Caribbean and Scotland, particularly Jamaica, also Barbados. There was also a discussion about the fact that quite a lot of countries now have an Ambassador in London but also have a Consul General in Edinburgh and Honorary Consuls all over Scotland to represent them. So we spoke about a Consul or Honorary Consul in Scotland to represent Caribbean nations.

I understand that Former First Minister, Jack MacConnell (Labour) is still closely involved in African affairs?

He was to be UK High Commissioner to Malawi from February 2009 but that changed last week. It seems now that he will be the UK’s peace and conflict resolution envoy for Africa. D.P.
A non-departmental public body of the Scottish government, the Inverness-based Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) has the task of boosting the region’s economy with an annual budget of around £80M, the bulk from the Scottish government but also the rental income generated on the property it owns and from the European Research and Development Funds (ERDF). It invests in big infrastructure projects such as the European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC) in Orkney, developing tidal and wave power, as well a plethora of mainly grants to smaller ones such as tourism training. Another of HIE’s big infrastructure projects is the Lifescience Facility, its first phase opening in 2006. Businesses operating there include the diabetes institute and ‘LifeScan’ owned by Johnson and Johnson, the largest private employer in the Highlands and Islands.

“This is what people find strange; this ‘wee’ (small) bit of Scotland right at the Northern end of Europe: we’ve got links with some of the biggest players in the world who are helping us to achieve all of this”, says Alex Paterson, Director of Regional Competitiveness at HIE. He says that the United States’ software giant, Microsoft, recently voiced an investment interest.

More traditional industries include food and drink. According to the Edinburgh-based Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) value of exports reached a new high of £2.8bn in 2007, earning £90 every second for the UK’s balance of trade (see separate article).

“Seafood is trucked overnight to France and Spain. Quite a lot of people are now looking at adding value to seafood, especially by investing in organic produce”, says Paterson. The ‘Orkney’ brand produces many organic products and the Shetland Isles are going the same way with fish products. The bigger food companies are there too like food processing firm, Baxters. “Scotland has a provenance for good, wholesome food”, explains Caroline Rham, HIE’s press officer.

The Highlands and Islands sells Scotland; its favourite attraction being the elusive monster.
Onshore wind power takes a battering

For the moment, the wind has been taken out of the sails of the Scottish government’s plan for a major onshore wind farm in the Lewis areas of the Western isles. After six years’ planning including an environmental assessment and raising expectations of jobs, plans were ruled out by the European Union’s Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, says HIE’s Manager for Energy, Audrey MacIver.

It’s now back to the drawing board to look at scaled down wind projects both on and offshore. The Scottish government has commissioned a study looking at economic and community benefits from renewable energy on the Western Isles. ‘This whole area is one of the most densely designated areas [conservation] that we have and we must look at appropriate development and the real scale of opportunity’, says Audrey MacIver.

As one of the windiest areas in the whole of Europe, pummelled by tides and battered by waves, the Highlands and Islands region is pioneering research and development into renewable energy. The government wants to up the share of electricity generated by renewable resources from currently 16 per cent to 50 per cent by 2020, the bulk from wind. MacIver says that some companies interested in investing in Orkney pulled out not only because of the problematic planning issues but also the problem of the cost of transmission from the north to the big centres of population. Traditionally energy has been generated at the centre of Scotland outwards. Investment in renewable would mean hefty investment in transmission lines from the North and West to the centre.

In Orkney, there is also a test site for wave power and another for tidal power. The Pentland Firth, the strait separating Orkney from Caithness in the north of Scotland, is one of the best sites in Europe for generating tidal power. ‘There is a huge potential for us to exploit marine energy based around tidal developments here’, says Audrey MacIver, adding that some developers see this as imminent with a ‘pre-commercial stage’ within 3-5 years. But this too leaves the costly issue of connecting to the grid. A device is already connected to the electricity grid in Orkney but is currently being tested for 18 months to two years for energy efficiency and also to see how it interacts with the marine environment and how monitor mammals might interact with it. Eventually linking Shetland and Orkney to the mainland grid could cost billions of pounds and any investment might ultimately be passed on to the consumer. The UK’s energy regulating body, Ofgem, would have its say here. Looking beyond 2020, HIE is drawing up a feasibility study on the potential of exporting renewable once domestic demand is filled.

A unique university

It is the pride of the Highlands and Islands but the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) is still seeking full university status. The absence of a university close to home has been an issue for many years, leaving students with no choice but to go to Aberdeen or Sterling. In 1992, serious work began to create the UHI. In 2000, a milestone was reached when the University of the Highlands and Islands Millennium Institute was awarded higher education institutional status. HIE’s Director, Alex Paterson, explains that the UHI is unlike the big Scottish universities like Glasgow or Edinburgh where you attend courses on a big campus. It is a network of colleges and research institutes stretching from Shetland to Argyll and Perth. There are 15 small campuses and 126 learning centres across the Highlands and Islands, some of which are in the most remote parts of the region, offering studies from computing for beginners right through degrees and post-graduate degrees. These learning centres have links with job centres. Two months ago, UHI passed one of the first hurdles to becoming a university – the right to award degrees. The next is hopefully, within the next two to three years, full university status. A world class Gaelic college on the island of Skye (Sabhal Mor Ostaig UHI) does all of its teaching in Gaelic. UHI is also renowned for its theology teaching and the research work of the Institute for Marine Science (SAMS). In 2006-2007, over 6,800 students were enrolled (58 per cent part-time). There are plans to build a major campus and research facilities in Inverness on a brand new Greenfield site. Paterson stresses the potential for new business resulting from UHI’s research work.

‘Nessie’ at Loch Ness near Inverness. Only a raft of adjectives can begin to do justice to natural attractions of the islands; peaceful, magical, wild and ethereal. HIE’s Marketing Manager, Maria Peters, predicts that tourism numbers will dip slightly as belts are tightened as a result of the financial crisis, but a drop in US visitor numbers is being offset by UK residents coming to Scotland. Spain is a key market for tourism in the Highlands and Islands, also France and Italy, she says. And high end tourism is buoyant from stalking wildlife to whisky tasting tours and rounds of golf. “We have an incredibly good portfolio of extreme sports from mountaineering to kayaking”, adds Peters. Events held along the shores of Loch Ness include the ‘Rockness’ music festival and in October, the Loch Ness marathon.

Energy is a growing sector too (see box on top of the page) with many downstream economic benefits from the harnessing of wave and tidal renewable power. HIE also backs the flourishing creative industries sector, art, music, fashion, writing or technical designs.

Paterson says there’s a lot of potential too for the whole data centre industry with some of the biggest players in the world already employing over 3,000 people in the Highlands and Islands. “We want to exploit this more and see if there are niches in financial services. Given the economic crisis, businesses are looking to locate some of their financial activities in lower cost situations and Scotland could become particularly attractive for ‘Green Data Centres’ using the renewable energy”, says Paterson. Scotland’s chillier climate is also a business plus. “There’s a lot of heat generated by data centres, so the cooler the climate, the better”, says Caroline Rham.

HIE is also lobbying for more transport links in and out of the region. “If the region is going to be a place that people want to come to live, study and to set up to do business you have to have a certain level of infrastructure”, says Paterson. More air links are being considered to connect up with international hubs such as Brussels, Paris and Amsterdam. “If you are trying to attract businesses, they expect good connectivity and easy ways to get in and out of the Highlands and Islands”, he says.

D.P.

Keywords
Highlands; Scotland; ERDF; EMEC; Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE); Scotch Whisky Association (SWA); Alex Paterson; Caroline Rham; Debra Percival.
ScOTcH: From strength to strength

Whisky, or Scotch, is a leading Scottish product, with the value of exports for the first half of 2008 up 14 per cent over the same period in 2007, says David Williamson of the Edinburgh-based Scottish Whisky Association (SWA). Whisky tastings are also drawing tourists to some of the most wildly beautiful parts of the Highlands and Islands such as Islay, Jura and Skye, where single malts are distilled.

There continues to be optimism about Scotch Whisky’s future international prospects. Over the last 18 months, there has been £500M new investment in production capacity - in distilling, bottling and warehousing - across Scotland”, says David Williamson, spokesman for the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA).

According to SWA’s figures, exports reached a new record of £2.8bn in 2007, with the shipment value of Bottled Blended Scotch Whisky – which can be a blend of as many as 30-40 whiskies – up 15 per cent to £2.22bn. Bottled single malt exports rose by 11 per cent in value (to £454M) in 2007. The largest export market for all Scottish whiskies is the USA, with Spain the largest European market by value. Tariff reform mid-2007 boosted exports to India by 36 per cent in value (to £32M).

Scotland’s whisky exports were up 9 per cent in value (to £91M) to South Africa, putting the country in the top ten of its customers, according to SWA.

Chris Conway, of the organisation Scottish Whisky Heritage, says that 23 per cent of all visitors to Scotland go to a distillery. He is in charge of ‘The Whisky Coast’ project which has created a network of 18 hotels or ‘Whisky Embassies’ around Scotland and especially on the islands, giving visitors detailed information on flavours, origins and whisky anecdotes. A total of 98 distilleries across Scotland produce some 300 whiskies.

Whereas the soft, gentle lands of the Scottish lowlands give a softer, lighter, refined and delicate whisky, in the Northern Highlands - the land of Clansmen and deerstalkers - whiskies are more peaty and saltier, explains Conway. Half of all distilleries in Speyside on the Eastern side of Scotland, produce blended whiskies whereas the Islands such as Orkneys, Jura, Skye and Mull Islay produce “a sea soaked, full, robust and salty dram”, says Conway.

Although many distilleries are owned by the ‘big boys’ of the spirits world such as Diageo, Pernod Ricard and William Grant, there’s an increasing cachet to doing everything at the distillery. At Kilchoman distillery, the westernmost distillery in Scotland and one of Islay’s eight distilleries, barley is grown on the distillery’s Rockside Farm. The single malt whisky is also malted, distilled and bottled on-the-spot.

The European Union (EU) has helped protect the authenticity of Scotch Whisky. Regulations passed in 1989 and 1990 (1576/89 and 1014/90) protect its geographical indication and have helped the industry’s work to protect consumers and Scotch Whisky from unfair competition, says SWA. In 2007, a clearer EU definition of whisky from Scotland legislated that it could not be flavoured or sweetened.

But there are still barriers to trade in around 130 different export markets, says Williamson, including high tariffs, discriminatory excise taxation, and a range of technical barriers to trade (including certification and labelling requirements). Says Williamson: “Markets which put high tariffs on Scotch include India (150 per cent), Vietnam (65 per cent) and Thailand (60 per cent). In comparison, the tariff in China is 10 per cent and in Brazil it is 20 per cent.” D.P.
Africa in the Museums of Europe

Against a backdrop of the challenges and complexity of globalisation, African art is at the centre of a lively cultural and political debate on its representation in European museums and the future of artistic treasures pillaged from Africa during colonialism.

With the importance of an educational role, going beyond the ethnographic approach, the need to renew the outlook towards exhibitions and meeting the expectations of a new multicultural public, African museums in Europe are today faced with a new set of challenges.

The debate on the place of African art in European museums goes back some time, but the construction of the Musée du quai Branly (Paris) has rekindled the fervour of experts. It is a monumental cultural project, supported by the former French President, Jacques Chirac, which brings together the collections of the Musée des Arts d’Afrique et d’Océanie with those from the Musée de l’Homme. Officially opened in 2006 amid controversy, Quai Branly was engulfed by the criticism of anthropologists who were “astonished” by the combination of anonymous exhibits and work of contemporary artists, the lack of historical information on the exhibits and the way in which they were acquired, as well as by an architectural structure (created by Jean Nouvel) that represents tropical vegetation from a primitivist and naturalist perspective. Buoyed by their success with the general public (the museum welcomed 1.7 million visitors in its first year of opening), the organisers have always defended themselves against this kind of accusation, pointing out that it is an experimental project open to redefinition based on its relationship with its visiting public, which should not be an elite but as popular and diverse as possible.

The restitution of cultural treasures plundered under colonialism

The museums and their representatives come together at meetings and research projects. These include ‘Broken memory, or how to end the colonial history’, ‘Patrimonio e intercultura’ at the ISMU Foundation in Milan, the ‘Museums as Places for Intercultural Dialogue’ project, financed by the Lifelong Learning programme, and the READ-ME (Réseau Européen des Associations de Diasporas et Musées Ethnographiques) project, which involves the Musée Royal de l’Afrique Centrale de Tervuren (Brussels), Etnografiska Museet (Stockholm) and the Musée du quai Branly (Paris). One of the most intriguing topics of discussion concerns the restitution of cultural treasures plundered during the colonial period as a means of moral reparation. Most of...
Images of women

How are women portrayed in African art? The Musée Dapper in Paris aims to provide answers to this question with an exhibition dedicated entirely to ‘Women in the Art of Africa’.

Much has been said about the central role women have always played in African societies. From reproduction to household duties, a rich body of literature pays testimony to the irrefutable position women have held throughout history in domestic life. On a cultural level, the Musée Dapper highlights the fact that African art is full of examples of the representation of women’s role in everyday life. This at least is the view of Christiane Falgayrettes-Leveau, director of the Musée Dapper and exhibition curator: “The theme of women in African art is one of the richest subjects in the culture of the continent. We therefore wanted to look at the approach of different artists.”

Judging by the approximately 150 exhibits on display, including statues, statuettes and masks, from the Musée Royal de l’Afrique centrale de Tervuren, the Louvre museum in Paris, the Ethnographic Museum of Antwerp and other prominent European institutions, it seems African artists have little interest in nubile body forms. This is certainly true of the Benin sculptors (DRC) whose sumptuous parturient figures are an ode to maternity and fertility. Beside their aesthetic qualities, the exhibits provide an insight into the roles occupied by women in political, social, economic and religious life.

‘Women in the Art of Africa’ also provides an opportunity to reflect on the great debates that affect women in Africa today. Seminars, sometimes with documentary showings, will look at hotly debated issues like polygamy and sexual mutilation. These events – which also include an exhibition by Angèle Etoundi Essamba (image at page 55), a photographer from Cameroon whose work examines the representation and identity of African women in the age of multiculturalism – aim to provide a greater understanding of the female world. Falgayrettes-Leveau said: “All of these women will certainly help to open up a different perspective to the world for us.”

Keywords

Africa; African art; museums; Europe; Musée du quai Branly; artistic treasures; cultural heritage; plunder; colonialism; OIF; Abdou Diouf.

Women; art in Africa; Musée Dapper; Paris; Christiane Falgayrettes-Leveau; Angèle Etoundi Essamba; Sandra Federici.

© Musée Dapper. Photo by Hughes Dubois

Museums in the west, among others, ponder.

The owners are no longer identifiable and the states do not have sufficient infrastructure or resources to preserve collections of great artistic value. Bourema Diamitani, Director of the West African Museums Programme (WAMP) is proposing greater cooperation between the museums of the northern and southern hemispheres to address this issue.

The Secretary General of the International Francophone Organisation (OIF) and former President of Senegal, Abdou Diouf, said: “The issue of restitution, often presented polemically, deserves reasoned treatment (…) The law must apply (…) but cooperation, partnership and joint responsibility remain key principles.”

> And what about migrants?

Let’s not forget projects aiming to foster non-western heritage by providing an intercultural mediation service in response to an increasing demand for culture and citizenship from peoples of foreign origin. These requirements are met by projects like ‘Migrants and Cultural Heritage in Piedmont’, which tend to involve immigrant mediators in activities where African masks and fetishes are used as narrative stimulus in their approach to integration.

In the context of migration, the role of ethnographic collections is to use treasures that have often been obtained unjustly and violently to build new bridges between former colonists and colonised countries whose common destiny is linked to migration. Narrative accounts of pillaging can help to strengthen this link rather than undermine it.

Keywords

Africa; African art; museums; Europe; Musée du quai Branly; artistic treasures; cultural heritage; plunder; colonialism; OIF; Abdou Diouf.

‘Women in the Art of Africa’ from 10 October to 12 July 2009 at the Musée Dapper (Paris)
Open every day from 11 a.m. until 7 p.m. (except Tuesdays and public holidays)
For more information please visit: www.dapper.com.fr

For more information please visit: www.dapper.com.fr

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Nkisi Statuette, Congo, Inv. n° 2212.

How are women portrayed in African art? The Musée Dapper in Paris aims to provide answers to this question with an exhibition dedicated entirely to ‘Women in the Art of Africa’.

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To confront the complexity of the world of culture, lend it new impetus and, if possible, strengthen it: that is the triple challenge the PSICD set itself in Benin when it started up its activities in March 2006. Allocated financing of €2.940M under the 9th European Development Fund (EDF), the programme, scheduled to run for three years, aims to correct the cruel lack of structures and professionalisation in the Beninese cultural sector.

Entrusted to a consortium that appointed the experts responsible for the programme’s technical and financial management, the project is being implemented in a number of stages. Initially, the operational structure (OS) identified the needs and expectations of the Beninese cultural operators. With sufficient data to orient it in implementing the Programme, the OS, through its group meetings, drew up a geographical map of the distribution of cultural activities and demand for them in Benin’s various regions. Six sectors were identified, namely the visual arts, cinema, the performance arts (theatre, music and dance), cultural heritage, applied arts (cartoon strips, photography) and literature.

After taking stock of the situation, technical support sessions were organised for the promotion of cultural journalism and art criticism, the management of cultural buildings and spaces, and the organising of cultural activities and events. These support structures sought to inform cultural operators of the conditions of access to PSICD financing so as to equip them with the appropriate tools with which to follow the guidelines of the application form for subsidy requests.

Conditions of access to financing are among the most innovative and important of the project’s aspects, the aim being to provide the Beninese with the necessary training and instruments for managing cultural development in their own country. The actors can thus apply for subsidies without having to pass through intermediaries. Benin is also a very responsive country in this area: a look back at the cultural life of Benin shows the many activities in all areas of art and culture, ranging from communication to local folklore.

Proof of this can be found in the response to the first call for proposals. Among the 86 submissions received, 11 were selected, including a Hip Hop festival, a project to pep up and consolidate Benin’s International Theatre School, the screening of films in the villages and working class districts of Benin, the production of a series of cartoon films entitled Ana et Bazil, and a popular theatre.

The second call for proposals was launched on 3 April 2008. “After strengthening the capacity of the cultural actors”, says Babacar Ndiaye, the PSICD coordinator, “this call is addressed to projects whose financing request does not exceed five million CFA francs* (as opposed to the 15-30 million CFA francs of the first call, ed.).”

Finally, to complete the support for the cultural initiatives, the project is supporting the publication of ‘Tam Tam’, a quarterly newsletter distributed free of charge, the launch of a cultural website (www.artbenin.com) and the creation of the Espace Rencontres, in Cotonou, which will be open to the public on Mondays to Fridays, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

* 1 Euro = 653.761 CFA (24 October 2008).

Keywords
Benin; Decentralised Cultural Initiatives Support Programme (PSICD); culture; EDF; subsidies; Babacar Ndiaye.
If you have any doubts about the courage and determination of Rama Yade, French State Secretary for Human Rights, all you need do is to ask her in person. She is only too happy to reply, as is evident from this first mischievous question from a child: “So it was you who didn’t go to China with the President?” The response is a scathing attack on the country’s political dictatorship! Others also get a verbal lashing, such as the Libyan and Tunisian regimes and other “friendly nations”. She then relates a short but passionate story retracing human rights from the time of Hammurabi, the founder of Babylon, who, 36 centuries ago, wanted “justice installed to stop the strong doing wrong to the weak”, up until today’s defenders of the rights of homosexuals or undocumented immigrants, including mention of the first genuine declaration of human rights, the English Magna Carta of 1215. Verbatim. As to the use of human rights as a pretext, these are her own words: “Great Britain was also accused of this in Zimbabwe because it supported Tsvangirai against outgoing President Mugabe.” As for the right to intervene as the privilege of the powerful: “In theory, no. But in practice, I have not yet seen African contingents on a peacekeeping mission in Northern Ireland, or the Lebanese intervene in the Basque Country…” H.G.


Keywords
Rama Yade; France; human rights; children.

“Y ou know you are really famous when you become a comic book character.” Nelson Mandela likes to joke. Known worldwide for his tireless fight against apartheid and winner of the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize, the former South African President of course did not have to wait for a comic book biography to be published to become famous. But when, in 2005, he attended the launch of A son of Eastern Cape, the first volume of his incredible epic tale financed by the Nelson Mandela Foundation, he had no hesitation in repeating his desire to see “this comic book encourage a love of reading among young people”. Since then his Foundation has published seven other chapters in his life story, today brought together in a single volume with the title Nelson Mandela: The Authorised Comic Book, Speaking to The Courier, Verne Harris, head of the Mandela Foundation’s Centre of Memory and project coordinator, stressed that: “After the millions of copies we handed out free of charge in South African schools, this book completes an initiative that has achieved enormous success.”

Nelson Mandela: The Authorised Comic Book is the official story of the life of the father of the ‘rainbow’ nation: from childhood to his triumphant election as South African President in 1994, through his anti-apartheid struggles, exile and 27 years in prison on Robbin Island, the reader embarks on a genuine initiatory voyage that is an incentive to (re)discover an extraordinary individual. A hero who is now ingrained in the collective memory, and not only that of South Africans. Launched in July 2008 on the occasion of Mandela’s 90th birthday, the comic book was published in an edition of 10,000 copies, 6,000 of which had been sold by last October. “We are very pleased”, says Verne Harris, “especially as we have concluded an agreement with a US publisher to distribute the book in the United States from 2009”. The next step is to translate The Authorised Comic Book into Xhosa, Madiba’s mother tongue. Madiba is the name the wise men of the country’s second largest ethnic group gave to their child prodigy. Everybody knows this in South Africa, even the children!


Keywords
Nelson Mandela; comic book; South Africa; Verne Harris; Xhosa.
Now we can be more efficient

This morning for the first time, I didn’t have to get up at five o’clock to go to school! It’s wonderful to be able to sleep another two hours. To get up without rushing, have breakfast, wash my hands and face, brush my teeth and I’m off to school. I walk a few hundred yards to the market place, I cross it and come up to another square where for a few days now, the main attraction has been the brand new village school.

The mayor decided to build it, after consulting with the local officials and the parents. This is a real first here. Up to now, the Minister of Education in the capital decided where schools would be built. And since his budget is limited, there were few schools, and they were concentrated in towns. Which explains why, up to now, I had to walk 12 km in the morning to get there.

But since the new law on ‘decentralisation’ has been adopted in the capital, things are changing in the villages. The mayors can now decide to do things that concern life in the village directly: build schools, health centers, sewers, electric grids, and other things too. This is what we call ‘local governance’. To manage this, the ministries in the capital transfer part of their budget to the villages. The budgets are limited, and our mayor had to be very ingenious to manage to build the school.

At this point, there is just one classroom, with a little apartment on the side for the teacher. He comes from a big town, but he agreed to work here, because, since decentralisation, he will be paid directly by the village council – he won’t have to take the rural taxi to the capital every month to get his pay. Despite all his cleverness, the mayor still hasn’t collected enough money to deal with the increase in the price of oil that we use to generate electricity in the village. So electricity is down frequently, and the mayor can’t use the computer that the European Union has given to the village council.

* Cartoonist from Madagascar
Dear Sir,

Actually The Courier magazine is fantastic, informative and technically covered. Finally congratulations on your education magazine.

Yours Faithfully

John Nechoesa Makokha (Kenya)

I am a member of the World Association of Nongovernmental Organizations (WANGO), Peace and Collaborative Development Network, and I am a Board Member of the Central PA Chapter of the United Nations Association of the United States of America. Your publication seems to be an asset to anyone interested in international development and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Tony Antonio Karantonis
Harrisburg (Pennsylvania, USA)

Good topic. Good text on this man, who writes with the charm of the Caribbean soul. It’s always good to take a look inside, even if it’s only a quick peek, to look outside afterwards, towards the world, the sensitive eyes of Derek Walcott... The great poet, dramatist and critic deserves to be read more and more by everyone who encourages literary work with charm and connects possible interfaces with reality.

Italo Bruno

ERRATUM

We apologise for an error which slipped into the title of our interview with Christiane Taubira on page 7, issue 7 of “The Courier”. The correct title is: What cooperation exists between ACP countries and the EU’s overseas territories within the framework of the EPA?

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Calendar

December 2008 – March 2009

December 2008

› 29-2 Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, Doha, Qatar
www.un.org/esa/fid/doha/

› 1-12 United Nations Climate Change Conference, Poznań, Poland (http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_14/items/4481.php)

› 4-5 Heads of ACP Regional Integration Organisations, Brussels, Belgium

› 7-10 Global Forum for Media Development, Athens World Conference, Athens, Greece
www gfmd athensconference com/

› 11-12 88th Session of the ACP Council of Ministers, Brussels, Belgium
www.acp.int

January

› 1 Czech Republic takes over presidency of the EU

› 11-16 5th EGU Alexander von Humboldt International Conference | African Climate Change Conference, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa
www.humboldt5 uct.ac.za/

› 29-2 African Union Summit, Addis Abeba, Ethiopia

February

› 12 High Level Parliamentary Conference on Policy Coherence for Development and Migration organised by EP, COM and OECD

› 23 Redefining South-South Cooperation: Africa on the Centre stage, Mumbai, India
www.mu.ac.in/arts/social_sci ence/african_studies/cfp.pdf

March

www.changes-challenges.org/

› 31-2 UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, Bonn, Germany
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