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THE WIDER WORLD

Funding Human Security

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After months of delay in the U.S. House of Representatives, aid for Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan finally made it back to the U.S. Senate and President Joe Biden's desk for approval. So, this seems a good time to explore concepts of supporting countries in need.

It should be noted that the majority of the "aid" packages approved by the House of Representatives are in many ways loans that these countries will use to purchase American military materiel, which in turn is paid back to the U.S. Treasury and will become orders for American military industrial supply companies. Therefore, they are not giveaways.

The last [installment](#) of "The Wider World" discussed the process of implementing reconstruction and stabilization plans by the U.S. government abroad. However, multinational approaches, if successful, can provide even more opportunities to stem the tides of conflict, poverty, and migration that overwhelm many countries around the world.

The United Nations General Assembly resolved in June 2012 to adopt a common definition of "human security" adapted from the language of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and concepts discussed in the 1994 Human Development Report as "the right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair. All individuals, in particular vulnerable people, are entitled to freedom from fear and freedom from want, with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential."^[1] Although not

exactly offering the right to “pursue happiness,” the goal heads in the right direction.

Human security and human development share the elements of “people-centered, comprehensive, context specific and prevention-oriented responses,” to specific threats. Human security, however, adds empowerment, adding citizens to the list of those who provide for their own security. “Human security recognizes the interlinkages between peace, development, and human rights, and equally considers civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights – thus combining human rights, human needs, and human development.”^[ii]

The United Nations Development Program’s “Sustainable Development Goals” support the development elements of human security focused on “people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnerships.”^[iii] The goals can only be achieved with strong national commitments and regional support, as many of these issues transcend boundaries. And without civic efforts to place the people themselves at the forefront of identifying and implementing solutions, establishing human security in struggling regions will fall short of all goals.

As the Development Program’s “Agenda 2030” states, “Sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security; and peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development.”^[iv] It is nearly impossible to focus, for instance, on developing educational or job opportunities or long-term child and maternal health initiatives when participants are likely to be killed on the way to a school, jobsite, or clinic. Thus, when governance, rule of law and a secure environment are not forthcoming from government institutions, people find a way to create these pillars for themselves and their communities.



Map of IGAD Region

Although nearly every country in the world is working toward its development goals, for today’s example, the countries of the Horn of Africa first began working together to mitigate the effects of regional drought and its adverse effects on development in 1986. Today’s regional economic community in the Horn of Africa is the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) created in 1996.^[v]

Previously, I noted the authority’s members are Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. IGAD’s vision is “to be the premier Regional Economic Community for achieving peace and sustainable development in the region.” Its mission is to “promote regional cooperation and *integration* to add value to Member States’ efforts in achieving peace, security and prosperity.”^[vi]

A drawback of the current Sustainable Development Goal's indexes is that they are applied at the national level, which creates a dearth of knowledge about the diversity in conditions within countries. Developing findings beyond national index rankings should be considered to better understand the macro – or region of authority as a whole, and the micro – or subregions of the authority that may not stop with national borders, due to cross-border dynamics.

In this light, it makes little sense to apply one measure to all of Kenya and another to all of Somalia that does not include local grievances, migration, crime, human displacement, and environmental degradation that affects both of them. This challenge is recognized as the need to tailor regional and country programs to more specific contexts, some of which will be subnational and some cross-border and regional: the micro and the macro. The same argument applies to the development goals. Although they are meant to be nationally based in character, many of them also have cross-border attributes difficult to measure only on a national basis.

The topographical makeup of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development region lent itself to human populations developing in pockets in remote mountains, separated by growing deserts and shrinking lakes and rivers. This led to divergent cultural development that separated people into groups that did not always cooperate. Many are just learning to do so today. Longtime environmental degradation, desertification, deforestation, colonial exploitation, and growing populations, along with few common conservation policies and technological adoption, have caused stagnation of economic opportunity.

Geography and history have conspired against the authority region for centuries, and today there is a greater shared effort to begin to deal with both legacies through increased attention to the cross-border nature of these challenges and a realization that the authority can do more to address them through regional approaches, rather than individual country or specific program approaches. This provides the opportunity to overcome these scourges through cooperation creating new industries and opportunities for the future.

Financing Over Funding

One aspect of the January 2020 United Nations Development Program's Strategic Offer in Africa's "New Approach" [vii] Financing new projects and programs requires a level of oversight that does not necessarily have to negate the objective of providing local ownership and innovation if the mechanisms can be made to ensure monies are not siphoned off for personal projects and wealth creation.

In the 1990s, the International Monetary Fund assumed this was how its financing programs were constructed – until then-Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma redirected \$600 million in IMF funds and used it to play the Ukrainian stock market.^[viii] This was a wake-up call for the IMF economists involved but was not enough for the entire organization to restructure its funding mechanisms. It may indeed be time for a new financing paradigm for the [Bretton Woods](#) institutions and their partners.

As British economist Barrington Moore stated in 1967, “Certain historical processes need to develop, notably the emergence of a large middle class, in order to sustain a viable democratic state.”^[ix] The keys to creating opportunities for producing that middle class include security, stability, and infrastructure, not more aid. As former World Bank economist Dambisa Moyo emphasized in her book, “Dead Aid,” “Not only is aid easy to steal, as it is usually provided directly to African governments, but it also makes control over government worth fighting for.”^[x]

Moyo also pointed out that, “Foreign direct investment and rapidly growing exports, not aid, have been the key to China’s economic miracle. Africa needs to learn from Asia.”^[xi] With foreign direct investment, as investors are taking the risk not international donors, regional economic communities, not individual governments, could be the recipients. These entities are better suited to manage interstate activities, such as building robust transportation and power generation structures that can serve more than a single country or constituency with realistic risk calculations and clear incentives for private investment, than any single constituent country.

Conversely, former IMF Director and Nigerian Finance Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala has long noted that this disparagement of aid is somewhat displaced, as Africa has contributed more than other countries throughout history to the astronomical growth of Western countries through its labor and resources and is entitled to aid almost as payment for that investment, however unwitting. In addition, Okonjo-Iweala has long maintained that when people are in extreme distress, such as those impoverished and displaced by extreme environmental events, they do not care where the help they receive originated. She calculates that every life saved through humanitarian aid allows that person to contribute to economic growth, and every life lost is a literal dead end to growth.

National financing frameworks are new financial tools meant to help fund national priorities within countries as described in each country’s Sustainable Development Strategy, which put the strategies at the center of the development agenda. Financing frameworks describe how this financing will be applied to planning and implementing each national strategy. These incorporate four building blocks for operationalization: (i) assessments and diagnostics; (ii)

design of the financing strategy; (iii) mechanisms for monitoring, review, and accountability; and (iv) governance and coordination mechanisms.

The first step in developing a single country financing framework is the Development Finance Assessment, which is the mechanism for assessment and diagnostics. In the authority, several countries have assessments and are in the pipeline for continuing the process toward financial frameworks as certain other national conditions need to first be in place, the first of which is leadership.

Technological Support

The Organization for Economic Development sees the critical challenges for social protection, especially concerning “last mile protection” of the poorest 20% in least developed societies as requiring focus on assistance, insurance, and labor market policies.^[xii] Once basic access is established, technology can support mitigation of these challenges in myriad ways. Even as some decried the need to support populations against the global pandemic as a drain on resources, many innovative strategies for education and healthcare, as well as social assistance, developed as a result.

The pandemic spurred the expansion of telehealth, remote education, and the need for individuals to access emergency funds, driving technology growth across the globe. In a distant village with few medical personnel or teachers, telehealth and remote learning showed it can reach many people with only a single, centralized internet connection. In Ethiopia, domestically produced drones were used to transport personal protective equipment and medicines across rugged terrain, where the lack of road infrastructure would have made conventional deliveries impossible. This has since become a long-range network that can deliver needed supplies not just to remote areas but in fast-growing, congested urban areas.^[xiii]

In a July 2020 TED Talk, United Nations Development Program Director Achim Steiner mentioned the importance of people needing rapid cash transfers for basic needs during the early days of the pandemic.^[xiv] Today in many countries, people can use their mobile phones to both apply for such aid in disaster zones and receive their funding directly to mobile accounts.

Mobile telephone penetration is drastically higher than internet use in the authority, so a similar method could be explored for use there during poor harvest seasons or other disasters that cause human displacement. As such programs are already mobile, they do not preclude migrants from maintaining their cashflow. These are just some areas in which technology can be used to enhance access to social protection.

Information and Communications Technologies

Rising levels of education and technical sophistication can be found across the authority region. In the cities, government agents, analysts, and entrepreneurs are communicating and processing ever more data to build businesses and work for large organizations. Amid the persistent challenge of food insecurity, communities and individuals are relying increasingly on the connective power of technologies to allow them to access weather reports, commodity pricing, and warning alerts for environmental variations that could threaten their livelihoods.

The International Telecoms Union notes two key challenges to its efforts to meaningfully connect everyone on the planet to the internet by 2030. These are obviously more serious in less developed parts of the world, including most of the authority.

- Substantial digital divides persist between countries.
- Digital divides are also evident within countries. Men, urban residents, and young people are more likely to be online than women, rural dwellers, and older people. The digital gender gap is more pronounced in developing countries and substantial in least developed countries.[xv]

A primary growth inhibitor of expansion of the technology sector in authority countries is unreliable power supply. If the authority region was to identify critical sources of investment for the energy sector, it could lead the world in solar and wind production and move its arid and unproductive land areas to highly dynamic use in developing new industries away from agriculture. With little detail on how, the IGAD Regional Strategy 2021-2025 identified four main areas of focus to be “to develop a unified regional market with expanded infrastructure and connectivity with expansion of 30% transport & ICT infrastructure linkages & continental power pools leading to 15% increase in regional trade, 15% in manufacturing, and 10% in tourism.”[xvi]

In December 2023, ITU's Partner2Connect Digital Coalition identified new connectivity projects worth \$7 billion worldwide in 2023. The funds for these projects are from U.N. organizations but mainly from their commercial partners who pledge funding for large telecommunications investments in poorer countries and regions.[xvii]

In December 2019, the Harvard Business Review evaluated the potential of technologies as a driver for growth in Ethiopia and Kenya and determined that they have increasingly educated youth, with an emphasis on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), and administrations committed to privatizing growth industries, including technology and supporting innovation.

Ethiopia has developed its “Sheba Valley” and Kenya its “Silicon Savannah” as growing tech-savvy ecosystems.

The World Bank noted in 2019 that Djibouti has untapped potential in tourism and in renewable energy production. It also lies on still more untapped undersea telecommunications cables it could further develop for digital economy dividends.^[xviii] According to the ITU, as of December 2023, 65% of people in Djibouti had internet access, as opposed to 37.5% across the African continent.^[xix] In its Djibouti Vision 2035, the country aims to increase availability of affordable quality telecommunication services and “to leverage the potential of digital technologies as a driver of economic growth.”^[xx]

As Ethiopia and Kenya surge ahead, opportunities like Djibouti’s system will need development and connectivity support, as well as reliable energy. However, informing potential users why these services are a benefit to them, when many are struggling with basic food insecurity, will also be a significant hurdle.

It has traditionally been the elites in each individual African country that dictated the policy directions of each country. Today, it is often the regional economic communities that identify and implement the most effective regionally based policies and decisions for economic and security matters. These regional economic communities are not focused on single-nation concerns but recognize that challenges like poverty, transnational organized crime, terrorism, migration, and climate change do not halt at borders, but affect entire regions.

To ensure the entire region benefits from these advances, the authority should take the lead in training leaders on why bridging the digital divide is in their interest so they, in turn, can strive to make them accessible and affordable and educate potential users on their benefits. Cross-border challenges are some of the most pressing issues today and they require cross-border solutions and enhanced resilience to be holistically achieved across regions with shared problems. This is as true in Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and South America as it is in Africa.

Aid has its place, especially in the form of advising and engineering support, but the real solution is likely in the form of investment.

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