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CSO Capacity Building: An Action Framework



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Introduction

A. Rationale and purpose

For most African countries, the task for the immediate future is reconstruction/transformation of their economies within a continental and global context. For this to happen, they must consider seriously how to share this responsibility with civil society. Undoubtedly, the importance of the contribution of civil society organizations (CSOs), especially that of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to development is often recognized. However, the fact still remains that these organizations must be enhanced for greater impact, especially in relation to their role in the reconstruction and transformation process. Yes, there is still scope for improvement, especially if CSOs are to meet the challenges of the day. African CSOs have to be more active, viable and strong if they are to step up their contribution to Africa's development. Management of scarce resources and distribution of services among diverse and needy recipient require improvement in their overall operation and capacity. For this to happen, we must develop a better appreciation and understanding of the roles to be played by CSOs, and assist in developing their capacity to play these roles. It is necessary, in this regard, to initiate a process of review and discussion leading to the formulation of a framework for CSO capacity development. Such a framework should provide commonly accepted principles, establish the conditions under which improvement in CSO activities would thrive and make impact, define the priority areas for performance enhancement and an agenda for engaging in CSO capacity building. The thrust of this publication is to stimulate discussion on strategies for enhancing CSO capacity to contribute to the development process. In this respect, the objectives of this publication are manifold, mainly to:

- Provide a conceptual framework;
- Provide a functional understanding of the roles of CSOs, in particular NGOs, in Africa's development;
- Relate these roles to the emerging political and economic realities and expectations;
- Provide a better appreciation of the capacity-building needs of African CSOs, for enhancing the effectiveness of their contribution to the development process; and

Promote methodological approaches to CSO capacity building.

B. Organization of document

The paper seeks to contribute to the ongoing search for the most feasible measures to facilitate the effective contribution of CSOs in the development process. It draws on studies, which have explored CSO activities in Africa, the strategies employed in promoting their activities, and factors that influence their role. The introduction lays out the background to CSO involvement in the development process, the rationale for initiating a capacity-building programme and provides operational definitions of concepts and notions, which are presented in the annex to this document. This is to develop a common understanding and appreciation, as a basis for engaging in any meaningful discussion or designing of technical and other support to CSOs. The document is presented in two parts. Part I of the publication provides perspectives on the present activities and factors that will influence any future role. It also recognizes the presence and active role of other actors and the need, therefore, to be definitive and to build on the identified strengths of CSOs. A strong argument is made for building CSO capacity by proffering reactions to questions such as, "Are they strategically placed and capable of taking on these new challenges?" "Given the magnitude of the expectations placed on CSOs, how do we move beyond wishes to concrete and strategic actions to ensure their effectiveness?" The paper then identifies opportunities to be used in building CSO capacity, including the enabling factors, the priority areas on which to focus and capacity-enhancing instruments. Finally, some concluding observations and recommendations are provided along with illustrative examples of how to apply the capacity-building framework.

Part II helps develop these thoughts further, by proposing a number of operational modalities and strategies for providing capacity building and technical support to CSOs in Africa. Practical actions required to make CSOs function effectively and effi-

ciently are addressed to CSOs, government, the for profit private sector and other development partners. It outlines what each actor could do to contribute to the building of CSO capacity.

C. Target audience

The paper seeks to open up discussions and to provide a framework for enhancing CSO effectiveness in the development process. Hopefully, its conclusions and recommendations will be made available to governments, private sector actors, the international community including foreign-based NGOs and CSOs themselves. It will form a basis for engaging in actions to build CSOs that are more effective and that are credible development partners.

D. Conceptual definitions

An important aspect of consensus building is a clearer understanding and clarification of specific themes, words, statements and concepts. Most of the concepts used do not necessarily transmit generally accepted meanings and understanding and as such it is not uncommon to experience confusion in the use of certain concepts, words or themes. Even those fairly intimately involved with civil society activities do not always have a consensus on meanings. It is therefore very important that we start off with a common understanding of concepts. It is important to stress that the definitions used in this report are operative definitions and have been subject to discussion. These are presented in a glossary of terms in annex I.

Part I:

Enhancing the Effectiveness of Selected Indigenous African CSOs Including NGOs: Capacity Building Challenges and Opportunities

I. CSOs: Their Evolution and Function

A. The historic context

The last few decades have seen escalation of the number of CSOs, in particular NGOs, devoted to socioeconomic development issues. Not that these are recent developments. CSOs in Africa have long contributed in diverse ways to the continent's development in political, social and economic spheres. Civil society organizations have evolved in complex ways since the years after the Second World War. Examples from the pre-and post-independence era all testify to the important role that they have played. As far back as the 1950s, CSOs served to nurture the concept of participatory development in Africa. First they played a major role in the struggle for independence which swept across most of Africa in the 1950s and 1960s. Extensive mobilization of civil society was a crucial source of pressure for the end of colonial rule. Citizens pressed their challenge to colonial rule not merely as individuals, but as members of women's movements, trade unions, civic associations and the like. For example, the Sierra Leone Women's Movement and the trade union were prominent civil society organizations that pressed for Sierra Leone's independence.

It is equally important to note that civil society organizations were also prominent in other areas; some provided services, some served educational purposes. The provision of services by CSOs originated with the development activities of religious groups. Educational and health services were provided as part of religious duty. Mission schools and hospitals mushroomed to provide services although these were mostly in rural communities.

The normative role of CSOs in political change continued until the 1970s when the pressure for strong central government control and leadership devoid of

In the process of achieving long-term growth and sustained development, it is important that African Governments use the spirit and will of its people.

outside competition led most African governments to rethink their role and helped to shape the relations between governments and other development partners. This situation led some governments to stay a courteous distance from CSOs because, at this time, expatriates predominantly led these organizations. The distancing took various forms, most notably, the taking over of the funding and running of most of the services (educational and health) provided by these organizations.

This trend for strong central government control did not last long, as most sub-Saharan African countries faced with the sharp decline in economic performance had to review this policy. For most of Africa, this decline led to worsening of the economic situation of a large segment of the continent's population. Governments addressing the economic decline were forced to take harsh reform measures, including the adoption of stringent fiscal discipline and other structural adjustment measures. As these reforms began to pinch, the politics of development based on strong central government was undermined and gave way to the use of community development programmes to fill the gap in the fight to reduce poverty. As a result, awareness of community involvement became much more acceptable and widespread. Government's use of self-help community groups in search of a way out of Africa's economic and social crisis gained prominence.

While the idea of civil society's participation in the development process goes way back, the idea that CSOs should be mobilized and organized to participate in local development has been formalized and popularized only during the last fifteen to twenty years. One of the first continent-wide discussions on the role of civil society organizations in Africa's development was the 1987 African NGO meeting in Dakar, Senegal. The meeting stressed the need for close association between NGOs and their governments, and for African governments to consider NGOs as partners and not competitors in development. Similarly, the UN at large has kept the discussion going and together with other development partners have produced substantial argument and justification on the issue. The UN family has argued that efforts should focus on strengthen-

ing CSOs for the mobilization of popular participation in the development process and that people's active involvement in the development process accelerates economic and social progress. Proposals aimed at furthering people's participation were forcefully made in the Copenhagen Declaration, as well as in the Programme of Action for Social Development and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD-PA). Further proposals were made in Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), has been in the forefront of these discussions. Together with representatives of African governments, other agencies the United Nations System, representatives of civil society organizations and the international community, it organized the landmark International Conference on Popular Participation in the Recovery and Development Process in Africa to discuss the issue. The conference, which was held in 1990, in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, adopted the "African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation" (attached as annex II). The Charter, which laid out the framework for promoting broad-based popular participation, received endorsement by the African Heads of State and Government, African Ministers Responsible for Economic Development and Planning and the United National General Assembly. It provided consensus on the role of people's organizations in the development process. The Charter affirmed that the development process should be fundamentally reoriented towards greater broad-based participation on the part of Africa's people and their organizations.

ECA, within the context of the Charter, launched a popular-participation-in-development project with resources from the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ). The project was designed to broaden assistance and support to civic organizations in Africa so that they could be more proactive in contributing to Africa's development. Within the framework of the project, a wide range of activities was undertaken, primarily to facilitate dialogue and enhance cooperation and interface between governments and CSOs. The effectiveness of CSO contribution to the policy-making process received significant attention through a number of semi-

African Governments by the adoption of the "African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation" in 1990 laid out the framework for promoting broad based popular participation and clearly established the need for civil society's involvement in the development process

nars and workshops organized in collaboration with national institutions. Through this project, a database has been developed to facilitate documentation and exchange of information as well as to document and disseminate best practices in CSO involvement.

The emergence of new CSO concerns and roles

Changes in both African and the international political situation and the emphasis on the international cooperation agenda are redefining the content and landscape of development management. These changes are evoking new strategic management practices, where external and internal environmental analysis is used to redefine basic roles and overall strategic positions and missions. In some cases, these changes have compelled governments to roll back their dominant role in production. Another concern is the eroding effects of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) on development resources. These have led to domestic cutbacks in the social service budgets of most African countries. While it is widely accepted that governments bear the primary responsibility of providing basic services such as health and education to its people, these cutbacks have left a vacuum that CSOs and the private sector are expected to fill in a more dominant way. Furthermore, the twin processes of globalization and liberalization of the world economy bring new threats and challenges that lead to formation of strategic alliances and partnerships involving government, CSOs, and the private sector, for managing and capturing the emerging opportunities.

These regional and global trends are dramatically changing the context in which CSOs work. While CSOs have been given a new position of prominence as a result of these trends, African CSOs, especially the NGOs, must now begin to adapt to this new environment and expectations. Collectively, CSOs must reflect strategically on how the emerging political, social and economic trends are shaping their roles and relationships. Consequently, they will have to focus on capacity development of this sector in order to play their new role effectively and efficiently. Several trends are competing for attention but the following issues demand our response, as they are more likely to define civil society's role and relationship with government and its representatives.

1. Political and economic emergencies

For most African countries, political and economic emergencies have been more the norm than the exception. These emergency situations have been characterized by rapid deterioration of such socioeconomic conditions as worsening unemployment, destruction of property, destabilization of large segments of society and increased poverty. The transition from emergen-

cies to long-term sustainable development involves all aspects of reconstruction including those related to the macro-economy, the productive and social sectors, and physical infrastructure. In most of these situations, the rural areas are the most affected. A full-scale reconstruction programme will definitely involve government agencies, donors, CSOs, etc. The respective activities of these actors should be well defined and harmonized to complement efforts.

2. Emphasis on democratization and good governance

There has been renewed attention and emphasis on democratization and good governance as important instruments to sustain development in Africa. Many African governments have been obliged to bring the issues of political, economic and administrative reforms to the centre of policy debates. A prominent feature of this transition is the principle of collective engagement for socioeconomic development, which encourages the participation of civil society organizations in the democratic and good governance process. The greatest challenge in the process is how to support the creation and development of civil society's institutional capabilities and power to intervene appropriately.

3. Regional integration and cooperation

Globalization requires a process of regionalization and integration, that is, a deepening of cooperation and closer integration of national economies and markets to form larger regional markets, with the subsequent removal of all barriers to the movement of goods and people. These developments require new and innovative approaches, to allow for policy convergence on issues of mutual concerns and interest. African governments have recognized the importance of civil society in this respect. To this end, article 90 of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community points to the need to develop cooperative relations between the Community and African NGOs for the purpose of furthering regional economic cooperation and integration. The article states "The Community, in the context of mobilizing the human and material resources of Africa, shall establish relations of cooperation with African NGOs, with a view to encouraging the involvement of the African peoples in the process of economic integration and mobilizing their technical, material and financial support." Few governments have thought strategically about how the integration process will shape livelihoods and affect relationships with NGOs.

4. Focus on poverty reduction

Poverty remains a serious problem for most African countries. This problem has been exacerbated by the conditionalities imposed by SAPs on the one hand and the effects of the debt burden on the other. SAPs, as much as they have been efficient in resource trans-

fers, tended to overlook the need for sustained investment in national development. The emphasis on fiscal discipline and management has also contributed to neglect of the social sector, deterioration of the development potential of most sub-Saharan African countries and the subsequent poverty situation. The debt burden has equally contributed to the fiscal crisis facing them. In some cases, the neglect of the social sector has led to reduced access to basic services for a majority of Africa's people. Debt servicing has absorbed a significant portion of foreign exchange earnings and this means diversion from social sector investment to debt repayment. The human cost of this situation is increased poverty. The consequences of long periods of economic stagnation and decline, rural deterioration, rapid population growth, explosive urban expansion outstripping the supply of social amenities and economic opportunities have all contributed to the spread of poverty in most African countries. As such, African countries have concentrated their development objectives on reducing poverty. New cooperation arrangements now recognize that indigenous CSOs, including NGOs, represent the backbone of the grassroots capability for poverty reduction. The general trend of most cooperation arrangements is for civil society organizations to have more say over the nature of the partnership and increased access to development resources. For example, the new form of the European Union - African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (EU-ACP) cooperation is based on the principle of partnership, which promotes the active participation of civil society organizations in defining and implementing development cooperation programmes.

5. From aid to international cooperation

Changes in both African and international economic relations and shifts in the emphasis of international cooperation policy are redefining the content and scope of development cooperation. There is new emphasis on stimulating productive energies through investing in people and through participatory development. These are becoming central elements in development strategies and development cooperation. They are seen as essential ingredients for involving communities in the planning and implementation of development programmes so as to engender equitable and sustainable development. The involvement of communities also serves as a means of generating self-sustaining change, economic growth and greater equity. Development cooperation programmes now seek opportunities to work in a constructive manner with local institutions.

6. Changes in information and communication

Changes in information and communication have helped to bring socioeconomic conditions more squarely to the forefront of the development agenda.

The information revolution has made people more aware of their socioeconomic conditions and is a factor favouring popular participation and the eminent role of CSOs. The role could take the form of promotion and advocacy for all vulnerable groups, including women, children, the aged, and the handicapped.

Economic globalization has provoked quite legitimately, a crisis of confidence and competitiveness. For instance, African countries with weak economic structures could be hard-hit by the effects of globalization. African countries stand in danger of further marginalization in a global economy that is becoming increasingly competitive. This situation could manifest itself in many ways, among which are increased poverty, environmental degradation and likely increase in unemployment. These situations need not be the case, as the emerging new "borderless" world economy of integrated markets offers both opportunities and challenges, especially for developing economies, such as Africa's.

However, without a deeply entrenched social dimension covering job development and protection it will not fulfill its promises for Africa. African governments, employers and trade unions must take appropriate measures to fight unemployment and poverty. The implementation of these actions should take precedence over the protection of the special interests of multinationals or the fortunes of the narrow African elite who have so far reaped the benefits of trade and liberalization. These consequences have profound ramifications on how African countries do business. It is time for decision-makers, at all levels, to realize the importance of workers and their trade unions in coming up with solutions. CSOs collectively must recognize these implications and equip themselves to interpret and resist their negative impact on Africa at all levels of society, especially the more vulnerable. It challenges us to evolve new approaches to building broad-based partnerships with all stakeholders including civil society organizations, in particular civic associations, trade unions and NGOs.

8. Implementation of regional and global programmes

The economic development of Africa continues to be a source of concern and challenge to both African governments and their partners who have, over the years, launched various development initiatives in favour of Africa's development. The most recent include the UN Special Initiative on Africa (UNSIDA) launched in March 1996 and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). Also important is the observance of a decade for the promotion of transport and communications as well as industrial development in Africa under such programmes as the second United Nations

Transport and Communications Decade for Africa (UNTACDA II), and the second Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA II). Similarly, the international community has also adopted various global programmes and action plans, such as the ICPD-PA and Agenda 21 to address various development concerns. This reflects the sense of urgency and commitment that exists at the international level. The adoption of these programmes provided opportunities to engage in action-oriented efforts in response to the situation. Governments and CSOs must persistently collaborate in pursuing implementation of the various provisions.

These trends should be confronted with appropriate strategic response that will not only redefine the changes necessary in CSO roles, relationships, organizational structures, financing, linkages and strategies, but create conditions for concrete actions. Strategic response to these trends include:

- Addressing the changes necessary in CSO roles, relationships, organizational structures, financing, linkages and strategies to confront the emerging challenges of poverty, economic globalization, regional integration, and growing economic uncertainty. Additionally, CSOs can help to ensure equitable resource distribution and defend the interests of marginalized groups in society. This would require a re-examination of the work of CSOs, redefinition of their roles, whom they serve and to whom they are accountable, and how CSOs, especially NGOs, can function more effectively and efficiently.
- Developing indigenous CSO capacity to take on these new responsibilities, especially towards poverty alleviation.
- Linking communities across national boundaries to promote regional economic integration, local, subregional, and regional institutional linkages, networks and movements of goods and people.
- Influencing business practices and behaviour to cover issues of ethics and accountability, responsible business attitudes, job creation and protection, protection of the environment, responsible consumer society and a socially responsible private sector.
- Strengthening the research and information dissemination capacity of CSOs to provide empiric data and information on the effects of these changes and developments on the lives of marginalized groups in society.
- Influencing political practice and behaviour to promote a development culture that is responsive to society's needs and aspirations rather than the present elitist and self-serving motivation.

II. CSOs and Participatory Development: A Review

A. CSOs: Making a difference in development

Civil society organizations, especially NGOs, have grown significantly in numbers over the last decade or so. At the same time, the scope of their programmes has widened to the extent that they reach into many spheres of political, economic and social development, and are concerned or involved with almost every aspect of human need. Many are known for their advocacy role in pushing for improvement in public policy and for more responsiveness to the socioeconomic development agenda. They are now widely recognized as a catalyst for change, implementing projects, generating support, mobilizing resources at the national and international levels, bringing communities together for self-help, and organizing interest and professional groups. Their collective actions are touching the lives of a growing number of people although they have not yet reached their full potential.

The size and scope of work of the African CSO sector varies widely across subregions and across countries. This variation in size and scope is a reflection of the different circumstances giving rise to the birth of CSOs and NGOs. Southern Africa presents a vivid picture of the CSO sector, its evolution and the areas of focus that were shaped by the political liberation struggle. NGOs and CBOs, along with churches, trade unions, and voluntary associations have featured prominently in the political change which for some decades preoccupied this region. As country after country gained their independence, CSOs turned their efforts to development-oriented activities, providing a range of services from educational support and training to rural development, media services, protection of the environment especially wildlife conservation, and human rights and gender issues.

In each of the countries of the subregions, NGOs have organized themselves under umbrella bodies with the specific objectives of stimulating, promoting and supporting the development activi-

ties of their members. These umbrella bodies provide common forums for discussion; they promote cooperation among themselves and provide assistance in the planning and coordination of activities of member organizations. Collectively, they are enhancing their networks and strength, especially for advocacy, lobbying and policy influence.

An innovative development in this subregion is South Africa's CSO information dissemination through the establishment of community radio services that give voice to people not heard on mainstream media. These serve many purposes. They present political points of view and respond to specific local information needs. They fill the media gap by providing a mix of international and local programming, and provide educational development needs. Out of this has emerged the Cassette Education Trust, which provides a medium for empowerment at the grassroots level through free speech and training in the communications movement.

The civil society sector of the Central African subregion is dominated by NGOs that see as their primary role the creation of partnerships with government. Alongside these NGOs, a good number of grassroots CSOs contribute their fair share to improvement of the quality of life of people. In this respect, closing the ranks and making their voice heard have been the main preoccupations of the civil society community. NGOs have devoted considerable attention to the building of a united front around specific issues and concerns. For example, the Confederation des ONG d'Afrique Centrale (Congac), a subregional network, was established to mobilize and stimulate participation of people in environment and sustainable development activities. Congac has established technical liaison capacity for North-South and South-South dialogue and cooperation between civil society and public authorities. It also helps to build capacity among CSOs. Major accomplishments in the area of North-South and South-South dialogue include:

Participation in discussions at the international level on the effects of the Uruguay Round of

GATT Negotiations on the life of ordinary citizens; and

- Involvement in the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), whose on-going discussions focus on the processes and programmes to stimulate economic growth in Africa. Another subregional network is Communauté Economique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale (CEMAC); its primary focus is the promotion of economic integration and cooperation among countries of the subregion.

A number of other country-specific networks have organized their work around one or more of the following issues or areas:

- Protection of natural forest;
- Protection of water resources including drinking water;
- Population related issues especially the promotion of family planning;
- Rural and agricultural development;
- Community development covering the provision of basic services such as water, education and health;
- Micro-enterprise promotion including micro-financing assistance;
- Promotion of women in development; and
- Training for the development and application of local technology.

In the past few years, the political situation in Central Africa, has been characterized by civil wars and cross-border conflicts. This has redefined the scope and work of CSOs, especially those of Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As a result of the present political instability, there has been a major shift in emphasis from development-oriented activities to humanitarian response and conflict resolution. CSOs are actively participating in national, subregional, regional and international initiatives for conflict resolution and the provision of humanitarian assistance.

In all of these, women are very active in many aspects including organizing groups and mobilizing resources and support for their activities. They have a strong involvement in negotiating positions of the civil society community and promoting awareness among its rank and file. CSO activities have been handicapped by lack of transparency and good governance practices, poor information flow and access and limited financial resources. All of this weakens partnership and project delivery.

Countries of the North African subregion have seen an upsurge in the rebirth of CSOs after a period of inaction due to strong government control. This situation changed during the period 1964 to 1998, and NGOs have grown in many directions,

developing a significant presence in their communities. However, the new wave of CSOs, have realized that the challenge they face go beyond mere involvement and should include strategies for opening the path to constructive engagement. Making an impact requires the development of a participatory framework that is sensitive to the internal dynamics and power play. They realize that their survival is more guaranteed if they have strong leadership with enough ability to wield and make effective use of power. It is partly in reaction to this reality that CSOs have focussed their attention on two interrelated areas. One is the development of strong powerful leaders who can leverage resources and the commitment of other development partners and the other is the building of a power base from which to sustain their participation.

Many developments are working in their favour, namely the adoption of a legal framework for NGO operations has helped in the creation of an enabling environment within which NGOs engage not only in their activities but have established some partnership relationships with governments. They have also taken advantage of this momentum and have given high priority to the rebuilding of a CSO vision within the subregion. The rebuilding has taken many forms. One has to do with recognition of the competence within the CSO community, including how to mobilize and coordinate existing expertise. The second focussed on measures required for addressing the tensions between CSOs and government so as to improve the partnership with civil society. The third form was adoption of a position and taking actions leading to the acceptance of civil society as an integral part of government machinery.

These developments in the CSO community have achieved the following: enhanced political dialogue, improved government/CSO cooperation within a spirit of constructive engagement and increased participation in the economic development programmes of the subregion. CSOs within this subregion have embarked on initiatives to deepen this dialogue and involvement further by expanding their network beyond the subregion to link up with countries in the Middle East. Through this, they have launched a communications programme and publish the newsletter "Hotline", on a regular basis, to inform the sector and to mobilize the participation of a wide range of CSOs.

CSOs in the North African subregion are making significant contributions to the development process and but with a focus on issues related to:

- Population growth including family planning;
- Community development especially in the rural area;
- Protection of the environment;

- Conservation of natural resources, especially water;
- Support to human rights and other rights discriminated against, including the protection of women's rights;
- Community-based income generation;
- Culture and religious education;
- Youth development;
- Information networking;
- Provision of voluntary services;
- Research and training to support CSO activities.

Together, countries of the East African subregion have an overwhelming number of CSOs, including NGOs. A central feature of CSO development activities in the subregion has been promotion of membership organizations. These organizations, as much as they exist to further the interests of their members, play a significant role in the mutual support system and provide an anchor for community development. These organizations operate mainly in the rural areas as self-help groups and perform among other tasks, agricultural and food production activities. They are also involved in a range of other productive activities such as income generation and environmental protection aimed at saving the sub-region's wildlife. Other CSOs include women's groups that play a prominent role in organizing communities to take on community activities such as education, rural development and income generation. More recently, the CSOs of this subregion have been in the forefront of fighting for political transformation and are playing key roles in guiding the process of political dialogue and consolidation, an important factor for political stability. Despite the changes taking place, the extended family homestead has remained the central point around which CSO activities rotate.

In most of these Eastern African countries, CSOs and particularly NGOs, have been pulled together under various forms of consortium arrangements. The NGO community of this subregion has, as part of its effort to organize support and services to its network, established the Eastern African Support Unit for NGOs (EASUN)¹. Its overall goal is to help to strengthen civil society so that its actors can become more effective in development. This it hopes to achieve by improving the capacity of NGOs and CBOs so that they can be more effective.

In the case of West Africa, CSOs devoted to development promotion on the basis of community contribution is a well-established tradition that has roots in the charity and welfare orientation of the community. Most villages have some such organization at work, usually formed by inhabitants to address the welfare needs of these communities.

CSO activities grew in the years following independence and their number increased significantly during the period of austerity - the 1980s and 1990s. There was a matching increase in the number of self-help activities that started in response to the economic and social decline experienced by a number of West African countries.

In every country in the West African subregion, CSOs are actively engaged in a wide and diverse range of grassroots development initiatives, ranging from environmental protection activities to refugee relief and rehabilitation. Women's groups are more prominent in environment activities that involve reafforestation, development and promotion of indigenous fuel-efficient devices and stoves; and entrepreneurial skills development programmes aimed at combating poverty and raising family incomes, among others.

The level of awareness, participation and commitment of community groups or CSOs to development concerns and priorities is quite high and growing, fostered by the self-help philosophy that is strongly entrenched in the culture and traditions of most ethnic groups in the area, especially in the Sahel countries.

Generally, grassroots CSOs in West Africa, and NGOs in particular, operate under very favourable and encouraging atmospheres, and enjoy highly collaborative relationships with governments and development/donor agencies. In most, if not all countries in the subregion, national umbrellas have been created, which are recognized as representatives of CSOs. They are consulted on critical development issues, and, in some instances, are assigned the mandate to coordinate CSO interventions and to act as conduits for project funds to CSOs for projects supported by bilateral and/or multilateral assistance.

The number and strength of CSOs in West Africa, especially NGOs, continue to grow, and they are increasing in prominence and credibility at the community level as development initiators and partners that are more genuine than governments. Notwithstanding, they generally suffer from weak administration and management, low absorptive capacity, over-dependence on outside financial support, and insufficient human and resource bases.

From the foregoing analysis on the role of CSOs in the development process, a number of typical activities emerged. Broadly, CSOs are agents in the following major areas of emphasis:

Social transformation. Community-based development activities result in improved living standards in some communities, especially

¹ No. 1, PRODDER Newsletter, 1998.

among disadvantaged groups. Women make strategic contributions in this area, especially in organizing and mobilizing support including community financing, and in implementing community-based social welfare and economic improvement activities;

Conscientization and empowerment. CSOs are operating as agents for molding local concerns such as human rights, gender equity and poverty alleviation, and directing them in a particular direction mainly through their influencing role;

Implementation of new policy and development agendas adopted by a number of governments; Supporters of charitable and welfare groups. Such activities have significantly increased over the years in response to war and conflict in the region. Some CSOs now add the role of peace building, reconstruction and rehabilitation to their functions.

The above mentioned four broad areas of emphasis cover the following CSO group activities:

Developmental, that is, devoting resources to im-

provement of infrastructure, institutions, and the quality of life of the community, including economic activities such as are primarily undertaken by productive, economic and commercial associations and networks;

Cultural and religious. Communal, ethnic, and other institutions and associations defend collective values, faiths, beliefs, and symbols;

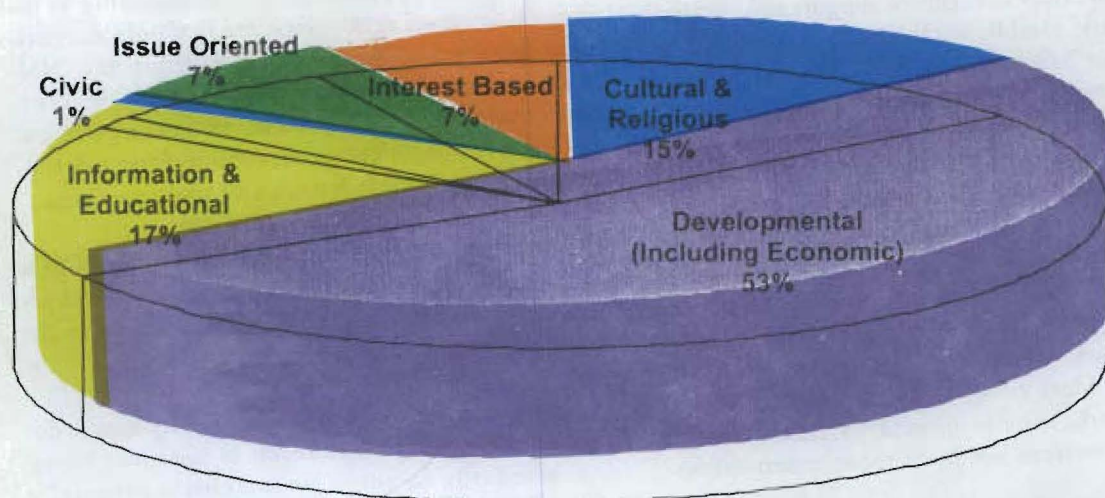
Interest-based. These exist to advance or defend the common functional or material interest of their members, such as workers, students, professionals, and the like;

Issue-oriented. These are movements for consumer protection, women's rights, land and other reforms, and environmental protection;

Civic. Some CSOs seek improvements in political, public administrative and judicial systems through human rights monitoring, voter education and mobilization, poll-monitoring, and anticorruption campaigns, among others; and

Informational and educational. Such CSOs become involved in the production and dissemination of information, ideas, and news for public knowledge.

The Scope of CSO's Activities in Africa



About fifty-two per cent of CSO activity is developmental and includes income generation especially at the micro and informal level. This concentration of development activities is the result of people coming together to promote their survival in the face of declining economic status. The second largest area of focus is informational and educational – two important elements in the empowerment process. This area is vital for promoting popular participation, especially in the governance process.

enabling environment, policy formulation, programme planning, implementation and monitoring to resource mobilization and allocation. The success of this process depends on the full engagement of all actors in different phases, namely: service delivery, resource mobilization, public information, education and advocacy. It is further noted that each actor a distinct but important role in the process. The question then is how can the key operating roles of the various actors balance? Is it feasible that government and CSOs can be linked in a workable relationship? To what extent can the government devolve some of its development responsibilities to CSOs? To what extent can CSOs cooperate with government? Given the strengths of each actor, what opportunities exist for cooperation, collaboration and consultation? The comparative advantage of each actor can be summarized as follows:

B. Comparative advantages of the various actors

Boxes 1 to 5 provide key positive features of the various actors in the development field. They highlight the process of development as encompassing a broad spectrum of actions from creation of an

Box 1: Government

Government's main comparative advantage is its strategic role in programme and policy development. This translates into the following other important advantages, namely:

- ☐ Power and legitimacy to plan and implement national development programmes;
- ☐ Central control in the planning and directing of national development plans;
- ☐ Effectiveness in developing a participatory framework, covering institutional and infrastructural aspects for broad-based popular participation;
- ☐ Strategic role in defining and coordinating development policy among all players;
- ☐ Influence on how public goods and services are provided locally, by setting policy guidelines and the regulatory framework for their delivery;
- ☐ Power to mobilize and allocate development resources;
- ☐ Mandatory role in establishing conducive environment for the effective participation of other players in the development process; and
- ☐ Position to promote greater participation and consensus-building in the formulation and implementation of policies at all levels in society.

Box 2. Private sector (for profit)

The positive features of the profit-making private sector include:

- ☐ Participation and financing of national development programmes,;
- ☐ Penetration in the decision-making process;
- ☐ Influencing role on national development and community cooperation policies;
- ☐ Providing technical support for the preparation and implementation of locally initiated community development cooperation programmes; and
- ☐ Networking among private sector groups for mobilizing and channeling resources to national development programmes and projects.

Local CSOs have the following comparative advantages:

- ☐ Capacity to develop innovative and more appropriate policy proposals from field experience;
- ☐ Better providers of social services;
- ☐ Differential ability to mobilize resources at home and abroad;
- ☐ Role as natural interlocutors in opening up the development process to civil society;
- ☐ Being able to operate in problem areas, which the State has not addressed properly – or not yet addressed at all;
- ☐ Monitoring and effecting adjustment in State development interventions;
- ☐ Ability to relate to people's real needs and opinions and to use this knowledge of grassroots realities in their dialogue with development partners. This has helped to enrich development perspectives;
- ☐ Mobilizing, organizing and coordinating grassroots support for implementation of development projects;
- ☐ More effective operational work, thus more valuable for programme or project implementation;
- ☐ Having effective contact with the wider society as they seek to provide development assistance;
- ☐ Having extensive knowledge and effectiveness in awareness raising and sensitization of society at large on development agendas and priorities;
- ☐ Providing development intervention at lower cost;
- ☐ Experience in supporting local level development initiatives.

Regional CSOs are known for:

- ☐ Their experience in expanding local development initiatives at the sub-regional and regional levels.
- ☐ Being particularly useful in cross-border actions such as co-ordination of humanitarian assistance.

The comparative advantages of international NGOs include:

- ☐ Their ability to play active role in development programme negotiation covering the design, preparation, funding and monitoring;
- ☐ Being strategically placed to provide platform for improved dialogue between governments and donor community on the one hand, and local NGOs on the other;
- ☐ Being better placed to coordinate activities between local CSOs and their international counterparts;

The donor community's strength is in:

- ☐ Financing of development programmes and projects;
- ☐ Providing technical assistance including expertise, technology, human resources development,

Women are known for their organizational and influencing skills, which explains their:

- ☐ Effectiveness in addressing issues of social justice and equity as part of the development agenda;
- ☐ Comparative advantage in mobilization of grassroots participation in the development process;
- ☐ Effectiveness in mobilizing resources at the grassroots level to finance community development projects;
- ☐ Entrepreneurship skills;
- ☐ Dedication to the promotion of fundamental changes in the development process;
- ☐ Being more action-oriented towards community needs.

Currently, government occupies a central position when it comes to national development. If, however, common national development efforts in the future are to be more effective, then a network of society must emerge, in which non-State actors and private concerns also assume part of the responsibility for community development. Of course, the government remains responsible for balancing interests, gathering together and coordinating local, regional and international activities and setting the overall course. Again, a government based on the rule of law and democratic legitimacy, remains the decisive authority when it comes to safeguarding the interest of all. It has the responsibility of ensuring that the organizational and developmental tasks within society are carried out, that there is social equity, that a public infrastructure continues to be guaranteed, and that an enabling environment exists. Furthermore, the task of providing oversight, monitoring and regulation of all participation in development remains the domain of government. Governments will be confronted increasingly with coordination tasks at the national, regional and international level, as global policy continues to depend on self-coordination by governments.

The potential for achieving national development goals is greater in those situations where actors from civil society make fruitful contribution to the development process. State institutions no longer

have the resources, nor the capacity to take on development single-handedly. Shaping of development policy has to include non-State actors in a more intimate way. They are much more in touch with people's real needs and opinions and this knowledge of grassroots realities is useful in shaping development policies and perspectives. "Bottom up" approaches to economic development policy, involving the people, have great advantages compared with "top down" policy decreed by planning departments. The former also increase the people's ownership of the policy and the programmes evolving from it. Non-State actors, with lobbying resources at their disposal, in particular international NGOs, can press more comprehensively for respect for international norms, agreements and legal rulings, especially within the context of globalization. An example for consideration is how Green Peace, the international NGO on environmental monitoring, is working across borders to highlight the effects of the production practices of some multinationals on local environments. Its environmental policing role has helped nationals understand the environmental consequences of certain actions taken by some conglomerates.

What is proving to be an important building block for participatory development is recognition of the strengths of each actor and using these strengths for promoting cooperation in the development process. It is important to note that when the activities of government, other State institutions, private enterprises and civil society organizations interface and complement each other, this can contribute to their mutual benefit and end up enhancing the development process.

III. Enhancing CSO Effectiveness: Capacity Building Challenges and Opportunities

A. Capacity: A key factor in CSO effectiveness

One of the most recent developments in economic thought has been the vast increase in attention to civil society organizations. In Africa, the rediscovery can be traced to the 1990 International Conference on Popular Participation in the Recovery and Development Process in Africa when African intellectuals and policy leaders gave recognition to the role of civil society in the participatory development process. Equally important are the compelling events, which make it imperative to build CSO capacity. First, the political, economic and social transformation underway in many African countries has encouraged and given voice to African civil society organizations and made them more active than they were in the past. These developments imply the need to build CSO capacity to take on these challenges. Second, indigenous CSOs are operating from a low base of critical capacity. Third, the enabling environment within which they operate manifests many inhibiting factors as well as misdirection of capacity into areas not directly related to achievement of goals. Fourth, lack of trust has caused many governments to fail to recognize CSOs as legitimate representatives of civil society. Fifth, modern African civil society requires a host of CSOs acting collectively to make significant impact. Sixth, on a continent faced with the daunting task of economic reforms and transformation, the presence of strong and vibrant organizations of civil society is an advantage. Finally, the popularization of the role of CSOs in so many regional and global programmes such as the Abuja Treaty and the ICPD-PA points clearly to the need for improved capacity if they are to make meaningful contribution to implementation.

Despite the increasing scale of CSO activities, and the growing reputation they have won for themselves over the last couple of years, their contribution remains

limited. While CSOs can point to many small-scale successes, they typically have difficulty "going to scale" or expanding and sustaining those successes. Many reasons explain this situation. Volunteerism, which is the great strength on which CSOs draw, can cause difficulties with sustainability and expansion of capacity, capability, contributions and impact. Another reason is that many have yet to develop adequate systems for evaluating and documenting their activities and achievements. Still another reason is lack of resources and expertise. Furthermore, the challenges facing CSOs as they approach the new millennium have exacerbated the difficulties of CSOs. If CSOs are to make a difference, then the relevance and fundamental value of capacity building should provide solutions to a number of issues, namely:

- The inadequacy of CSO efforts to make linkages between the micro issues and the wider systems and structures of the macro dimension. For the most part, CSOs are only addressing small parts of bigger problems and therefore they must appreciate and situate the problem they are trying to solve within the larger context. For example, village public health services are undermined by deficiencies in national public health systems. Therefore, social actions to improve village public health services are not likely to succeed if national structures are not adaptable to new ideas and changes. Small and isolated CSO projects by themselves will not generate enough lasting development improvement. The question is how do CSOs increase the qualitative value of their small-scale activities? In designing capacity-building programmes, the importance of the macro dimension in determining the success of CSO small-scale efforts must be borne in mind.
- The diversity within the community of civil society organizations poses complications for catalyzing collective action with greater impact.
 - The relationships of CSOs with their constituencies. This includes securing legitimacy and establishing accountability.
- The constraints and difficulties of the systems within which they operate, including the tension between CSOs and government, and conflicting interests and agendas. Understanding and deal-

The expectations placed on CSOs have widened the goal post and consequently the need to enhance their capacity to be more effective

ing with these relationships and constraints increases the likelihood of sustainability.
Lack of well trained human resources.
Inadequate financial resources.
Overdependence on external resources.
Need for CSOs to stand up to donors in partnership and mutual respect.

It is against this background that capacity building is approached as a key element for the contribution of CSOs to the development process and as an ingredient for upgrading performance. For guaranteed effectiveness, operations must be solidly underpinned by the institutional, human and financial resource capabilities of the CSOs themselves. They have to develop the ability to identify and analyze problems, formulate solutions and implement them as well as monitor the outcomes of actions taken.

The CSO community is large and made up of diverse entities in terms of outlook, nature of work carried out and interest group served. A genuinely action/result-oriented, capacity-building programme should focus on those CSOs likely to generate impact and make a significant difference in the lives of a good number of its constituency. In this respect, the proposed capacity-building programme is targeted at selected non-self serving African indigenous CSOs involved in activities related to:

Poverty alleviation;
Provision of basic services, mainly education, health and water;
Agricultural production and rural development;
Women's economic empowerment; and
Stimulation of micro- and small-enterprise development, including micro-credit assistance and entrepreneurship development.

Focussing on selected CSOs serves the following purposes:

Allowing for an efficient spread of limited resources on those CSOs likely to show impact within a short period;
Addressing pressing issues relevant to the region's socio-economic development;
Concentrating action on viable, result-oriented areas; and
Increasing the justification for capacity building.

Capacity development should be seen as a means to enable CSOs to make a difference, and bring hope to communities and millions of families, especially women and children who otherwise have little chance

for a positive future. There are many problems facing our communities, especially poverty, characterized as it is by lack of access to basic services, productive resources and more importantly, the means to acquire them. CSO contribution to solving these problems is therefore necessary and vital. As their scope of involvement increases, their abilities and capacities have to develop correspondingly, to take on the expanded role. Success is, to some extent, determined by how well certain functions are carried out, such as capability to:

Connect community to community, and neighbourhood to neighbourhood;
Provide a purpose and direction to a community, including development of their neighbourhoods;
Plan and provide positive activities and influence policies.

Therefore, capacity building should, in the final analysis, aim at enhancing the qualitative performance and contribution of CSOs to the development process, which is a process that is becoming more and more complex and thus requires improved capacity.

Improvement in CSO contributions hinges on the qualitative strengthening of key performance criteria and dimensions, both operational and structural, which should also serve as basis for measuring success. One of the main concerns to be addressed is how to measure CSO performance, or rather how to determine whether a CSO is making a difference. This then leads to the need to establish criteria on which to assess CSO performance. In this respect, the main criteria for assessing CSO performance and around which capacity-building should centre, are the following:

Sustainability;
Effectiveness;
Efficiency;
Impact;
Targeted groups and activities; and
Equity.

Capacity-building efforts undertaken so far have not led to significant improvements in the activities of CSOs. This can be attributed in part to several factors including lack of prioritization of CSO capacity-building activities, to ensure that limited resources are targeted to relevant areas. Some lessons learnt include:

Response to CSO capacity building has been mainly through a variety of traditional seminars, training and workshops on isolated aspects of their capacity-building needs;

- ❑ Capacity-building activities undertaken so far have been narrow in perspective and as such have not generated noticeable impact in terms of scale and quality of results;
- ❑ The recognition that CSO capacity development initiatives should be broadened to include the existence of certain conditions within which CSO activities could thrive and generate impact. The existence of enabling conditions are essential and are an integral part of capacity-building endeavours;
- ❑ Broadening the concept of capacity building to cover strategies for promoting greater transparency and accountability in CSO development work;
- ❑ The need to report on performance against goals and objectives as a basis for maintaining CSO legitimacy;
- ❑ Viewing capacity building in a larger context of political will, public policy and administrative reforms to generate an atmosphere for wider consultation, and creation of appropriate organizational and decision-making structures that allow for popular participation;
- ❑ The need for efforts at developing CSO capacity to take into account all the above in order for capacity building not to fall short of the intended objectives.

The principal challenges now facing the CSO community is how to improve all-round performance, which should cover the following:

- ❑ CSO empowerment. Apart from participation, most CSOs promote concepts such as self-help, conscientization, awareness building and empowerment. Some see empowerment as enhancing the power and functional base of the civil society community including CSOs to make effective contribution to the development process and environment. Empowerment suggests the development of skills and abilities to enable people, especially the disadvantaged, to manage better and to be able to negotiate with the existing delivery systems. This emphasis on empowerment is linked to tackling the relationship between the government and CSOs, especially how to maintain an interactive relationship between government and CSOs. It is also linked to access to knowledge and information, essential ingredients for the creation of a positive enabling environment for the empowerment of CSOs. Other important aspects of empowerment include broad-based alliance-building and the use of popular participation to sustain success and impact. The success of empowerment should be measured in terms of increased access to and control over resources, possible changes in the policy environment, and transformation in the administrative structures.
- ❑ Weak and fragmented CSOs. In a number of ways,

many CSOs including trade unions, religious bodies, student associations, professional and business associations, private voluntary and non-governmental organizations and community-based groups, do serve in a variety of roles. Yet a closer look at many civil society groups reveals deficiencies that inhibit their effectiveness as players in the long and difficult process of development. Correcting such deficiencies calls for strategies for catalyzing, redefining and ultimately promoting collective action as the means by which the development expectation of the masses is most likely to be attained. The key to this happening is to forge links to build a broader network to create a force for action. This will require combining the concept of popular participation with a well-educated, energized, highly motivated and socially mobilized civil society.

- ❑ Earning trust, legitimacy, support and capacity to act/mediate. The CSO sector has to face and deal effectively with its crisis of identity and purpose. This issue has been brought upon CSOs as a result of: emerging issues demanding their services and support, changes and complexity in the development field, scarcity in resources and greater expectations for accountability, transparency and a high sense of responsibility from both funding sources and constituencies. In earning trust, legitimacy, support and capacity to act, CSOs should adopt systematic and open evaluation and monitoring practices to assess and promote CSO principles and values as well as its strength to act as an effective broker and advocate on behalf of civil society at large.
- ❑ Ensuring CSOs viability by developing resourceful qualities and an assertive presence. One source of weakness is the extensive dependency on external support for the implementation of activities undertaken by CSOs. This is believed to have a negative effect on their effectiveness and credibility as honest contributors to the development dialogue and programmes. Another source of weakness is their low level of power, which is a result of low recognition by government, poor analysis and understanding of the issues and how to address them as well as the inconsistencies in the agenda pursued by CSOs. The feasible and long-term goal should be to reduce the severe financial, political and organizational constraints that currently burden civil society organizations. While it might be necessary to continue to rely on external support, it is imperative that CSOs explore innovative resource mobilization strategies to fund their operations and this should include internal sources so as to enhance flexibility and independence. CSOs must also improve their knowledge base and develop deeper insights for greater cooperation, assertiveness and confidence. CSOs need to stand up more to donors and make

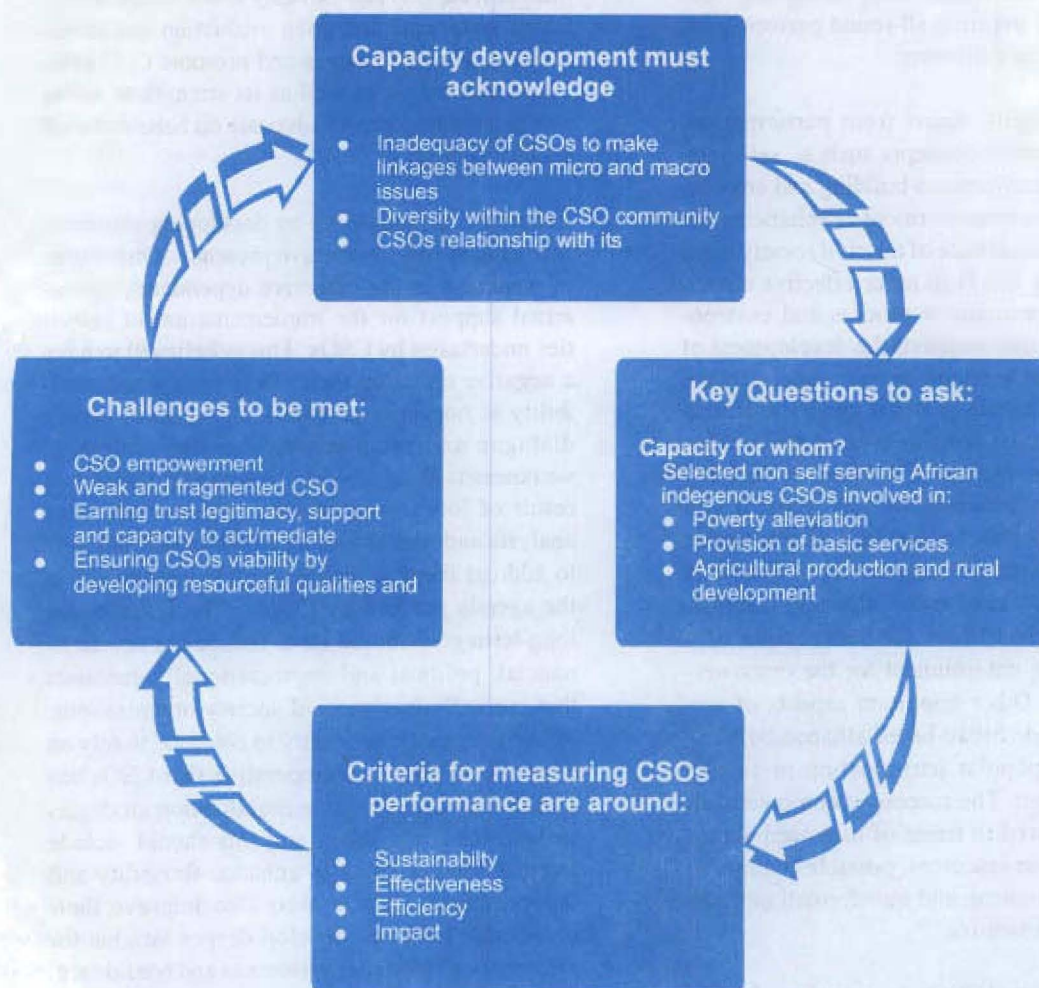
more effort to transform their relationship to one that reflects a spirit of mutual respect and collaboration. This is also useful in changing the situation from donor-driven programmes to consensual arrangements that ensure that the CSO vision and mission is not lost in the process. Capacity-building efforts should ensure significant changes in these areas, especially through the development of information and communications networks. Information technologies do allow for increased networking and exchange of information in promoting the CSO course.

- Consolidating gains and breaking new grounds for active participation. Consolidation is a process by which popular participation in the development process becomes broadly and profoundly legitimized among civil society organizations. This requires attitudinal and institutional changes including public policy and structural reforms that would allow CSOs to work with other development partners, in particular government, by complementing developmental work at the grassroots level. Efforts to consolidate CSO positions should also aim at public policy reform to

enhance CSO and government collaboration and partnership, improved institutional links, establishment of CSO focal points, and involvement of CSOs in the planning, programming and implementation processes.

- Institutionalization of the CSO role in the development process. Crucial to the good governance process that is sweeping across the continent is the institutionalization of the CSO role. An essential element in this regard is the provision of an enabling environment and space for CSO participation – one in which CSOs can then form and express themselves. This will increase their involvement in decisions affecting their lives. Efforts should therefore aim at providing flexible and practical institutional framework arrangements, that strengthen the full participation and continuous involvement of all citizens in the future of their nation. This institutional framework should also strengthen the consultative process and improve information sharing between government and civil society. A structured arrangement will provide a permanent channel or avenue for CSO participation, rather than the present ad-hoc situation.

The Issues Summarized



IV. CSO Capacity Building: A Common Agenda

A. What to do: Prerequisites, principles and priorities

Efforts to meet the challenges of CSO capacity building should take into consideration the need to broaden CSO capacity-building endeavours to include actions aimed at ensuring the existence of certain conditions within which CSO activities could thrive and generate impact. The existence of an enabling environment is essential and should be treated as an integral part of capacity-building initiatives. CSO capacity building requires concerted efforts by governments, the international community and civil society working in partnership. As a first step in this partnership for capacity building, the prerequisites, principles and priorities should be established as the basis for capacity-building strategies. In this respect, what follows is presented as the key aspects of a comprehensive approach to CSO capacity building.

1. Prerequisites for promoting sustained capacity building

In order to achieve the ultimate objectives of capacity building, certain prerequisites must be met. These include:

- Definition of a clear vision, mission and objective. The positioning of CSOs in the development arena is an important consideration in the capacity-building programme. Positioning allows for a critical examination of the values and beliefs that CSOs represent. It also provides a basis for their role determination. These also provide measures against which CSOs have been judged and evaluated. In this respect, the clear definition of vision, mission and objectives to be attained provides valuable information about the priority issues and problems. It also serves as the basis for deriving their mandate and legitimacy.
- Peace and stability. Peace and stability are prerequisites for promoting sustained CSO capacity building. Issues of ethnicity, religion, class, and scramble for resources represent major sources of conflict and division in many African countries. These divisive issues generate tension within CSOs themselves and result in marginalization of their contribution. Efforts must therefore be encouraged to address potential conflicts rapidly and with resolve.
- Improving the enabling environment. Existence of a friendly policy environment including flexible and decentralized structures allows for CSOs to operate as an integral component of the development effort, rather than at the periphery. Many CSO micro-projects have failed because the public policy environment has not been conducive to viable individual projects conceived outside the context of public policy. CSO participation is more likely to be enhanced through a combination of policy reforms and capacity building rather than through expanded activities. This could include review of existing legislation on CSOs to introduce reforms appropriate for strengthening CSO participation in national development. With the active participation of civil society, a policy framework for CSO participation should also be considered. The enabling environment should be based on the value of transparency and accountability by all.
- “Ownership”. This goes with a high sense of responsibility by all constituencies of civil society including the grassroots, and both are important elements of the capacity-building process. With ownership of the process, CSOs and governments have greater commitment to facilitate, monitor and evaluate their endeavours. Taking over ownership serves many purposes. First, it allows for involvement of civil society constituencies in mobilization and sensitization activities, and second, increases opportunities for leveraging resources to sustain the efforts to build capacity.
- Commitment. The success of CSO capacity building depends to a large extent on commitment and initiative at the national level. This is an important factor and is vital to CSO survival; so also is

improvement in the attitudes of public officials who are more concerned with protecting their own interests, at state or local level. There is need to adopt concrete, methodical and political measures for the wide-scale mobilization of civil society organizations.

- Sound infrastructure. This is necessary for supporting and facilitating development work, including work by CSOs that operate mostly at the grassroots level and in the rural area. This should include transport and telecommunications infrastructure as necessary ingredients for mobilizing and extending development support to marginalized and disadvantaged groups in the rural and peri-urban areas. Efficient transport and communications facilities also enhance communication and consultation between CSO leaders and their constituencies in the rural areas.
- Relationship between CSOs and other actors. This should be well-defined and enabling, for example with the private sector. The tension in CSO/government relations should be addressed, in order to remove the suspicion presently characterizing their relationship. For some African countries, there is a mounting uneasiness between government and CSOs as each desperately defines and jealously guards its space. This explains, in some cases, the stringent regulatory process imposed by some governments on CSO operation. Some have to operate under difficult conditions. To a large extent, this uneasiness affects the way CSOs relate to governments and vice versa. This in itself affects existing capacity and the modalities for improving on them.
- Technical cooperation programmes. These must also be supportive of CSO capacity building. The support should be defined in the context of the specific capacity-building objectives.

2. Principles

Drawing from the lessons of current capacity-building efforts, a number of principles are provided as general guidelines for programme elaboration and implementation. The principles offered include:

- Variation in entry point. The need for the implementation process of any capacity-building programme to recognize that the condition and level of capacity needs vary from CSO to CSO and from country to country. Thus, the type of capacity building programme would also vary.
- Internalization. Capacity building at the national level is needed to generate national impact while achieving individual capacity-building goals. This

would require a process of raising national awareness and acceptance of the need for CSO capacity building. Through the internalization process, the participation of national capacity development institutions, private sector operators and the media would all form part of a network to fund and provide technical support and assistance. The process should also include a national capacity assessment to define needs at the country and individual CSO level. Internalization should also include a process for the full and active participation of all stakeholders in the capacity-building process. The value of full and active participation is that opportunities are provided for collective effort in the creation of an enabling environment and adoption of viable operational modalities. Other aspects of the internalization process should cover strategic resource mobilization strategies that target mainly local sources, define operational modalities involving government machinery, the CSO sector and others, and adopt a standardized code of conduct including monitoring and evaluation methods to guide CSO operations.

- Adoption of a comprehensive and integrated approach. There are abundant experiences justifying adoption of a comprehensive and integrated approach to CSO capacity building. The approach should encompass both the development and utilization aspects. It should also recognize the importance of shifting from the traditional capacity development approach of piecemeal and isolated actions to capacity development as an integral element of project delivery. The adoption of an appropriate approach is also an important factor in the success or failure of CSO capacity-building efforts. It should be strategic in scope, forming the basis for coordinating interventions and allowing for sustainable contribution to capacity development goals. The approach should also take into consideration the interrelated nature of the capacity-building challenges, and allow for integrated measures that comprehensively address CSO capacity development and utilization.
- Make capacity building an integral element of project/programme delivery. A distinguishing feature of the capacity-building approach envisaged is to make it an integral part of programme/project elaboration and implementation rather than a tag along or after thought. For example CSOs purporting to improve women's access to productive resources would incorporate awareness and empowerment in the implementation of their development activities. Thus, in evaluation of its integrated strategy, the success of awareness/empowerment components would be measured in terms of equity gains and increased access to and control over productive resources.

3. Priority areas

Success in the CSO sector should be determined by how well certain functions are carried out, such as the capacity to plan effectively, to mobilize resources, and to implement development projects and programmes. Success could also be measured by key aspects of structural arrangements, the most successful being those able to perform a range of activities and attract a large number of members, ideally through vertical linkages. A primary goal for building CSO capacity in this respect is to enable them to define their own objectives, carry out development activities, access resources and gain recognition as partners in development. It is therefore necessary to focus attention on areas with potential of making this happen. Priorities would of course differ from country to country and from CSO to CSO and, as already stated, there would be need for consensus at the national level in terms of priority areas. However, drawing from various observations, conclusions and recommendations of the many forums addressing CSO issues, the following functions are among the priority areas for attention:

- (a) **Capacity for strategic planning.** It is a process of considering all the variables, both internal and external, that would shape the future of CSOs and the outcome of their activities. This entails the process of setting long-term objectives, adopting courses of action, identifying and allocating resources and pursuing programme plans in a pre-determined manner, to ensure a high degree of certainty in the future. Simply put, CSOs need capacity to plan for their future and for the unknown and unexpected. The building of such capacity will enhance their relevance, survival and impact.
- (b) **Capacity for advocacy.** This includes policy influence and for CSOs, advocacy is the core of their mission. CSOs throughout Africa have to live up to the challenges of change and transformation sweeping through most countries. The goals of development are now broader than ever, cutting across national, regional and international boundaries. This is also true for participation trends, be it a matter of shaping policy, implementation of programmes or projects, or reaping benefits. All must be enlarged to include the people, and for this to happen, ways to catalyze, empower and strengthen civil society have to be found. The development of a vision and commitment to monitor the usefulness of policies, programmes and government institutional machinery is therefore required. Capacity for advocacy is crucially relevant if CSOs are to address adequately and legitimately the issues of interest to society at large. If advocacy is to become a very important strategy, then legitimizing the activity requires skills and ability to:

- Carry out research, to document, analyze and interpret political and socioeconomic developments;
- Promote people's power in development, including group formation;
- Search for answers and alternatives, initiate change, generate active participation, and define collective goals;
- Encourage informed participation of all people in the community in developments in the political, social and economic spheres;
- Inculcate new values and behaviour that promote a strong sense of community responsibility and of ownership;
- Address adequately and legitimately such issues of concern to the population as poverty, human rights, promotion of justice, women's political and economic empowerment, promotion of peace, better management of the environment, economic and social transformation including political and administrative reforms, struggle for democracy and good governance, promotion of the private sector; and
- Speak up and ask questions that will assist in introducing transformation.

- (c) **Capacity for strategic and operational management:** Civil society effectiveness in the performance of their developmental role depends crucially on their ability to manage the different development activities in which they are engaged. Successful programme/project implementation calls for genuine participation, strong and effective management, and skilled and committed staff. In addition, the capacity to select, plan, design, finance and implement programmes and projects is a critical component of the programme/project implementation process. Such capacity offers opportunities to translate intentions into viable development programmes and projects and acts as a vehicle for enhancing the CSO's legitimacy. The central concern is how to ensure that the operational, institutional and organizational sustainability, and effectiveness and efficiency of activities are addressing targeted needs in actual circumstances. To make sure that the capacity-building effort for strategic and operational management meet the above, the content and approach should be broadened to take into consideration specific CSO needs. Capacity building for operational management should include the active involvement of end-users and beneficiaries. It should also pay particular attention to issues of coordination, women's participation and popular participation as essential elements for success. Any effort to enhance operational management capacity should include adoption of management practices that are of a high standard and should strengthen institutional and organizational capa-

bilities including the human and administrative aspects.

Improved operational management should also focus on ability to monitor and evaluate programmes and projects. Reporting, monitoring and evaluation are the implementation activities that pose serious difficulties for CSOs. For this reason, very few CSOs bother to monitor and evaluate their work. Few have experience in systematically examining activities designed to address specific situations or issues. Capacity to monitor and evaluate is about ability to examine the effectiveness of programme implementation in an objective manner. It has been difficult to assess the contribution made by CSOs given the absence of an established evaluation programme as internal procedures for documenting their work or assessing impact. Monitoring and evaluation are important for the promotion of organizational excellence, transparency and accountability. Capacity-building efforts in this area should aim at:

- ❑ Improvement in the accountability for resource use and for the results of activities carried out. This is necessary as donors and development partners are demanding greater efficiency in the use of increasingly scarce resources. Such improvement should cover documentation of expenses and financial and programme performance reporting;
- ❑ Improving ability to collect and analyze data on target groups and activities, to ensure that services offered match community needs;
- ❑ Developing a self-assessment programme that would cover establishment of key performance indicators (benchmarks) for focusing on results, lessons learnt about best practices and ineffective ones, cost of operation, systems and people.
- ❑ Creation of structures and procedures that are enabling and that can promote efficiency, such as participatory decision-making, and structured consultative meetings.

(d) **Capacity for mass mobilization and collective action:** Any attempt to live up to the expanded role brought on by developments on the national, regional and international scene has serious organizational implications. Enabling broader participation in the productive sector and a more equitable sharing of benefits rest on CSO ability to organize and mobilize the seemingly powerless. They can build mass constituencies for greater involvement. The presence of a strong organizational base can enhance CSO legitimacy and skills base. This requires the adoption of strategy for expanding work in advocacy, grassroots mobilization, collaboration with governments, networking or expansion of operational activities. All require mass mobilization and linkages. Efforts

to build this form of capacity should concern itself with the steps to take for using collective CSO experience to launch a platform for coordinated work. Such work includes information gathering and dissemination, monitoring policy implementation, networking and building relationships at all levels. Capacity building for mass mobilization and collective action requires ability to define and capitalize on opportunities for people's participation, including effective use of organizational skills, educational methods, techniques for building collaborative relationships with political and private organizations and for building alliances with the media and other sectors. Efforts should also aim at identifying actions to intensify CSO-CSO alliances. All these reflect the view that collective action is central to sustainability of CSO activities. Capacity building for mass mobilization and collective action should constitute the following:

- ❑ Creating a legal and regulatory environment to maintain an effective CSO sector;
- ❑ Forming a coalition of CSOs, useful for greater cooperation, assertiveness, confidence and efficiency;
- ❑ Enhancing skills necessary for helping communities to organize themselves;
- ❑ Establishing the process for development of a closer relationship with all sectors of society, thus enabling CSOs to strengthen popular participation. This should include consultation at all levels - CSO to CSO, CSO to government and CSO to private sector - as a way of promoting collective decision-making, better coordination and unified planning. This would reduce tensions in relationships and the fights over jurisdiction;
- ❑ Exploring the possibilities for setting codes of conduct and operational standards for all CSOs;
- ❑ Designing programmes for popular education as a strategy for strengthening people's involvement in the development process and as a way of raising understanding and awareness on the causes of the problems;
- ❑ Establishing a process and venue for dialogue, for discussing issues in depth, gaining commitment and soliciting appropriate interventions, financial and other;
- ❑ Building CSO-media partnerships for communicating viewpoints, activities and results to the general population.

(e) **Strengthening the unique role of women CSOs:** CSO capacity-building initiatives should not fail to recognize the unique role of women if such efforts are to have far-reaching effects. Women are very active at the grassroots level and are predominantly involved in mem-

bership-based organizations with a focus on income generation or economic cooperatives. Women's groups have also been instrumental in promotion of self-employment programmes for poor and low-income groups of women. Women's role in the political sphere has been changing to one of inclusion and women should use this change to their benefit by adopting a more assertive posture. Special attention should be given to enhancing women's capacity to participate:

- ❑ Women CSOs are effective agents for social and economic change. As a way of enhancing their capacity in this area they should be included in policy dialogue, project implementation and evaluation activities so that they acquire confidence and learn by involvement;
- ❑ The leadership role of women in group formation and mass mobilization is well appreciated and should be strengthened and used as a force in soliciting support at all levels in society, and in increasing CSO organizational growth;
- ❑ Women's role in popular education is proven to be very effective;
- ❑ The instrumental role of women in sparking national movements is evidence that women have been instrumental in advocacy and awareness raising and in providing direct assistance;
- ❑ Leadership of women is important in the formation of organizations;
- ❑ Their role in income generation and self-employment activities is well-known;
- ❑ Women's decision-making role has evolved, to cover capacity to generate concern on women-specific issues and to integrate gender concerns in CSO programmes that are not only for women.

B. Processes and instruments for CSO capacity building

Capacity can be developed in different ways and, in fact, each dimension of capacity requires a different mix of both traditional, mainly training, and the use of non-conventional instruments and processes. This has to be in an integrated, coordinated and concentrated manner. Capacity building should be comprehensively approached to include acquisition and utilization, and should focus on the institutional, organizational and environmental or attitudinal dimensions. Getting the appropriate fit between the capacity-building intervention and the beneficiary ensures the usefulness of the programme. Processes and instruments for capacity building should cover:

1. Participatory needs assessment

Participatory needs assessment and evaluation is necessary to determine whether the CSO is operating in an environment conducive to achieving its vision, mission and objectives. Such an assessment would enhance the definition and adoption of appropriate capacity-building instruments. This information would lead to the identification of strategies for addressing any environmental constraints that may inhibit the CSO's participation in the development process.

2. Formulation of an action plan and programme

Formulation should include:

- ❑ Training and other skills enhancement programmes. Seminars and workshops are useful instruments for human and organizational capacity building. Such exercises could be formal or informal with stress on methods, sequences and performance criteria relevant for effectiveness in planning and implementation. Skills enhancement should form part of the process of design, implementation and evaluation of a programme or project cycle. In expanding the delivery capacity of CSOs, community involvement becomes a critical factor. Involving communities to work out solutions does not come naturally and requires the training of CSO officials to design the format and modalities for facilitating community action. This entails getting beneficiaries to take initiatives, get organized, mobilize resources, set up systems and implement projects. Gaining committed community involvement calls for facilitation skills. Development of facilitation skills as part of human resources development is necessary for development of attitudes, perceptions and procedures.
- ❑ Learning from experience. Learning from experience allows for a combination of knowledge and attitude development as well as practical experience in carrying out activities on the ground. It allows for skills acquisition and utilization, change in behaviour and attitude and application of knowledge to on-going activities. The usefulness of this process is that it can be programmed as an integral part of service or product delivery. The use of expert assistance to transfer knowledge and skills should be explored in the delivery arrangements.
- ❑ Promoting and strengthening partnership. Partnership is a valuable instrument for enhancing all forms of capacity building. It enhances advocacy and ability to influence, operational management, monitoring and evaluation as well as mass mobilization and collective action. The promo-

tion of partnership as a capacity building technique enhances dialogue and cooperation, which in turn enables CSOs to respond collectively on issues at the macro level. Partnership should also be used as an instrument to foster coordination, avoid unnecessary duplication and expand operations.

- Promoting the formation and strengthening of alliances among CSOs: This process enhances capacity to take on issues at the macro level and also allows CSOs to close their ranks, thus enabling them to speak with one voice that is bigger and better. The creation of networks in the form of umbrella and networking arrangements facilitates joint action, representation of common interests, provision of training, and opportunities to learn from experience. Networks form a powerful tool and are a force for channeling individual and collective interests and views. In other words, networking enhances the participatory process. The role of change agent that is played by CSOs requires networks for building strong power bases. They are very important factors in building partnerships and alliances and can be the effective means for constructive engagement in the development process. Once the power of networks is appreciated, individual interest is shed, members can close ranks and feel at ease with collective action.

The effectiveness of this process should be evaluated in terms of numbers, because this shows strength, visibility and presence and the collective clout within the networks that can be used to open doors. The power of networking is clearly appreciated in the following saying: *Breaking one stick is very easy! Breaking two sticks is easy! Breaking five sticks is not so easy! Breaking ten sticks is very difficult!* This goes to illustrate the power of coming together – the power of bunching.

- Launching an effective communication and information dissemination programme. The launching of an effective communication and information dissemination programme could be an appropriate response to improving CSO communication strategy skills. This is a valuable instrument for the sharing of experiences and expertise and for information networking, keeping in touch with each other, and obtaining information to monitor developments taking place in the local and international community. The main emphasis of such

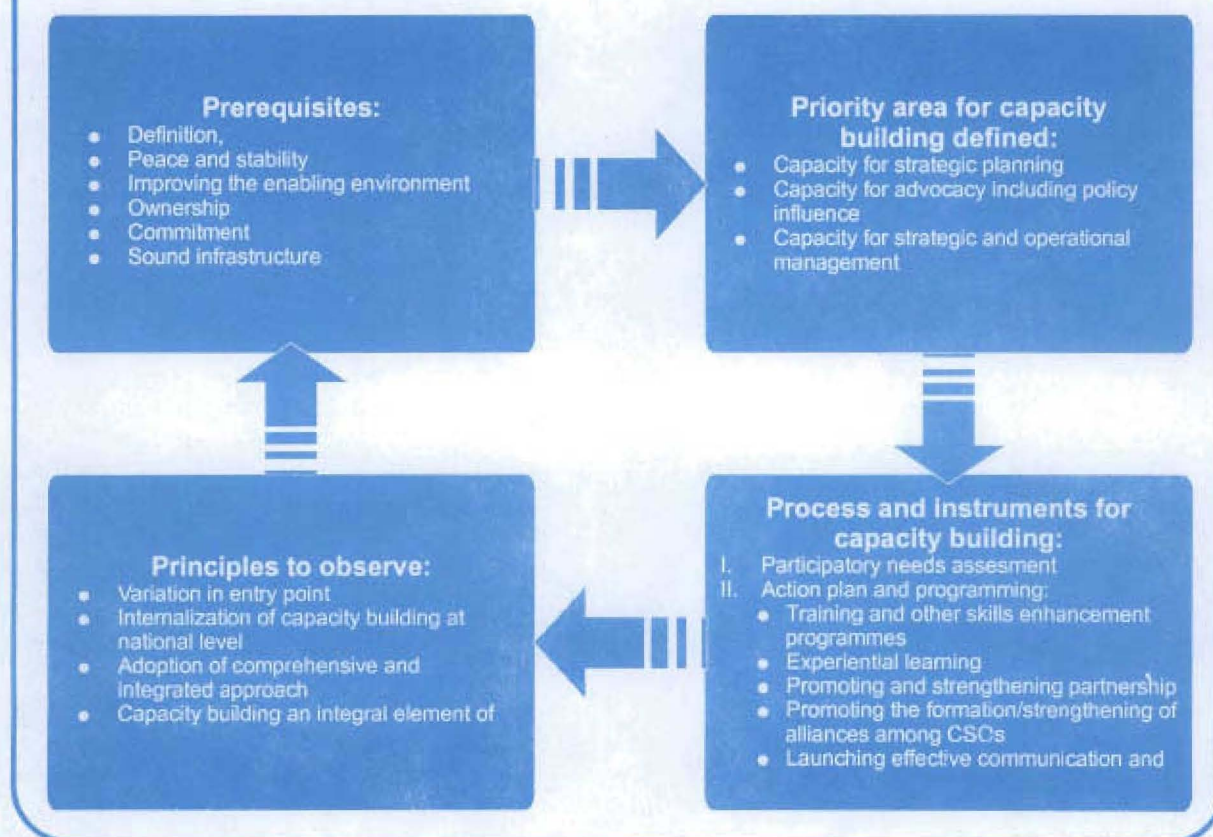
an instrument is its usefulness in enhancing advocacy and influencing skills, mass mobilization and collective action, and outreach. Such a programme could embrace audio and visual formats and include the use of newsletters, newspaper publications, radio talk shows, theatre and drama, and video recordings, all aimed at enhancing CSO advocacy, mass mobilization and operational capacity. The programme should also include a strategic mechanism for making effective use of the media.

- Establishment of a CSO support Centre: This Centre should serve as a catalyst for action, research and other intellectual activities to assist the African civil society to evolve its own African identity, perception and way of doing things. It would also provide capacity-building services to the CSO community at large. The ECA, as part of its efforts to provide meaningful assistance for the active participation of civil society in the development process, has launched the idea and is exploring with its consultants and partners, the establishment and operation of such a Centre.
- Establishment of a Foundation or Fund to finance the activities of CSOs: This could be an appropriate institutional capacity-building mechanism for the funding of activities initiated by civil society. It could also be used as a mechanism for facilitating coordination among CSOs and collaboration between all actors-government, private sector and CSOs. The use of a Foundation would also improve resource mobilization by government, private sector, international community and CSOs themselves. All CSO projects submitted for funding would have to be scrutinized by the Foundation to ensure that they meet established criteria and have high operational viability. This would help to improve CSO accountability, transparency and credibility.

3. Execution of the Action Plan

The execution of an Action Plan should include capacity needs assessment to define what is required to achieve the vision, mission and objectives of the CSO. On the basis of this, specific strategies can be adopted to develop the needed capacity. The Action Plan should also set out the timeframe, resources required, partnerships and application of the capacity-building framework. An example is provided as a guide in annex III.

CSO Capacity Building: What it entails



V. Conclusions and the Way Forward

A. In Conclusion

The critical challenge facing CSOs today relates to their capacity to make meaningful contribution to Africa's development. Despite increased recognition of the heightened role that CSOs can play, they have not matched this recognition with significant increase in their impact. The need for building CSO capacity is therefore well-founded and should be supported in many ways. One way of supporting CSOs is by taking concrete actions to enhance their capacity to contribute to development. By so doing, we can expand their potential to carry out their missions to:

1. Mobilize and organize people at the community level. This is how they derive their legitimacy and mandate.
2. Participate in and influence policy-making. This would depend on their ability to initiate mass movements that lead to the formulation of favourable policies or policy changes.
3. Contribute directly to the implementation of policies through programme and project implementation. In this respect, CSOs would need to act as links between communities and government in service delivery and other development matters. They would need resources, well-established contacts, appropriate approaches, skills and knowledge in an array of areas.
4. Monitor and evaluate policies and programmes to assist in determining whether these address the concerns of people and communities.

This calls for a number of actions, among which the following are included:

- The need to define the capacity-building requirements of CSOs based on the specificity of their circumstances and activities rather than as a random initiative.
- Adoption of a proactive and action-oriented strategy that is objective-driven and results-based.

- Adoption of an integrated capacity-building programme approach that reflects both the building and the utilization dimensions.

B. The way forward: Some recommendations

If the capacity-building challenges are to be met, then the implementation measures should be clearly defined and modalities agreed upon for their follow-through. Necessary to the achievement of these objectives are the:

- Sensitization of all actors at national, subregional, regional and international level to the need of taking actions in a concerted and integrated manner;
- Identification and classification of the actors according to their role and level of participation, either at the national, subregional, regional or international level.
- Need to put in place arrangements to enhance cooperation and translation of the blueprint into the programme of action at all levels;
- Formulation of specific interventions and strategies by actor for the various capacity-building areas;
- Internalization of capacity-building objectives and requirements at the national level.

The process of internalization should also include national consensus building on the way forward through discussions involving a cross-section of local actors. These discussions should also be used for forging strategic partnership for CSO capacity building and utilization. The participation of governments is very crucial in shaping the way forward and should be encouraged to give their blessing and support to initiatives aimed at enhancing CSO capacity.

Outside the national arena, partners should be

identified to contribute to the implementation phase. These partners should include among others OAU, ADB, World Bank, ECA, donor countries who in many ways can contribute to the creation of a supporting environment within which African CSOs can function.

These are preliminary thoughts on the way forward and the steps necessary for meeting CSO capacity- building challenges and opportunities.

Part II

Operational Modalities and Strategies for Capacity Building and Technical Support to Indigenous African Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

VI. Operational Modalities and Strategies for Implementing CSO Capacity Building Programme

A. Important and urgent actions to be taken

Agreement about the importance of building the capacity of African CSOs is widespread among major development agencies and among CSOs themselves. Consensus also exists about what capacities are most important to be strengthened and/or how they can effectively be developed. Efforts undertaken by institutions such as ECA, UNDP, ACBF and other development agencies have only addressed aspects of the problem. There is need to go deeper into the problem by approaching it in a more systematic and comprehensive manner. Much capacity building in the past has been designed to train individuals rather than to build effective organizations or promote strong and effective civil societies. Too often, the design and time perspectives of programmes have not encouraged the development of sustainable local institutions, so benefits have been transitory. In addition, capacity-building services have been offered without proper diagnosis of the capacity needs and without prior consultation with the recipients; so services have not been informed by real needs and circumstances. Before meaningful capacity-building initiatives can be embarked upon, the following actions must be taken, namely:

- Assessment of the capacity needs of the CSO;
- Definition of and agreement on what the priority areas for capacity building must be; and
- Definition of the level at which the capacity building should focus.

1. Assessing CSO capacity needs

The primary purpose of building the capacity of indigenous organizations is to enable them to solve their development problems. To redress any "capacity gaps" requires taking a close look at what conditions might be constricting their performance or output. Any diagnostic approach must be sensitive enough to identify areas that are progressing well, and to reveal capacity gaps - those organizational/institutional deficits that are compromising the quality and quantity of the out-

put of a CSO. Capacity needs assessment involves a review or analysis of the environment within which the CSO operates or will operate and comparing the existing human and institutional capacity to the ideal capacity required to realize its vision, mission and goal.

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) has developed a framework for achieving greater understanding of the organizations it funds. This framework for profiling helps to clarify important issues and guides the collection and analysis of the data that will inform decisions about performance and capacity enhancement. It encompasses the following areas:

- **Understanding the organization's environment:** here are key forces in the environment, which have bearing on an organization's performance. These include the administrative, legal, political, economic, social and cultural contexts, the demands and needs of clients and stakeholders as well as the relations with other pertinent institutions/agencies. They set the conditions within which CSOs operate and can be very restrictive or quite permissive. Ultimately, the environment influences the choices a CSO makes regarding its programmes, types of activities and how it can interact with the broader community.
- **Determining the organization's motivation:** Each organization has a different purpose or mission. Some are highly motivated by the opportunity "to do good" while others are driven to perform by other forces, including the personal ambitions of key players. The organizational concepts that motivate and drive an institution include its mission and its internal culture and values. These are important variables that define the dynamics of an organization and are to be considered in the capacity-building process.
- **Examining key areas of organizational structure and management:** Strategic leadership, human resources, other core resources, programme management, process management and inter-organizational/institutional linkages are very impor-

tant. A strategically charged organization will be continuously engaged in a process of constant review of its relevance, and will follow a path that is sensible to both its constituencies and stakeholders. The more broad-based and constructive the leadership is that develops among the members of the organization, the more vibrant and creative is that organization. Another issue in the survival of an organization is how effective it is in acquiring core resources in the vital areas of funding, infrastructure, technology and personnel. Leadership in this domain is necessary for identifying and capitalizing on opportunities that are available. The capacity to manage resources is also crucial not only to the organization's performance but also for building and sustaining the trust needed for its survival.

- **Measuring organizational performance:** The performance of organizations falls within these broad areas: performance in activities that support the mission (effectiveness); performance in relation to the resources available (efficiency; and performance in relation to long-term viability or sustainability (ongoing relevance)

B. Priority areas for capacity building

A number of priority areas that should be given attention were identified by an ad hoc experts meeting held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 12-13 October, 1998 under the auspices of the ECA. These included capacity for:

- Strategic planning;
- Advocacy including policy influence;
- Strategic and operational management;
- Monitoring and evaluating programmes/projects;
- Mass mobilization and collective action; and
- Strengthening the unique role of women CSOs.

The CSO community is large and made up of diverse entities in terms of outlook, nature of work, and the interest group served. In this regard, the experts suggested that capacity building should be targeted to

focus on CSOs that play the most developmental role. Furthermore, a genuinely action/result-oriented, capacity-building programme should focus on those CSOs most likely to generate impact and make a significant difference in the lives of a large segment of its constituency. As such, capacity building is targeted at selected African indigenous CSOs involved in activities related to poverty alleviation; provision of basic services, mainly education, health and water; agricultural production and rural development; women's economic empowerment; and stimulation of micro- and small-enterprise development, including micro-credit assistance and entrepreneurship development.

C. Levels at which capacity building should take place

Capacity building of indigenous African CSOs should be carried out at two levels, at the local or national level, and at the subregional or regional level. At the local/national level, umbrella organizations and national governments should take responsibility for capacity building, with the support of multilateral and bilateral development partners with a country presence, as well as of the corporate sector. The scope of the capacity-building effort at this level should be determined in consultation with the leadership of grassroots CSOs, whose members will be the principal beneficiaries.

The building of CSO capacity calls for a number of actions, which should be undertaken by CSOs with the assistance and support of government, private sector and other development agents. These activities should be done in a concerted, integrated and sustained manner. These actions are necessary to develop CSO capacities so as to render them more effective and efficient in carrying out their roles as champions/flag bearers of civil society, and in fulfilling the expectations that are increasingly being heaped on them by both their grassroots constituencies and development agents. The key activities that should be undertaken, the modalities for effectuating them and the actors that could provide the appropriate and requisite technical and support services are outlined.

VII. Deepening Modalities and Strategies for Mobilizing Capacity Building Support

A. Identification of principal actors and role definition

1. The role of CSOs in building their own capacity

If capacity-building efforts for indigenous African CSOs are to be successful, then individual members of the CSO community must demonstrate a high degree of commitment to the process. They must acknowledge their inadequacies and take the initiative to improve their weaknesses. They must be proactive. Before devising CSO capacity-building strategies and modalities, an assessment of the capacity needs of the particular CSO must be carried out with the involvement of the other interested parties. Where a CSO's capacity or experience to conduct such capacity needs assessment is inadequate or lacking, technical expert assistance should be sought from outside.

Organizational assessments should be conducted as learning exercises designed to diagnose areas of need so as to guide capacity-building efforts. By approaching the assessment of the capacities of indigenous African CSOs as a learning process conducted in partnership with the funding institution, the adaptability and sustainable development of the organization will be fostered.

The first task of any organization in building its capacity is to formulate a vision, a mission, and the principal objectives for which sustainable capacity is to be strengthened, which should coincide with, or fit into, the broader national, regional and/or community vision.

2. Role of CSO umbrellas or coalitions

The principal role of CSO umbrellas or coalitions in building the capacity of indigenous CSOs is that of fostering closer cooperation and partnership between CSOs and governments, and between CSOs and development partners at the national level. Nationally recognized CSO umbrellas should work with relevant government ministries or departments charged with CSO matters, and with development organizations and

donors operating in their countries, to identify and put in place frameworks/mechanisms that promote and strengthen cooperation and partnership. This joint action should also maximize the use of available resources and ensure reciprocal transparency. Where there is no national CSO umbrella, CSOs should take the initiative to establish one for their mutual benefit.

CSO umbrellas should assume the responsibility of taking an inventory of all actors at national level who could contribute to the capacity building of indigenous CSOs and of identifying and assessing the capacity gaps to be addressed. They should create and strengthen linkages within and between CSOs and CSO networks and coalitions. Their role should also include the mobilization and channeling of resources to CSO capacity building for institutional strengthening at national level.

3. The role of governments

African governments are beginning to acknowledge the fact that the development process cannot realize its objectives if indigenous CSOs are not fully involved. As a way of building indigenous CSO capacity to participate more fully in the development process, governments should involve CSOs in the design and implementation of development projects at village or community level, to ensure that projects reflect beneficiary interests.

To enhance cooperation and collaboration with government, development actors and the private sector, the government should name focal points/desk officers in relevant ministries to promote relations among CSOs, government and development organizations. CSOs should be represented on relevant national working groups and committees. Frequent consultative meetings with CSOs should be held, as well as forums for development of appropriate strategies for consolidating understanding and partnership between government and CSOs.

4. Role of the private sector

The private sector can provide both technical and financial support. It can make its facilities available

to CSOs so that they can acquire sound management practices and skills. This could be through internship programmes sponsored by private-sector organizations. Private sector actors could also fund the participation of CSO representatives in capacity-building training and exposure opportunities, including attendance at international conferences and other events within and outside their countries of operation. The private sector could also contribute in a significant way to the funding of major activities and products such as printing CSO newsletters. CSO leadership should take the initiative of seeking to establish a mutually beneficial relationship with the private sector.

The mass media working in unison with the CSO community should define the areas and approaches for media and press coverage as part of the overall programme for building effective communication and disseminating information. The media could assist by placing their communication facilities and technical know-how at the disposal of the African CSO community, thus contributing to the enhancement of advocacy and influencing skills as well as strengthening mass mobilization, collective action and outreach. The media could also facilitate the process of documenting, disseminating and evaluating the outcomes of CSO initiatives based on their impact on lives.

The national offices of the United Nations agencies, because of their closeness to CSOs, are in a good position to provide ready assistance within their national programme. It is worth noting that the UN system has taken the initiative to engage in a consultative process leading to greater participation of CSOs in UN system-wide programming processes, with a view to promoting UN objectives and to ensuring the involvement of local actors in national development. A system for broader collaboration between UN national offices and CSOs is at its final stages of development. It requires coordination on the ground to ensure that the UN agencies, regional organizations and others active in the respective countries take the efforts of others into account, in institution and capacity building, so that efforts are not duplicated and resources wasted. There should be regular meetings or consultations between CSO leaders and UN agency staff.

Another area in which UN national offices can play a role is in facilitating CSO access to electronic communications. It would be useful if UN national offices could identify innovative ways to furnish critical information to CSOs and obtain their views on pressing policy issues. Indigenous CSOs often do not have even the most basic communication capacities. National

UN offices should give high priority to providing them with facilities to enhance communications with agencies and other CSOs.

The role of this group of organizations and technical assistance agencies in the capacity development of indigenous CSOs should be guided by the approach based on the concept of 'partners in development'. This implies that there is consultation and dialogue between these agencies and the CSO recipients. This should take place in all aspects of project/programme planning, design and implementation, while ownership resides with the CSO. Development partners should, as a priority, focus their capacity-building efforts at the subregional and regional levels. At these levels, the areas needing capacity building are areas of highly specialized knowledge and skills, in which expertise at the national level is either lacking or scarce, but which could effectively be developed and shared on a subregional or regional basis. Training institutions established to serve member countries of subregional economic groupings are the ideal loci for capacity-building interventions at this level.

Development partners can play a major role in fostering CSO networking and interaction and promotion of professional contacts and exchanges. Networking on a subregional and regional basis will make it possible to optimize the use of scarce resources and talents and thus increase CSO managerial capacity on the continent as a whole. The capacity-building role of development partners with donor resources lies largely in providing CSOs with enhanced information, especially access to the knowledge base of best practices gleaned from experience. Partners can also assist in enabling access to the relevant global networks and pools of knowledge.

Collaboration permits an exchange of experiences among indigenous African CSOs and brings together expertise from within the continent and from outside to assist in the development of managerial capacity.

The principal development partners in the building of CSO capacity have been:

- The UN specialized agencies;
- Individual countries of the European Union through the European Development Fund (EDF) that have had long economic ties with African countries;
- Financial institutions such as the World Bank; and
- The African Development Bank and private foundations.

The UNDP stands out among the agencies of the United Nations system in the business of capacity building. As one of the leading multilateral development

agency, it has adopted a decisive and strategic approach to building CSO capacity in developing countries. The approach emphasizes advocacy, networking, training, technical support and monitoring. The UNDP in 1992 created the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) through a partnership with the World Bank, the African Development Bank, several African countries, and several member States of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). ACBF was meant to implement the African Capacity Building Initiative (ACBI), the main aim of which was to build sustainable institutional and human capacities in policy analysis and development management. The ACBI's priority areas of support include the strengthening of NGOs through provision of grants.

UNECA has a significant lead role to play in strengthening CSO capacity in Africa as one of the implementing agencies of the UN Special Initiative on Africa (UNSIDA). It is facilitating the establishment of the African Centre for Civil Society (ACCS). The fundamental task of the ACCS is the building of the organizational and human capacities of African CSOs, so that they can better manage resources, improve their partnership relationships and enhance their participation in defining and implementing national development agendas. ECA should continue nurturing the development of the Centre to full-fledged status.

The role of the ACCS in building the capacity of African CSOs is unique, pivotal and crucial. It should adopt a more proactive stance in dealing with the growing number of indigenous African CSOs. In addition to the activities it is already carrying out, which it should reinforce, the Centre should endeavour to broaden and diversify its contacts and linkages with CSOs and other development actors on the continent. It should establish long-term, collaborative agreements with institutions within and outside Africa, using the networking approach. It should facilitate and participate in regional networks that serve as information exchange mechanisms and as platforms for debating policy issues and strategies.

The Centre will have to use a range of communication tools and publications to reach out to its various target groups. Its publication, *People First*, will have to be widely disseminated among the rapidly growing CSO community, and the frequency of its production increased, to capture a much wider audience. It should cover and share the best practices in development with CSOs, in a more timely manner. The frequency of this publication will encourage and inspire CSOs to share their stories of achievements with others more promptly. For this purpose, the extensive and appropriate use of electronic communication is needed.

As a first step, the ACCS should raise the awareness of grassroots CSOs on the issues of capacity building and other relevant development concerns. This calls for the convening of national, subregional and regional

workshops, seminars and conferences that will involve the participation of key actors, representatives of CSOs, development partners, government and the private sector. These forums will enable the various interventions proposed as priority capacity-building areas for CSOs to be shared with participants and consensus arrived at on how these can be realized. This process ensures ownership of the capacity-building programme that emerges from such participatory consultations. These consultations lead to elaboration of plans of actions for the programmes to be implemented, identification of sources of support, and agreement on how to monitor and document progress in implementation of the capacity-building blueprint.

One of the immediate tasks that the ACCS should undertake is the creating of a database of development partners, training institutions and consultants for CSO reference. This should be in the format of a compendium, listing the key multilateral, bilateral and private foundations that support the work of CSOs and their institutional development would be a very useful resource for CSOs. Producing such a reference source should be given urgent attention by the ACCS. This database should include national, regional and international development agencies, institutions and organizations that support the capacity-building activities and development efforts of CSOs, training institutions and specialized organizations that can assist in skills development of personnel, including senior management and leadership in CSOs. This database should present the information by country, by subregion, by region and internationally.

In countries where CSO umbrellas or coalitions are non-existent, the ACCS, other development partners and the private sector should encourage or assist in their formation by providing the necessary technical and financial assistance. Development partners could be helpful by earmarking funds in their annual budgets for CSO umbrellas to enable them to provide the services, which their constituencies expect from them, on a continuous basis. Funds for training personnel from indigenous CSOs, both locally and abroad, should be a significant element in the provisions made by development partners in their capacity-building programmes.

Training is an important tool for human and organizational development as it entails learning and acquisition of new knowledge and skills that should bring about attitudinal change towards and visible improvements in development efforts. There is therefore no substitute for training in the collective efforts of development partners, governments and CSOs themselves, in their capacity-building activities. Most, if not all, the capacity-building needs of CSOs can be addressed through training of one form or another.

Training, whether one-off or continuous, is one of the major needs of development and should therefore occupy an important place in the capacity-building agendas of CSOs, development organizations and development agencies. Indigenous African CSOs should endeavor to forge links with training institutions, and development agencies and organizations for relevant training on a systematic and continuous basis. At the national level, capacity in critical areas can be built through staggered, short-term training courses, workshops and seminars conducted by national management development institutes (MDIs), other training institutions and training consultants. Other subregional or regional training institutions could provide assistance in designing and delivering training, including:

- ❑ The Strategic Management Group of Southern Africa;
- ❑ The African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development, Tangiers, Morocco;
- ❑ The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Africa, Arusha, Tanzania; and
- ❑ The Pan African Institute for Development, with facilities in Cameroon and Zambia

B. Developing strategic partnership

The strengthening of capacity is a complex, problem-solving process, and one for which there is no single formula for success. However, for indigenous African CSOs to build capacities, the environment in which they operate should be conducive or enabling. They must be allowed to participate fully with government and other development actors in the development process, and not be marginalized. CSOs must acknowledge the limitations they face, in terms of inadequate resources, absence of a strong institutional base and low technical background in some critical areas of operation. For these reasons, strategic partnership must be developed so as to mobilize the contribution of all to the capacity-building efforts. In developing this partnership, CSOs should consider the adoption of various mechanisms at different levels, national, subregional and regional.

At the national level, country-specific partnerships should be developed and this could be initiated through a variety of actions. One could be the hosting of a forum including national conventions to discuss modalities for partnership building and ways of approaching capacity building. The main objective of such a forum should focus on the development of a framework for partnership and should cover, *inter alia*, the following:

- ❑ Agreement on actions required;
- ❑ Why these actions are necessary and how to accomplish them;
- ❑ Defining and allocating roles and responsibilities;
- ❑ Resources required and means of mobilizing such

resources;

- ❑ Indicating a timeframe for accomplishment; and
- ❑ Establish performance criteria.

Whatever the approach adopted, it should involve a cross-representation of actors; namely the government, private sector, United Nations agencies operating at national level and other international development organizations with local presence. These should forge strategic partnerships on CSO capacity building.

A number of NGOs such as the West African Enterprise Network (WAEN), Forum of African Voluntary Development Organizations (FAVDO), Community Development Resource Association (CDRA), Mwelekeo wa Non-Governmental Organizations (MWENGO), and African Women's Development and Communications Network (FEMNET), just to name a few, operate at the subregional level. These should also establish links among themselves and with the various subregional intergovernmental organizations, to galvanize their efforts to focus on capacity building. The consolidation of partnership could be achieved through the establishment of working groups on the various aspects of CSO capacity building and the definition of the required intervention around the critical areas.

At the regional levels, organizations such as the OAU, African Development Bank (ADB) and ECA, with demonstrated interest in the work of CSOs, should coordinate their activities and resources to address the capacity-building needs of CSOs effectively. One possible action towards partnership building at the regional level could be the organization of an event to bring all parties together to think through the scope and level of their intervention. It would also be prudent to develop a framework for partnership to include an integrated programme of action.

C. Sensitization of grassroots CSOs

A genuine popular participation process that allows for the involvement and contribution of grassroots CSOs would help build consensus and ensure ownership. This will involve mounting of workshops, seminar and conferences at national, subregional and regional levels at which key actors will participate. A vital step in the process is to share the capacity-building initiative with grassroots CSOs, so that they are part of the process and are provided with the opportunity to internalize and appreciate the value.

D. Coordination and monitoring of CSO capacity-building actions

There is need to coordinate and monitor capacity-

building activities at national, sub-regional and regional levels, especially if joint actions have been planned for implementation in the latter case. Key qualitative and quantitative indicators have to be identified and developed to guide measurement of the progress and results of the capacity-building efforts, and to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of the activities.

Development actors, more especially ACCS, should assist CSOs to establish at all levels, a machinery for driving the programmes elaborated, and ensuring that the objectives are realized. This machinery could be an umbrella or apex organization, or a corps of professionals with experience and expertise in programme coordination and monitoring.

There are a number of practical ways in which various actors can package their technical support programmes for CSO capacity-building assistance. These include, *inter alia*, the following listed below.

Participatory approaches that utilize the capacity of CSOs could be used where structural changes in policy and operational practices permit. This requires a review of current rules and practices of organizations in the public, private and international arena geared to improving their relationships with CSOs. Some organizations have taken the strategic move by introducing modifications to their legal, financial and administrative rules and arrangements to enhance the participation of CSOs in their activities. The United Nations system has responded to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) decision to deepen the participation of CSOs in the policy and programme development process, and has engaged in a consultative process that led to major changes in the way it does business. This initiative led to the development of the "Guidance Note for the Resident Coordinator System on Operational Collaboration with CSOs" and definition of "The Partnership Approach".² Furthermore, the Conference of Nongovernmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO) serves many purposes; it provides opportunity for NGOs to collaborate and get their voices heard, thereby influencing decisions and enhancing their lobby on specific issues. These arrangements are valuable in that they foster an enabling environment for CSOs; this helps to catalyze and facilitate mechanisms for dialogue and participation as well as promotes a high sense of accountability, all of which are key ingredients in capacity building.

One of the main elements of the development package of the UN system to developing countries is providing technical support in the form of experts, equipment and materials. Indigenous African CSOs could also benefit from such technical assistance from UN agencies and bilateral sources. In as much as indigenous African CSOs could benefit tremendously from the advice and involvement of external experts in their capacity-building efforts, such expertise should be sought primarily from within the region and/or from other developing countries with similar circumstances and conditions, rather than from the developed countries. The UNDP-sponsored DDS programme is one source of providing indigenous African CSOs with relevant, low-cost expertise. Indigenous African CSOs should take advantage of this programme, to benefit from the experiences and expertise that volunteers can bring to their operations.

Collaboration with CSOs must be viewed as an integral part of the capacity-building assistance and support mechanism. The objective of collaboration with CSOs should not only be approached to help the partner organization carry out its work but to improve the nature, scope and how CSOs work through participatory development process and as a way of incorporating grassroots perspectives and practices. Collaboration should be at every stage of needs identification, programme planning and implementation to monitoring and evaluation. Operational collaboration serves many purposes. It can:

- Provide for acquisition of hands-on experience (acquire knowledge as you go);
- Empower CSOs by the use of local knowledge and

² Report of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions on its 13th session to the Administrative Committee on Coordination, ACC/1998/15, 16 November 1998.

information in micro-policy formulation and programme design;

- ☐ Increase CSO funding;
- ☐ Enhance capacity to mobilized constituencies;
- ☐ Enhance partnership and leverage the non-monetary strength of the local CSO; and
- ☐ Promote sound institutional practices, as these collaborating CSOs, to a large degree, have to adhere to the financial and managerial practices of the partner organization.

The World Bank is leading the way in collaborating with NGOs. However, their collaboration is primarily to capitalize on the strengths usually associated with NGOs.³ The Bank's focus is on the utilization of existing capacity, especially in the following areas:

- ☐ Ability to bring grassroots experience to discussions of development at the national level;
- ☐ Ability to innovate and adapt;
- ☐ Important specialized field knowledge
- ☐ Field-based development expertise, social proximity (grassroots and community links);
- ☐ Participatory methodologies and tools;
- ☐ Long-term commitment to, and emphasis on, sustainability;
- ☐ Cost-effectiveness

The Bank, through its collaboration with NGOs, contributes to the capacity building by:

- ☐ Enhancing the effectiveness of the operations it supports;
- ☐ Foster better public understanding;
- ☐ Foster an enabling environment in project countries, and broaden NGO input into Bank policies, analyses and strategies.

These positive engagements with NGOs by the World Bank have motivated many NGOs to form networks at all levels with the aim of enhancing their acceptance as operational partners. These networks serve many capacity-enhancement purposes, namely:

- ☐ Better coordination of activities,
- ☐ Enhancing their institutional strength; and
- ☐ Improving the information dissemination process.

The United Nations has again taken some decisive steps to define the context and working arrangements for engaging in programmatic and operational collaboration with CSOs. These arrangements are embodied in the "Partnership Approach" for the UN system's operational collaboration with civil society organizations and in the Guidance Note for the Resident Coordinator System on Operational Collaboration with CSOs adopted by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC).

D. Institutionalized forum for periodic dialogue and information exchange

The guiding principles of such a forum should be to mobilize the participation of CSOs in policy and programme definition. Genuine participation is a key ingredient for recognition and confidence building, which in turn, is an opportunity for enhancing CSO decision-making capacity. This would force them to carry out needed research to support their activities and be in a position to influence the outcomes of such consultation. This is a valuable capacity-building strategy that would help in the capacity-building effort if it is well packaged and formatted. A forum made up of a collection and network of CSOs representing all sectors of society, will facilitate exchange of experiences and assist in promoting initiatives that address the real needs of people. This practice of organizing around topical issues and concerns would also prepare them for coming together under urgent and compelling circumstances. This should be used as a medium for empowering CSOs by informing, preparing and obtaining their collective response to issues affecting the lives of their constituents. Another means of dialogue could be the launching of newsletter to discuss and disseminate positions and the outcomes of actions undertaken by the CSO community.

E. Facilitating networking arrangements including North-South and South-South contacts

The promotion of coordinated follow-up to major regional and international programmes is one area in which technical support can be provided. Such programmes include inter alia the protocols of the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action for Social Development, and the UN Special Initiative on Africa. Experience has shown that an organized CSO participation in discussion forums enhances not only their participation but also their overall contribution to the outcomes of such gatherings. These networking arrangements should go beyond the Africa region to facilitate African CSO participation in discussions at the global level to ensure that their interests and concerns are adequately reflected in the conclusions emanating from these dialogues. This form of technical assistance will embolden CSOs and, in turn, enhance their influencing capacity to speak out as equal partners at world forums discussing issues of relevance to their situations. This practice is already an integral feature in some international forums but could be stepped up with constructive assistance given

³ Working with NGOs: A Practical Guide to Operational Collaboration between the World Bank and Non-governmental Organizations (GP 14.70 March 1998)

to define the issues and evolve well-thought out positions. The international community, especially the UN system, is strategically placed to promote such forms of technical support. The international community, in facilitating networking arrangements, could achieve a number of interrelated outcomes, namely:

- ❑ An organized African CSO sector linked to its counterparts in the North and in other Southern countries;
- ❑ Enhanced access to major international forums;
- ❑ Improvement in the quality of CSO contributions and influence in the discussions and outcomes.

F. Building a financial resource base

All actors should rally around the establishment of a CSO Foundation or Fund, as a way of ensuring the financial self-sufficiency of these organizations. The government can contribute to this process through tax incentives for financial support, especially from the private sector and from prominent families who might want to bequeath some of their estate to community initiatives. The private sector should sponsor fund-raising activities for the CSO community, in addition to its direct financial contributions. The CSO community should engage in various forms of fund-raising activities including engaging in community business ventures to mobilize financial resources to fund activities undertaken by CSOs.

G. Conclusions

In sum, if the capacities of indigenous African CSOs are to be effectively developed, the following modalities and strategies are necessary:

- ❑ Identifying and assessing the capacity gaps at national, subregional and regional levels. CSO umbrellas and coalitions should undertake the exercise at the national level while development partners and ACCS should talk responsibility at the subregional and regional level;
- ❑ Defining key actor roles in the partnership. Since several actors, namely CSOs themselves, government, and development partners, are involved in the capacity-building process of indigenous African CSOs at all levels, it is important that their respective roles be clearly defined, in order not to duplicate efforts. The nature of the partnership required to facilitate complementary and effective linkages also needs defining. In this regard, the CSOs should take the lead;
- ❑ Creating networking arrangements. Arrangements for networking with appropriate government ministries or departments and development partners must be created, if linkages are to be

strengthened and information, experiences and best practices shared. For such a networking strategy, an inventory of all actors at national, subregional and regional levels by area of interest should be taken. ACCS and the development partner community should assist with this at the national, subregional and regional levels, through the CSO umbrellas and coalitions, with government support.

- ❑ Creating and reinforcing linkages within and between CSOs and CSO networks and coalitions. This is an action that should be carried out by the CSOs with the support of development partners;
- ❑ Establishing strategic alliances and increasing collaboration with key actors to promote CSO capacity-building initiatives in the subregions. This is a task for both CSO umbrellas/coalitions and the ACCS;
- ❑ Increasing interaction at the subregional and regional level. Specific strategies and actions on policy issues which will benefit CSOs as a whole should be identified and regular forums organized for bringing the key players together to assess progress made in implementation of capacity-building plans and actions for indigenous CSOs;
- ❑ Fostering mechanisms for subregional capacity building, planning, implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation. There is need to coordinate and monitor capacity-building activities at national, subregional and regional levels, especially if joint activities have been planned for implementation in the case of the latter. Joint programme planning or development at these levels calls for identification of common capacity-building needs and priorities, addressing of which should result in significant impact on CSO development activities on the continent;
- ❑ Developing modalities for information dissemination. For the efficient collection and dissemination of information to and about CSOs, that serves to increase awareness of CSO capacity-building actions, the following strategies are called for:
- ❑ Production and wide distribution of a newsletter focusing on capacity building initiatives and successes;
- ❑ Working more closely and effectively with the media to promote CSO capacity-building needs and the actions taken to address them individually and collectively; and
- ❑ Enhancing cooperation with subregional groupings. To ensure that the capacity-building needs and collective development interests of indigenous CSOs are promoted and mainstreamed in the technical assistance programmes of partner organizations, it is vitally important that CSO networks and coalitions forge collaborative and supportive linkages with them.

Annex I

Glossary of Key Terms

1. State

What constitutes the State is widely debated and could be defined in terms of the conventional nation state or as an institutional arrangement for facilitating the socio-economic development of a country. In the present context of good governance, the institutional arrangement concept, which connotes defined structures, mechanisms, is more applicable as a process for facilitating the socioeconomic development of a country. In this context, the UNDP definition embraces this notion of an institutional arrangement with the primary responsibility of managing the socioeconomic development of a country. The UNDP definition of State contained in its "Governance for Sustainable Human Development" policy document reflects this understanding. It is defined as "the political and public sector institutions that guide the political and socioeconomic development and relationship of a country. It is composed of an elected government and an executive branch mandated to create an enabling environment for political participation and socioeconomic development, have responsibility for providing essential public services, control and maintain order." In this respect, the above definition is adopted.

2. Civil society

The civil society debate leaves many questions unanswered. Some are definitional, arising from the different ways in which the concepts have been applied in various times and places. In the traditional sense, civil society comprises the organized or unorganized groups interacting socially, politically and economically outside the State. In the present African situation, it is more appropriate to view the notion of civil society in the context of participatory development and the potentially significant roles it could play in sustainable development. A new vision of African civil society is therefore required, a society that has cultivated a "civic spirit" and been responsive to the emerging realities of nation building. The critical identifying mark of civil society in this context is the space or realm created to foster the feeling of belonging and of

solidarity between people, for the emergence of consensus in defining civil needs and responsiveness to one's community. Through this space, ordinary people are encouraged to participate in government, thereby strengthening relations between citizens and the State. This contributes to the development of their economies and livelihoods.

In this respect, civil society as used in the essays of Gyimah-Boadi⁴ and Larry Diamond⁵ fits with "civic spirit". Gyimah-Boadi referred to civil society as "the ensemble of intermediate actors that lie between the State and the household", formed voluntarily by society to protect and advance its interests and values, and that is "separate from the State and autonomous". This usage also assumes that civil society in Africa is an evolving entity. Diamond conceived civil society as "the realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the State, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules". It is distinct from "society" in general in that it involves citizens acting collectively in a public sphere to express their interests, ideas, exchange information, achieve mutual goals, make demands on the State, and hold state officials accountable. Thus, it excludes individual family life, inward-looking group activity (e.g., for recreation, entertainment, or spirituality), the profit-making enterprises of individual or corporate business firms, and political efforts. This definition is therefore applied.

3. Civil society organization

Civil society organizations are the organized groups in society. They encompass a vast array of organizations, formal and informal and are concerned with public rather than private life. They are the host of not-for-profit or non-profit associations around which society voluntarily organizes to participate in the political and socioeconomic development process. They include all secondary institutions such as NGOs, trade unions, cultural and religious groups, charities, professional associations, social and sports groups, and community groups covering cooperatives and commu-

⁴ Journal of Democracy Volume 7, Number 2 April 1996

⁵ Journal of Democracy Volume 5, Number 3 June 1994

nity development organizations. Community groups play significant roles at the people's level and are community organizations. These may be private or participatory and predominantly reliant on their members to control and/or undertake the work of the organization. They take many different forms and could be described as private voluntary organizations (PVO), community-based organizations (CBO), voluntary development organization (VDO), people's organizations (PO), etc. CSOs are typically established through volunteerism, by one or more founders who, at least initially, work without any remuneration, and most CSOs continue to draw and depend upon volunteerism. This spirit of volunteerism is what keeps them going.

4. Non-governmental organizations

The review carried out in preparing this publication revealed the wide variation in what a "non-governmental organization" or "NGO" means. This in itself could result in confusion and a considerable amount of misunderstanding. For some, the term "NGO" embraces a huge diversity of institutions operating in civil society and has a variety of social, political, civil, sporting, religious, business, cultural, and recreational purposes. To others, they are voluntary in nature, operate independently outside of state control, are not for profit, and are not self-serving in aims and related issues. For the purpose of this publication, the term "NGO" is taken to mean a non-self serving, non-statutory intermediary organization with a legal identity, that plays a distinctive role in addressing development concerns and issues through funding, technical advice, advocacy and as an implementing agent. This definition reflects the goals of participatory development and the need for the emergence of strong indigenous NGOs in the development process.

5. Participatory development

The notion of participatory development emphasizes broader involvement of all people in the productive and decision-making processes, in access to education, health and other public services and a more equitable sharing of the benefits. The fuller involvement of society at large in the planning and implementation of development activities is a basic element of the notion of participatory development. This implies that, rather than governments doing the job alone, they should provide a framework for the population to take part in the decision-making process, to encourage communities to provide critical contributions in the delivery of services needed by the population. This in no way means by-passing government, but merely implies channeling development activities through the use of civil society organizations and other decentralized channels. It is also clear, on the other hand, that effective progress towards realization of the objectives of participatory development requires fundamental

changes in basic attitudes, national planning and implementation systems, and in relationships with governments, especially for coordination and dialogue on policy issues.

6. Popular participation

The 1990 Arusha International Conference on Popular Participation in the Recovery and Development Process in Africa defined popular participation to connote a process of empowerment. It defined this process as one that empowers people to involve themselves effectively in creating the structures and in designing policies and programmes that serve the interests of all. It enables people to contribute effectively to the development process and share equitably in nation building and crisis resolution. The process of popular participation includes the opening up of political space for consensus building, and creating the necessary conditions for the empowerment of people. This requires action on the part of all. The role of the people and their popular organizations is central to the realization of popular participation. Similarly, the attainment of popular participation is dependent on the nature of the State itself, the readiness of Government to respond to popular demand and its openness to partnership.

7. Capacity building

Capacity building is complex, requiring a carefully thought out framework, which takes into account a number of factors, including the environment within which capacity is to be developed and utilized, and the various roles and relationships that must be established for significant impact on performance. Capacity building in the context of this publication is defined from an operational standpoint. It is conceived as a process or a series of measures for establishing effective and efficient systems of operation, creating an enabling environment for CSO participation in the development process, and for increasing institutional and human capabilities.

8. Mandate

A mandate is defined in the context of legitimacy to act and in terms of the parameters establishing the interests represented by a CSO, for whom it is speaking, and how it represents their development aspirations and interests. The mandate is the situation or occasion giving rise to the birth of a CSO. It is derived from a felt need in the community and is rooted in the desire to respond to this need. This desire to respond translates itself into the right to address the pressing problems. This right is further strengthened by the acceptance of the CSO role in providing inputs into Africa's development. Indeed, growth in the number and power of CSOs, in external support and in acceptance of their development role in Africa, has strengthened their rights and responsibilities. This translates into a mandate.

9. Empowerment

Empowerment is a process covering peoples' consciousness of their potential, ability to make and act on choices, and ability to influence, endorse or participate in decisions that affect their lives. Successful strategies for civil society empowerment include education, research and broad dissemination of research findings, training, access to resources, advocacy, lobbying and networking at all levels.

10. Advocacy

Advocacy is the process of speaking up about an issue or acting on behalf of another. It involves taking a position or acting on an issue or concern after careful study, assessment and appreciation of the need to facilitate discussion or action. One way to advocate is to champion a cause from an informed, strong position. This would require systematic documentation of information on the experiences with the issue, to facilitate discussion, build coalition of key actors with similar concerns, spread knowledge and information for education and networking as well as to influence change.

11. Enabling environment

In planting the notion of participatory development, attention must be given to establishment of an enabling environment as a necessary precondition. This implies that the climate under which civil society participates is favourable, first for the coming together of civil society groups and second, for their organized participation without hindrance in areas which are non-governmental. The current trend towards democratic openness, as a result of the move towards good governance, creates new opportunities for the emergence of an enabling environment. These include among others, recognition of the role of CSOs, a system of free media and free press and laws favourable to the participation of civil society. Furthermore, the relationship between government and CSOs should be harmonious and cooperative.

12. Sustainability

Sustainability concerns the extent to which actions/activities can last, to ensure results and continuity. This is assessed in terms of institutional capacity to carry on with a required action, and covers financial aspects, appropriateness of organizational arrangements and linkages with the macro dimensions of the problem.

13. Efficiency

Efficiency concerns the relationship between activities carried out and the results obtained. Factors to be taken into consideration when assessing efficiency

include cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness, analysis of the overall organizational expediency in covering activity programming methods, timeliness of implementation, and financial management.

14. Impact

Impact concerns the relationship between the specific objective of CSOs and the overall objective of development, i.e. the contribution of the CSO programme in question to the overall development objective.

15. Targeted groups and activities

Targeted groups and activities relate to the beneficiaries, and the thrust and focus of activities. Well-defined target groups and activities improve the scope and effectiveness of delivery. This also helps in exploring innovative measures to reach the different target groups. It improves prioritization to ensure that limited resources are targeted to areas of greatest need and relevance to the work of CSOs. Furthermore, CSOs secure equity by targeting and assisting groups that are disadvantaged.

16. Equity

Equity concerns accessing and spreading development resources based on a purely social-benefit perspective and from the need to address the concerns of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in society rather than for economic reasons. Equity also implies reaching the poor and other vulnerable groups in society in the sense of involving them in development activities and raising their standard of living, thereby accruing significant gains for such disadvantaged groups. Most African countries, in addressing poverty adopted the development concept that emphasized growth-with-equity, stressing the basic needs of the poor. It has been argued that in order to reach this goal, wider participation by the poor in the economic, social and political processes and structures is vital to helping them to help themselves to increase their productivity and income. One of the yardsticks of effective participation by citizens is equitable access to knowledge, resources and information. Equity in relation to CSO performance relates to how such organizations have been useful in the equitable distribution of resources and services, especially to the disadvantaged groups.

17. Operational strategies

Operational strategy refers to all those activities that set the course for the organization and help it on course, in service of its mission. For strategies to become operational, they need to be communicated, explained, processed, and revised according to feedback from stakeholders, both internal and external. Implementing strategy requires matching resources and ac-

tivities to objectives, and if required, scaling activities to fit resource constraints (human, financial, technological, and infrastructural).

18. Technical support

This is synonymous with technical assistance which development organizations, multilateral and bilateral agencies are known for providing to developing countries as part of their development aid packages. Technical support usually comes in the form of advisers, consultants, experts, equipment and materials, to facilitate the development activities of the recipient organization.

19. Capacity needs assessment

Capacity needs assessment involves a review or analysis of the institutional environment in which the specific CSO operates or will operate. It represents a stock taking of the existing human and institutional capacity of the particular CSO to realize its vision, mission and objectives. It also requires an evaluation of the ideal capacity required in achieving them and this involves a comparison of existing and ideal capacity.

20. Performance

The performance of an organization can be conceived as falling into three broad areas: performance in activities that support the mission (effectiveness), performance in relation to the resources available (efficiency), and performance in relation to long-term viability or sustainability (adaptability). Organizational performance relates to the ability of the organization to keep its mission, goals, programmes, and activities aligned with its key stakeholders and constituents. An organization's performance is made visible through the totality of the activities it carries out in pursuit of its mission. Performance needs to be assessed in qualitative and quantitative terms, and in terms that relate performance to basic organizational capacity. Assessing performance leads to identification of areas where capacity needs building.

21. Partnership

Partnership describes a relationship in which the parties involved acknowledge each other as equals. In consequence, they have mutual respect for each other. Partnership means working together to find solutions and achieve goals and a willingness to learn from each other is assumed. Partnerships can develop between funding agencies and organizations, or they can occur between two similar organizations. Partnerships can also be formed between an organization and its local stakeholder groups.

22. Programme management

Programme management is the ability of an organization's leadership to develop and administer programmes in a way that supports the organization's mission. Programme management is vitally connected with all other areas of organizational capacity. Good programme management ensures that proper weight is accorded to each facet of mission realization.

23. Linkages

Linkages encompass the ability to build productive relationships with a wide variety of organizations and agencies; with similar organizations at different levels (i.e., national, regional, international); organizations with similar functions but different beneficiaries; government institutions; and networks of agencies with mutual interests. It involves communication, interaction, and exchange of information and other resources on a regular and reliable basis. Establishing linkages assists CSOs to strengthen organizational capacity, influence policy, and increase their legitimacy.

24. Vision

Vision is the core statement that expresses what an organization sets out to do, for whom, and why. It reflects both the development philosophy of those who shape it and the reality of the poor whom the CSO serves. An organization's vision is inspirational, and motivates people to work toward it as it drives the organization to excellence.

25. Mission

Each organization has a different purpose or mission. An organization's mission is its *raison d'être*. It speaks to the questions, Why does this organization exist? Whom does it serve? By what means does it serve them? An organization sparked by a clear and powerful mission can overcome great odds, especially in the early and difficult stage of formation. The mission of an organization expressed in a written statement provides members with a sense of shared purpose and direction.

26. Objectives

Objectives are the desired results of development programmes and projects, which can be short-term, immediate or long-term. To be meaningful and sustainable, the objectives of the projects and programmes of development organizations should be in consonance with those of government, which carries the broader national vision.

27. Strategic planning

Strategic planning is the process by which an organization's vision is translated into a set of long-

term goals and objectives, and a course of action that will lead to their accomplishment. The final product of strategic planning should be a working document that defines the central features of the organization's programme, including resource requirements and a time-table.

28. Monitoring

Monitoring is the continuous or periodic review and overseeing by management of the implementation of an activity to ensure that input deliveries, work schedules, targeted outputs and other required actions are proceeding according to plan. This is necessary to achieving efficient and effective project performance. It provides feedback that enables management to improve operational plans

and take timely corrective action in case of shortfalls and constraints.

29. Evaluation

Evaluation, in the context of rural development projects, in which most CSOs are involved, enables the organization to assess effects - benefits or disbenefits and impact - on the beneficiaries. Through the process of evaluation, CSOs will be able to determine systematically and objectively the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of their activities in the light of their objectives. It is a process that enables CSOs to improve activities still in progress and aids them in future planning, programming and decision-making. In essence, evaluation is a learning process for all organizations.

Annex II

African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation (Arusha 1990)

Preamble

1. The International Conference on Popular Participation in the Recovery and Development Process in Africa was held, in Arusha, the United Republic of Tanzania from 12 to 16 February 1990, as a rare collaborative effort between African people's organizations, the African governments, non-governmental organizations and the United Nations agencies, in the search for a collective understanding of the role of popular participation in the development and transformation of the region. It was also an occasion to articulate and give renewed focus to the concepts of democratic development, people's solidarity and creativity and self-reliance and to formulate policy recommendations for national governments, popular organizations and the international community in order to strengthen participatory processes and patterns of development. It was the third in a series of major international conferences organized by the Economic Commission for Africa in collaboration with the rest of the United Nations system to contribute to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for Africa Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990 (UN-PAAERD). It came as a sequel to the Abuja International Conference on Africa. The Challenge of Economic Recovery and Accelerated Development held in 1987, and the 1988 Khartoum International Conference on the Human Dimension of Africa's Economic Recovery and Development. It is important to note that the initiative for this Conference came from the submission of the NGOs to the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly on the mid-term review and assessment of the implementation of UN-PAAERD in September 1988.

2. The Conference was organized under the auspices of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Follow-up on the Implementation of the UN-PAAERD at the Regional Level (UN-IATF) and with the full support and warm hospitality of the government and people of the United Republic of Tanzania. The ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for Economic Development and Planning adopted resolution 664 (XXIV) at its twenty-fourth session in which

it supported this Conference and urged member states of the Commission, the international community, NGOs and the United Nations system to support and actively participate in it. The Conference was attended by over 500 participants from a wide range of African people's organizations – including, in particular, non-governmental, grass-roots, peasant, women and youth organizations and associations, trade unions and others – as well as representatives of African Governments, agencies of the United Nations system, non-African non-governmental organizations, regional, sub-regional and intergovernmental organizations, bilateral donors, multilateral organizations as well as specialists, both from within and outside Africa. The Conference was opened by H.E. Ali Hassan Mwinyi, President of the United Republic of Tanzania. Opening statements were also made by the representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, the representative of the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Trade Union Unity and representatives of the Non-Governmental Organizations, African Women's Organizations and the Pan African Youth Movement. The Conference would like to put on record its appreciation for the full support and warm hospitality of the Government and people of the United Republic of Tanzania. The Conference was organized out of concern for the serious deterioration in the human and economic conditions in Africa in the decade of the 1980s, the recognition of the lack of progress in achieving popular participation and the lack of full appreciation of the role popular participation plays in the process of recovery and development.

3. The objectives of the Conference were to :

- (a) Recognize the role of people's participation in Africa's recovery and development efforts ;
- (b) Sensitize national governments and the international community to the dimensions, dynamics, processes and potential of a development approach rooted in popular initiatives and self-reliant efforts ;

- (c) Identify obstacles to people's participation in development and define appropriate approaches to the promotion of popular participation in policy formulation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development programmes ;
- (d) Recommend actions to be taken by Governments, the United Nations system as well as the public and private donor agencies in building an enabling environment for authentic popular participation in the development process and encourage people and their organizations to undertake self-reliant development initiatives ;
- (e) Facilitate the exchange of information, experience and knowledge for mutual support among people and their organizations ; and,
- (f) Propose indicators for the monitoring of progress in facilitating people's participation in Africa's development.

4. We, the people, engaged in debate and dialogue on the issues involved over the span of five plenary sessions and fifteen workshops during the five-day long International Conference. In the light of our deliberations, we have decided to place on record our collective analysis, conclusions, policy recommendations and action proposals for the consideration of the people, the African Governments and the international community.

I. Asserting the Role of Popular Participation

5. We are united in our conviction that the crisis currently engulfing Africa, is not only an economic crisis but also a human, legal, political and social crisis. It is a crisis of unprecedented and unacceptable proportions manifested not only in abysmal declines in economic indicators and trends, but more tragically and glaringly in the suffering, hardship and impoverishment of the vast majority of African people. At the same time, the political context of socio-economic development has been characterized, in many instances, by an over-centralization of power and impediments to the effective participation of the overwhelming majority of the people in social, political and economic development. As a result, the motivation of the majority of African people and their organizations to contribute their best to the development process, and to the betterment of their own well-being as well as their say in national development has been severely constrained and curtailed and their collective and individual creativity has been undervalued and underutilized.

6. We affirm that nations cannot be built without the popular support and full participation of the people, nor can the economic crisis be resolved and the human

and economic conditions improved without the full and effective contribution, creativity and popular enthusiasm of the vast majority of the people. After all, it is to the people that the very benefits of development should and must accrue. We are convinced that neither can Africa's perpetual economic crisis be overcome, nor can a bright future for Africa and its people see the light of day unless the structures, pattern and political context of the process of socio-economic development are appropriately altered.

7. We, therefore, have no doubt that at the heart of Africa's development objectives must lie the ultimate and overriding goal of human-centered development that ensures the overall well-being of the people through sustained improvement in their living standards and the full and effective participation of the people in charting their development policies, programmes and processes and contributing to their realization. We furthermore, observe that given the current world political and economic situation, Africa is becoming further marginalized in world affairs, both geo-politically and economically. African countries must realize that, more than ever before, their greatest resource is their people and that it is through their active and full participation that Africa can surmount the difficulties that lie ahead.

8. We are convinced that to achieve the above objective will require a re-direction of resources to satisfy, in the first place, the critical needs of the people, to achieve economic and social justice and to emphasize self-reliance on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to empower the people to determine the direction and content of development, and to effectively contribute to the enhancement of production and productivity that are required. Bearing this in mind and having carefully analyzed the structure of the African economies, the root causes of the repeated economic crisis and the strategies and programmes that have hitherto been applied to deal with them, we are convinced that Africa has no alternative but to urgently and immediately embark upon the task of transforming the structure of its economies to achieve long-term self-sustained growth and development that is both human centered and participatory in nature. Furthermore, Africa's grave environmental and ecological crisis cannot be solved in the absence of a process of sustainable development which commands the full support and participation of the people. We believe in this context that the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP) – which was endorsed by the twenty-fifth Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) held in July 1989, and by the Conference of heads of the State or Government of Non-Aligned countries held in Belgrade in September 1989 and by the Forty-fourth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations which invited the international community, including multilateral, financial and develop-

ment institutions, to consider the framework as a basis for constructive dialogue and fruitful consultation – offers the best framework for such an approach. We also wish in this regard to put on record our disapproval of all economic programmes, such as orthodox Structural Adjustment Programmes, which undermine the human condition and disregard the potential and role of popular participation in self-sustaining development.

9. In our sincere view, popular participation is both a means and an end. As an instrument of development, popular participation provides the driving force for collective commitment for the determination of people-based development processes and willingness by the people to undertake sacrifices and expend their social energies for its execution. As an end in itself, popular participation is the fundamental right of the people to fully and effectively participate in the determination of the decisions which affect their lives at all levels and at all times.

Promoting Popular Participation

10. We believe strongly that popular participation is, in essence, the empowerment of the people to effectively involve themselves in creating the structure and in designing policies and programmes that serve the interest of all as well as to effectively contribute to the development process and share equitably in its benefits. Therefore, there must be an opening up of political process to accommodate freedom of opinions, tolerate differences, accept consensus on issues as well as ensure the effective participation of the people and their organizations and association. This requires action on the part of all, first and foremost of the people themselves. But equally important are the actions of the State and the international community, to create the necessary conditions for such an empowerment and facilitate effective popular participation in societal and economic life. This requires that the political system evolve to allow for democracy and full participation by all sections of our societies.

12. In view of the critical contribution made by women to African societies and economies and the extreme subordination and discrimination suffered by women in Africa, it is the consensus of the participants that the attainment of equal rights by women in social, economic and political spheres must become a central feature of a democratic and participatory pattern of development. Further, it is the consensus of this conference that the attainment of women's full participation must be given highest priority by society as a whole and African Governments in particular. This right should be fought for and defended by society, African Non-Governmental Organizations and Voluntary Development Organizations as well as by non-African Non-Governmental Organizations and Voluntary Develop-

ment Organizations, Government and the United Nations system in due recognition of the primary role being played by women now and on the course to recovery and transformation of Africa for better quality of life.

People's Role

13. We want to emphasize the basic fact that the role of the people and their popular organizations is central to the realization of popular participation. They have to be full involved, committed and indeed, seize the initiative. In this regard, it is essential that they establish independent people's organizations at various levels that are genuinely grass-root, voluntary, democratically administered and self-reliant and that are rooted in the tradition and culture of the society so as to ensure community empowerment and self-development. Consultative machinery at various aspects of democratic participation. It is crucial that the people and their popular organizations should develop links across national borders to promote co-operation and inter relationships on sub-regional, regional, south-south and south-north bases. This is necessary for sharing lessons of experience, developing people's solidarity and raising political consciousness on democratic participation.

14. In view of the vital and central role played by women in family well-being and maintenance, their special commitment to the survival, protection and development of children, as well as survival of society and their important role in the process of African recovery and reconstruction, special emphasis should be put by all the people in terms of eliminating biases particularly with respect to the reduction of the burden on women and taking positive action to ensure their full equality and effective participation in the development process.

15. Having said this, we must underscore that popular participation begins and must be earnestly practiced at the family level, because home is the base for development. It must also be practiced at the work place, and in all organizations, and in all walks of life.

Role of African Governments

16. We strongly believe that popular participation is dependent on the nature of the State itself and ability of Government to respond to popular demand. Since African Governments have a critical role to play in the promotion of popular participation, they have to yield space to the people, without which popular participation will be difficult to achieve. Too often, the social base of power and decision-making are too narrow. Hence the urgent need to broaden these; to galvanize and tap the people's energy and commitment; and to promote political accountability by the State to the people. This makes it imperative that a new partnership between African Governments and the people in the common interest of societal and accelerated socio-

economic development should be established without delay. This new partnership must not only recognize the importance of gender issues but must take action to ensure women's involvement at all levels of decision-making. In particular Governments should set themselves specific targets for the appointment of women in senior policy and management posts in all sectors of government

17. We believe that for people to participate meaningfully in their self-development, their freedom to express themselves and their freedom from fear must be guaranteed. This can only be assured through the extension and protection of people's basic human rights and urge all Governments to vigorously implement the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the ILO Convention No. 87 concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

18. We also believe that one of the key conditions for ensuring people's participation throughout the continent is the bringing to an end of all wars and armed conflicts. The millions of African refugees and displaced persons are those with least opportunity to participate in the determination of their future. We urge Governments and all parties to Africa's conflicts, domestic and external, to seek peaceful means to resolving their differences and of establishing peace throughout Africa. In situations of armed conflicts, we uphold the right of civilians to food and other basic necessities and emphasize that the international community must exercise its moral authority to ensure that this right is protected.

19. We cannot over-emphasize the benefits that can be reaped if, with the elimination of internal strife or inter-country conflicts, the resources spent on defence were to be redirected to productive activities and social services to the people. As rightly noted in the **African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-economic Recovery and Transformation**, "it is not difficult to imagine what it would mean to social welfare in Africa, with all its positive multiplier effects, if a saving can be achieved in defence spending and non-productive expenditures". We believe that our Governments can make such savings and we call upon them to do so urgently.

20. We are, however, aware of certain situations, particularly, for the Front-line States which continue to face the destabilization acts of apartheid South Africa. The destabilization results in a debilitating diversion of resources that would otherwise have been used to meet critical basic needs of the people in these countries.

Role of the International Community

20. We call on the international community to examine its own record on popular participation, and hereafter to support indigenous efforts which promote the emergence of a democratic environment and facilitate the people's effective participation and empowerment in the political life of their countries.

22. We also call on the United Nations system to intensify its effort to promote the application of justice in international economic relations, the defense of human rights, the maintenance of peace and the achievement of disarmament and to assist African countries and people's organizations with the development of human and economic resources. We also call on the United Nations system to implement its own decision to have at least 30 per cent of senior positions held by women. Special efforts are needed to ensure that African women are adequately represented at senior levels in United Nations agencies, particularly those operating in Africa.

Popular Participation in Development

23. On the basis of the foregoing, we lay down the following basic strategies, modalities and actions for effective participation in development.

A. At the level of Governments

1. African Governments must adopt development strategies, approaches and programmes, the content and parameters of which are in line with the interest and aspirations of the people and which incorporate, rather than alienate, African values and economic, social, cultural, political and environmental realities.

2. We strongly urge African Governments to promote the formulation and implementation of national development programmes within the framework of the aforesaid aspirations, interests and realities, which develop as a result of a popular participatory process, and which aim at the transformation of the African economies to achieve self-reliant and self-sustaining people-centered development based on popular participation and democratic consensus.

3. In implementing these endogenous and people-centered development strategies, an enabling environment must be created to facilitated broad-based participation, on a decentralized-basis, in the development process. Such an enabling environment is an essential pre-requisite for the stimulation of initiatives and creativity and for enhancing output and productivity by actions such as:

- (i) extending more economic power to the people through the equitable distribution of income, support for their productive capacity through enhanced access to productive inputs, such as land, credit, technology, etc., and in such a manner as to reflect the central role played by women in the economy;
- (ii) promoting mass literacy and skills training in particular and development of human resources in general;
- (iii) greater participation and consensus-building in the formulation and implementation of economic and social policies at all levels, including the identification and elimination of laws and bureaucratic procedures that pose obstacles to people's participation;
- (iv) increasing employment opportunities for the rural and urban poor, expanding opportunities for them to contribute to the generation of output and enhanced productivity levels and creating better marketing conditions for the benefit of the producers; and,
- (v) strengthening communication capacities for rural development, mass literacy etc.

4. Small-scale indigenous entrepreneurship and producers co-operatives, as forms of productive participatory development, should be promoted and actions should be taken to increase their productivity.

5. Intensifying the efforts to achieve sub-regional and regional economic co-operation and integration and increased intra-African trade.

B. At the level of the people and their organizations

To foster participation and democratic development, the people and their organizations should:

- 1. Establish autonomous grass-roots organizations to promote participatory self-reliant development and increase the output and productivity of the masses.
- 2. Develop their capacity to participate effectively in debates on economic policy and development issues. This requires building people's capacity to formulate and analyze development programmes and approaches.
- 3. Promote education, literacy skill training and human resources development as a means of enhancing popular participation.
- 4. Shake off lethargy and traditional beliefs that are impediments to development, especially the customs and cultural practices that undermine the status of women in society, while recognizing and valuing those beliefs and practices that contribute to development. Rural and urban people's organizations, such as work-

ers, peasants, women, youth, students etc., should be encouraged to initiate and implement strategies to strengthen their productive power and meet their basic needs.

5. Concerted efforts should be made to change prevailing attitudes towards the disabled so as to integrate them and bring them into the main stream of development.

6. Create and enhance networks and collaborative relationships among peoples organizations. This will have the effect of social involvement capable of inducing social change.

7. People's organizations should support strongly and participate in the efforts to promote effective sub-regional and regional economic co-operation and integration and intra-African trade.

C. At the level of the International Community

We also call on the international community to support popular participation in Africa by:

1. Supporting African countries in their drive to internalize the development and transformation process. The IMF, World Bank and other bilateral and multilateral donors are urged to accept and support African initiatives to conceptualize, formulate and implement endogenously designed development and transformation programmes.

2. Directing technical assistance programmes, first and foremost, to the strengthening of national capabilities for policy analysis and the design and implementation of economic reform and development programmes.

3. Fostering the democratization of development in African countries by supporting the decentralization of development processes, the active participation of the people and their organizations in the formulation of development strategies and economic reform programmes and open debate and consensus – building processes on development and reform issues.

4. Allowing for the release of resources for development on a participatory basis which will require the reversal of the net outflow of financial resources from Africa to the multilateral financial institutions and donor countries and their use for development purposes and for the benefit of the people.

5. Reducing drastically the stock of Africa's debt and debt-servicing obligations and providing a long-term period of moratorium on remaining debt-servicing obligations in order to release resources for financing development and transformation on a participatory basis.

6. Ensuring that the human dimension is central to adjustment programmes which must be compatible with the objectives and aspirations of the African people and with African realities and must be conceived and designed internally by African countries as part and parcel of the long-term objectives and framework of development and transformation.

7. Supporting African NGOs, grass-roots organizations, women's and youth organizations and trade unions in activities such as training, networking and other programme activities, as well as the documentation, and wide dissemination of their experiences.

D. At the level of NGOs and VDOs

The African and non-African NGOs and VDOs have an important role in supporting recovery and development efforts and popular participation initiatives and organizations in Africa. They are urged to take the following actions:

1. African NGOs and VDOs and their partners should be fully participatory, democratic and accountable.

2. African NGOs, VDOs and GROs should develop and/or strengthen institutional structures and the regional sub-regional and national levels, such as FAVDO, to bring them together.

3. African NGOs and VDOs should broaden the dissemination of successful African popular participation and grass-root experiences throughout the continent and the exchange of experience thereon to create a multiplier effect and sensitize policy-makers.

4. The International Conference on Popular Participation is clear in its recognition of the value of the contribution of grass-roots organizations and NGOs to Africa's development and demonstrates that effective dialogue between governments, NGOs and grass-roots organizations is essential and valuable. This Conference recommends that national fora be established to enable honest and open dialogue between African Governments, grass-roots organizations and NGOs in order that the experience of grass-root participatory development informs national policy-making.

5. Non-African NGOs and VDOs should give increased support and target their operations within the framework of national economic strategies and reform programmes aimed at transforming the structures of the African economies with a view to internalizing the development process and ensuring its sustainability with a particular focus on the human dimension and people's participation

6. Non-African NGOs and VDOs should give due recognition to African NGOs and participatory, self-

reliant development initiatives launched by African grass-roots organizations.

7. Non-African NGOs and VDOs should utilize African expertise to the maximum extent possible with regard to their development work in Africa and advocacy and campaigning work at the international level.

8. Non-African NGOs should strengthen their advocacy work internationally and in their home countries and with regard to bilateral donors and the multilateral system, closely monitoring their response to the African crisis and holding donor governments and agencies accountable for their policies and actions. In particular, non-African and African NGOs should formulate a programme of action geared towards their fullest participation in the end-term review of UN-PAAERD.

9. Co-operation and dialogue between African and Non-African NGOs and VDOs should be strengthened to increase the effectiveness of their interventions at the community level and the building of greater understanding on the part of international public opinion of the real causes of the African socio-economic crisis and the actions that are needed to deal with its root causes.

10. Non-African NGOs acknowledge that their influence as donors is often detrimental to ensuring genuine partnership with African NGOs, VDOs and grass-root organizations and affects the enabling environment for popular participation. In that context co-operation in all its forms must be transparent and reflect African priorities.

11. African and non-African NGOs, and VDOs should, in addition to their traditional humanitarian activities, increasingly provide support for the productive capacities of the African poor and for promoting environmentally sound patterns of local development.

E. At level of the Media and Communication

1. The national and regional media should make every effort to fight for and defend their freedom at all cost, and make special effort to champion the cause of popular participation and publicize activities and programmes thereof and generally provide access for the dissemination of information and education programmes on popular participation.

2. Combining their indigenous communication systems with appropriate use of modern low-cost communications technology, African communities and NGOs, VDOs and trade unions and other mass organizations must strengthen their communication capacities for development. Regional and national NGOs should participate in the assessment of Africa's Development Support Communication Needs to be carried out under the auspices of

the United Nations Steering Committee and the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on UN-PAAERD.

F. At the level of women's organizations

In ensuring that the participation of women in the development process is advanced and strengthened, popular women's organizations should:

1. Continue to strengthen their capacity as builders of confidence among women;
2. Strive for the attainment of policies and programmes that reflect and recognize women's roles as producers, mothers, active community mobilizers and custodians of culture;
3. Work to ensure the full understanding of men, in particular, and the society, in general, of women's role in the recovery and transformation of Africa so that men and women together might articulate and pursue appropriate courses of action;
4. Implement measures to reduce the burden carried by women through: (a) advocating to the society at large, including central and local government levels, the importance of task sharing in the home and community, especially in the areas of water and wood fetching, child rearing etc; (b) promoting the establishment and proper functioning of community-based day care centers in all communities; and, (c) striving to attain economic equality by advocating the rights of women to land and greater access to credit
5. Women's organizations should be democratic, autonomous and accountable organizations.

G. At the level of organized labour

Trade Unions should:

1. Be democratic, voluntary, autonomous and accountable organizations.
2. Initiative, animate and promote mass literacy and training programmes.
3. Organize and mobilize rural workers in accordance with ILO Convention 141, which African Governments are strongly urged to ratify.
4. Defend trade union rights, in particular the right to strike.
5. Assist in the formation of workers' co-operatives.
6. Assist in organizing the unemployed for productive activities, such as the establishment of small and medium scale enterprises.

7. Give special attention to effective and democratic participation of women members at all levels of trade unions.

8. Promote work place democracy through the call for the protection of workers' rights to freedom of association, collective bargaining and participatory management.

H. At the level of youth and students and their organizations

Considering the centrality of the youth and students in Africa's population and the recovery and development process, the following actions should be taken:

1. Preparation and adoption of an African Charter on Youth and Student Rights to include the right to organize, education, employment and free and public expression.
2. The full democratic participation of youth and students in African society requires immediate steps by Government, popular organizations, parents and the youth themselves to eliminate the major impediments to youth participation, such as frequent bans on youth and student organizations, police brutality against unarmed protesting students, detention and harassment on campuses, dismissal from studies and the frequent and arbitrary closure of educational institutions.
3. Youth, students, Governments and the international community must join forces urgently to combat growing drug trafficking and drug abuse. We also urge Governments to sign and ratify the International Convention on the Illicit Trafficking of Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.
4. The advancement of youth participation in development also requires the protection of Africa's minors against forced military service, whether in national or insurgent/rebel groups.
5. African youth and students should organize national autonomous associations to participate in and contribute to development activities and programmes such as literacy, reforestation, agriculture and environmental protection.
6. Student and youth organizations must also strive to be democratic, accountable, voluntary and autonomous and should co-ordinate their activities with workers', women's and peasant organizations.
7. National youth and student organizations should take urgent steps to strengthen and further democratize existing pan-African youth and student organization to make them play their roles more effectively in Africa's development process.

Monitoring Popular Participation

24. We proclaim the urgent necessity to involve the people in monitoring popular participation in Africa on the basis of agreed indicators and we propose the use of the following indicators, which are not necessarily exhaustive, for measuring the progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the Charter.

1. The literacy rate, which is an index of the capacity for mass participation in public debate, decision-making and general development processes;

2. Freedom of association, especially political association, and presence of democratic institutions, such as political parties, trade unions, people's grass-root organizations and professional associations, and the guarantee of constitutional rights.

3. Representation of the people and their organizations in national bodies.

4. The rule of law and social and economic justice, including equitable distribution of income and the creation of full employment opportunities.

5. Protection of the ecological, human and legal environment.

6. Press and media freedom to facilitate public debate on major issues.

7. Number and scope of grassroots organizations with effective participation in development activities, producers and consumers co-operatives and community projects.

8. Extent of implementation of the Abuja Declaration on Women (1989) in each country.

9. Political accountability of leadership at all levels measured by the use of checks and balances;

10. Decentralization of decision-making processes and institutions.

25. We are convinced of the imperative necessity to follow-up and monitor the implementation of this Charter and to report periodically thereon progress achieved as well as problems encountered. We accordingly recommend that at the national level a follow-up mechanism on which representatives at high level of Government, trade unions, women's organization, NGOs, VDOs, grass-roots and youth and student organizations will be members.

26. At the regional level, we propose a joint OAU/ECA Regional Monitoring Machinery on which also, in ad-

dition to representatives of these two organizations will be representatives of the network of organizations named above. This regional monitoring group will submit biennial progress reports on the implementation of the Charter to ECA Conference of Ministers and the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU.

Conclusions

27. The Conference has taken place during a period when the world continues to witness tumultuous changes in Eastern Europe. Even more dramatically, this Conference has taken place during the very week when Nelson Mandela's release has exhilarated all of Africa, and galvanized the international community.

28. There is an inescapable thread of continuity between those events and our Conference; it is the power of people to effect momentous change. At no other time in the post-war period has popular participation had so astonishing and profound an impact.

29. History and experience both teach that this world never works in compartments. The forces of freedom and democracy are contagious. Inevitably, and irresistibly, popular participation will have a vital role to play on the continent of Africa, and play that role we will.

30. It is manifestly unacceptable that development and transformation in Africa can proceed without the full participation of its people. It is manifestly unacceptable that the people and their organizations be excluded from the decision-making process. It is manifestly unacceptable that popular participation be seen as anything less than the centerpiece in the struggle to achieve economic and social justice for all.

31. In promoting popular participation, it is necessary to recognize that a new partnership and compact must be forged among all the ACTORS in the process of social, political and economic change. Without this collective commitment, popular participation is neither possible nor capable of producing results. We, therefore, pledge to work together in this new partnership to promote full and effective participation by the masses together with Governments in the recovery and development process in Africa.

32. We, the people here assembled, have no illusion that the Charter will be embraced overnight by all of those to whom it is directed. But we are confident that this document is an indispensable step on the road to everything we would wish for the people of Africa.

Done at Arusha, The United
Republic of Tanzania
16 February 1990

Annex III

Application of CSOs' Capacity Building Programme: An Illustrative Guide

Experience suggests the need to build capacity around results expected. As such the application of CSOs' capacity building programme must be need based and focus on the specific areas of activities. The application should follow a set of routine steps, namely:

- I. Agree on the vision then go on to define mission, goals and roles to be played, around which a capacity building needs assessment should be carried out and a development and or enhancement programme would be established. As an illustration, a worksheet is provided to work you through two examples of how the capacity building framework could be applied by either CSOs involved in the provision of various aspects of basic education or by CSOs engaged in women economic empowerment. The illustration covers essential elements that should constitute CSO capacity building effort. These are as follows:

A. CSOs involved in the provision of various aspects of basic education:

Goals	Expected Roles ¹	Priority Areas for capacity building based on a needs assessment	Dimensions of capacity	Performance target/criteria	Capacity building measures ²
To increase the number of concrete initiatives on basic education especially in the area of primary schooling.	Advocacy	Strategic planning. Capacity for advocacy including policy influence. Capacity for mass mobilization and collective action.	Institutional	Improve visibility. Establish relevance. Ensure continuity. Enhance effectiveness. Enhance efficiency.	Promoting and strengthening partnership. Promoting the formation and strengthening of alliances among CSOs involved in basic education and other social mobilization programmes.
	Resource mobilization	Strategic planning. Capacity for strategic and operational management especially financial. Capacity for mass mobilization and collective action.	Financial management	Ensure credibility. Improve financial sustainability. Enhance efficiency. Improve cost effectiveness. Ensure equitable distribution and utilization of resources.	Establishing a process of mobilizing resources including the possibilities of a Foundation or Fund for basic education. Launching an effective communication and information dissemination programme around resource mobilization activities and results obtained from programme.
			Institutional	Ensure impact. Enhance effectiveness. Enhance efficiency.	
	Intermediary for managing assistance towards basic education.	Capacity to monitor and evaluate.	Institutional	Enhance effectiveness. Enhance efficiency.	Training and other skills enhancement in the areas of monitoring and evaluation.
			Human	Improve capability. Enhance effectiveness. Enhance efficiency.	Experiential learning- acquires monitoring and evaluation skills and approaches by doing.
	Implementer	Strategic planning. Capacity for strategic and operational management. Capacity for advocacy including policy influence. Capacity to monitor and evaluate. Capacity for mass mobilization and collective action. Strengthening the unique role of women CSOs.	Institutional	Establish relevance. Improve visibility. Ensure sustainability and continuity	Training and other skills enhancement. Experiential learning.
			Human	Improve capability. Enhance effectiveness. Enhance efficiency.	Promoting and strengthening partnership.
			Institutional including financial management.	Enhance effectiveness. Enhance efficiency. Ensure impact. Ensure equitable distribution of resources and services. Improve means of establishing and reaching target groups as well as appropriateness of activities.	Promoting the formation and or strengthening of alliances among CSOs involved in various aspects of service delivery. Launching an effective communication and information dissemination programme.
					Establishment of a Foundation or Fund for financing basic education.

¹ CSOs could be involved in one or a combination of roles.

² Capacity building measures should be a continuous and sustained effort and as an integral component of the implementation of activities.

B. CSOs involved in promoting the economic empowerment of women:

Goals	Expected Roles	Priority areas for capacity building based on a needs assessment	Dimensions of capacity	Performance target/criteria	Capacity building measures
To promote the economic empowerment of women by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increasing the number of women involved in economic activities, and - ensuring quantitative and qualitative improvements in women's economic activities. 	Advocacy.	Strategic planning. Capacity for advocacy including policy influence.	Institutional	Enhance visibility. Establish relevance. Ensure sustainability. Ensure impact.	Promoting and strengthening partnership. Promoting the formation and or strengthening of alliances among CSOs involved in the promotion of women economic empowerment. Launching an effective communication and information dissemination programme.
	Intermediary for managing assistance towards the economic empowerment of women including the provision of technical support.	Strategic planning. Capacity for strategic and operational management. Capacity to monitor and evaluate. Strengthening the unique role of women CSOs. Capacity for mass mobilization and collective action.	Institutional	Enhance visibility. Establish relevance. Ensure sustainability. Enhance effectiveness. Enhance efficiency. Ensure impact. Ensure equity. Improve means of reaching target groups.	Promoting and strengthening partnership. Promoting the formation and or strengthening of alliances among CSOs involved in women's economic empowerment. Launching an effective communication and information dissemination programme. Training and other skills enhancement programmes. Experiential learning.
			Human	Improve capability. Enhance effectiveness. Enhance efficiency.	Training and other skills enhancement programmes. Experiential learning.

- II. Adopt an action plan indicating the broad objectives, cost and time frame for implementation.
- III. Launch the capacity building and or enhancement programme.
- IV. Monitor and evaluate programme to allow for necessary adjustment to the programme and action plan.

The illustrative guide set out in this chapter should be seen not as a prescription but as a process of determining and developing appropriate capacity building programmes, one that is tailored to the specific goals and areas of action. Capacity building programmes adopted by individual CSOs should reflect the specific needs and circumstances and should be well discussed and defined.

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