

# Democracy Soup



**Democracy and Development in Africa**

**A Discussion Paper by the  
Africa All Party Parliamentary Group**

**May 2014**



*Africa All Party  
Parliamentary Group*



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Cover photograph:  
UN Photo / Albert Gonzalez Farran

Sudanese Friends and Relatives Celebrate Hajj Returnee.  
Some 500 people in El Fasher, Sudan, gather to welcome a friend and relative returning  
from his Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Women prepare food for the large-scale  
party.

19 December 2009  
El Fasher, Sudan  
Photo # 424404

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Lord Cameron of Dillington  
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James Duddridge MP  
Mark Durkan MP  
Pat Glass MP  
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Baroness Jay  
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Ian Paisley MP  
Earl of Sandwich  
Lord Steel of Aikwood  
Baroness Uddin

Hugh Bayley MP initiated the inquiry and James Duddridge MP closed it, as Chairs of the Africa APPG at different periods over the length of the inquiry.

Victoria Crawford, the Africa APPG's Research Coordinator, managed the inquiry and drafted the report. Africa APPG interns John Blow, Margarete Knorr and Lucy Kentish conducted background research and provided administrative support. Statisticians at the House of Commons Library produced Figures 1 and 2 and analysed the results for Africa of the My World survey in section 4.

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Many others have provided comments, ideas and contacts and our thanks are extended to them also.

## **Acronyms**

APPG – All Party Parliamentary Group

AU – African Union

AWEPA – European Parliamentarians with Africa

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

BGIPU – British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

CPA UK – Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK

CMG – Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George

DFID – Department for International Development

DRC – Democracy Republic of Congo

ENCISS - Enhancing Interaction and Interface between Civil Society and the State to Improve Poor People's Lives

EU – European Union

FCO – Foreign and Commonwealth Office

G8 – Group of 8

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

HE – Her or Her Excellency

HIV- Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HMG – Her Majesty's Government

IATI – International Aid Transparency Initiative

IIAG – Ibrahim Index of African Governance

MP – Member of Parliament

NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation

OBE – Order of the British Empire

ODI – Overseas Development Institute

OECD-DAC - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee

UK – United Kingdom

PETS – Public Expenditure Tracking Survey

UN – United Nations

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

US – United States

## **Foreword by the Chair**

Rather than providing the traditional list of recommendations we have settled on a discussion document that explores the relationship between democracy and development, and the broad range of ways the international community influences democracy in Africa.

As politicians we are convinced that democracy (however you define it) is part of what helps a country develop, part of the golden thread, and that we, the international community, are a force for good in this regard. However, the one compelling piece of unequivocal evidence that democracy always leads to development in all cases could not be found, and, while often positive, we have seen that we need to recognise the limits to our own influence and pay closer attention to how we influence the state of democracy in Africa in indirect ways as well.

We hope this will fuel the debate.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Duddridge".

James Duddridge MP

Chair

## Introduction

Democracy is gaining ground in Africa: whereas only one African country, Botswana, has remained a parliamentary democracy with elections throughout the period since Independence, now only one African country, Eritrea, does not hold elections. But while this trend is unlikely to reverse, questions remain about what this means for poverty and development in Africa. These questions are some of the most important Africa will face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: how to ensure that Africa's emerging democracies – now engrained as the dominant form of governance on the continent – work, so citizens can enjoy the potential benefits.

The Africa All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) set out to explore these issues: what democracy in Africa looks like, what it means for development, and, because as British Parliamentarians it is most relevant to the Group, what role the international community plays in shaping this. As well as drawing on Members' experiences on the continent more broadly, the APPG received 23 written submission, held seven meetings and visited two African countries under this inquiry, with 19 Parliamentarians actively involved in the process.

These activities have been the prompt for some exciting discussions but the breadth and complexity of the subject matter has meant it has been difficult to draw firm conclusions based on comprehensive evidence. We therefore took the decision to write up this inquiry as a discussion document exploring the nature of democracy in Africa and the ways that the international community has and continues to shape this. As such, the views expressed do not necessarily represent the views of all of the Africa APPG's Members but instead highlight some of the areas where there may be opportunity for strengthening the role of the international community and some of the risks to avoid while doing so. We hope these thoughts and observations will serve to prompt further discussion and that the report helps to broaden debates about the international community's influence on democracy in Africa to pay more heed to the often overlooked indirect influences.

This is a vast subject which plays out differently in different parts of Africa. While not representative of the range of democracies in Africa, the APPG's visits to Sierra Leone and Ethiopia allowed Parliamentarians to investigate two contrasting models. We found that each form of democracy has its own strengths and weaknesses, making it difficult to pick the "best" model; instead the most appropriate form of democracy in a specific country, and therefore the most appropriate form of international engagement, may depend on the type of development that its citizens aspire to. This variation makes it difficult to generalise but we have been able to make some observations.

In particular, we noted that institutional strengthening and democracy building are complex and long term processes; while setting up democratic elections is relatively easy, consolidating democracy is much more difficult, and many of Africa's democracies remain partial at best. For example despite considerable progress in some areas, there remain challenges in ensuring democratic processes are inclusive to marginalised groups, such as youth and women. We identified a number of factors which may serve to weaken democracy in Africa: a lack of accountability through the tax system, cases where the legislative and judicial branches of Government are weaker than the Executive and structural limits to the

role of the media as a watchdog on society. Both Parliamentarians and political parties tend to play different roles in Africa than they do in the UK and we have concerns that the expectations often placed on MPs to provide material benefits to their constituents, the limited use of manifestos to differentiate political parties, and ethnic politics pose fundamental challenges to democracy in Africa. New technology may provide some fresh opportunities for debate and accountability however.

Much of the spread of democracy in Africa is down to Africans and it is important not to overlook African agency. However the international community does play a role and as members of the international community, it is important we assess our influence, both direct and indirect. To do this, we considered the importance of global norms in shaping democracy in Africa, and the need to “get our own house in order” in this regard. We explored the significance of diplomatic pressure and soft power, and the limits to aid conditionality. And we discuss programmes directly promoting democracy and components of democracy, and support for elections. Overall, it appears that international support may be focused in certain areas: on the national-level executive branch of Government, and with certain sections of civil society, particularly at the grassroots, in a context where weak links anywhere can undermine the whole system.

We also noted that the international community’s influence has not always been positive and we hope that more attention will be paid to some of the political consequences of external interventions: the risk of making universal issues appear as western concerns, the risk of external sources of funding undermining the relationship between government and citizens, that aid can fuel corruption or support repression if it is not made accountable to citizens, the problems caused by any rivalry between different international actors, and the risk that Parliaments are disempowered if other civil society groups are invited to the table in their place.

This characterisation of democracy in Africa and the various ways in which the international community has influenced it have implications for how we engage in the continent. Overall the range of ways in which the international community affects democracy in Africa, the variety of international actors involved, the complexity of governance processes, the need for democracy-building to be context specific and the broad range of components of democracy point to the need for a consistent approach between different actors and their various influences and over time. We hope this paper will be useful as we consider what this means in practice and will serve as the basis for further discussion on the critical question of how to ensure that Africa’s emerging democracies remain or become the type of democracies that deliver.

## 1. The spread of democracy in Africa

The past decades have seen a fundamental shift in the patterns of governance and the nature of political regimes in Africa. Whereas only one African country, Botswana, has remained a parliamentary democracy with elections throughout the period since Independence, now only one African country, Eritrea, does not hold elections.

Figure 1 highlights this shift. Definitions of democracy vary and it is difficult to draw a line around what we count, but, based on the available data, this graph uses a classification of “democratic” as where multiple parties have won seats, and shows that where only one in five sub-Saharan African countries were “democratic” at the end of the Cold War in 1991, over four in five are “democratic” today. From its place as the region with the smallest proportion of democratic countries in the world, sub-Saharan Africa now has a larger proportion of formal democracies than Asia, Australia and Oceania and North Africa and the Middle East.

### Chart of democracy

*Proportion of countries in regions that are classed as democratic*

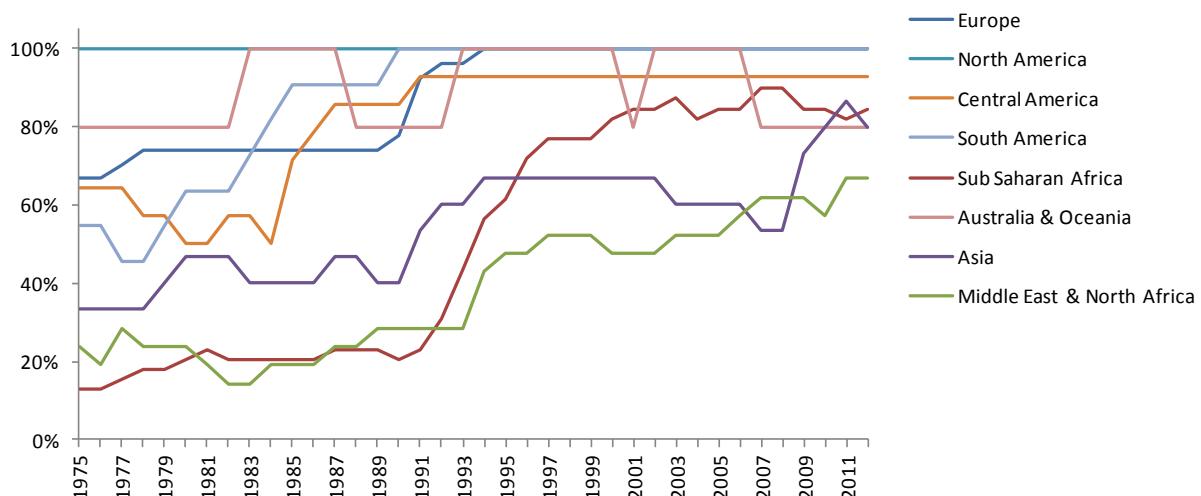


Figure 1: Data from the World Bank' Development Research Group's Database on Political Institutions. Data re-coded by the House of Commons Library as democratic where multiple parties have won seats and non-democratic elsewhere.

However democracy in Africa remains often partial at best, with submissions to this inquiry describing it as “a misconception” or “only nominal”, and it must be recognised that so-called “managed democracies” and “elective dictatorships” can be a far cry away from the FCO’s broader definition of democracy as “*more than just elections - it is acceptance for the principles of equity, participation, transparency and accountability. It is respect for human rights and the rule of law*”. The Ibrahim Index of African Governance<sup>1</sup> (IIAG) scores African countries on average a poor 48.4 out of 100 for participation and human rights, while Freedom House, a watchdog organisation dedicated to the expansion of freedom around the world, rates sub-Saharan Africa as only 13% free (with the press only 3% free) when

<sup>1</sup> Data available at: <http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/iiag/>

countries are weighted by population<sup>2</sup>, compared to 86% free in Europe, 38% free in Asia-Pacific and only 2% free in the Middle East and North Africa. Overall, the state of democracy in Africa is improving: between 2000 and 2012, 33 out of 52 African countries assessed by the Ibrahim Index of African Governance improved in participation. But put another way, 19 out of 52 African countries have not.

We met with African parliamentarians to discuss the state of democracy in their countries. Ugandan MPs for example emphasised that despite political stability, regular elections and a Constitution which ensures marginalised groups including women, disabled people and youth are represented in Parliament, debate is often stifled, corruption is increasing, Parliament is limited to an advisory role, and both the Electoral Commission and the judiciary are appointed by the President and therefore not independent from the Executive.

Even in countries held up as positive examples of democracy in Africa, democratic institutions are often weak and ineffective. Botswana, for example, is often held up as a positive example of democracy in Africa because the country has held regular elections since Independence and citizens enjoy a high degree of political rights. However, a single party, the Botswana Democratic Party, has been in power since Independence and one Opposition Botswanan MP who we met as part of this inquiry was keen to highlight the lack of transparency in the country, and that Parliament and that the judiciary are kept under the grip of the Executive.

Despite reservations about the quality of democratic governance in Africa, almost all African countries now have some form of democracy, and it is critical that these young democracies are able to bring about development benefits for their citizens. As Alina Rocha Menocal of ODI describes it, engaging with emerging democracies has become “the new frontier of the developmental challenge”<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Data available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/regions/sub-saharan-africa>

<sup>3</sup> Alina Rocha Menocal (November 2013). *Emerging democracies. Rising to the challenge*. ODI Briefing. Available at: <http://www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8699.pdf>

## 2. What does democracy mean for development?

The relationship between democracy and development has been discussed, explored and dissected for decades. The two are clearly related: we can go as far as saying that a democratic regime has never fallen after a certain income level is reached (*\$6055 per capita* in Penn World Table dollars, which was Argentina in the 1960s). However this is a complex subject and it remains impossible to make evidence-based generalised statements about which leads to which. Fundamentally different countries develop in different ways.

Central is what we mean when we use the terms “democracy” and “development”, both of which have been defined by different people in different ways. For this section, it seems most useful to consider a system with free, fair and regular elections, respect for basic civil and political rights, and effective vertical and horizontal accountability mechanisms, as broadly democratic, and to look for a form of development that goes beyond economic growth to include “quality of life” factors such as literacy and life expectancy, considered important by citizens and the majority of the development community alike.

We compared the effectiveness of development with how democratic a country is in order to investigate the hypothesis that more democratic countries better bring about development for their citizens than more autocratic countries.. To do this, we devised an “added value” score to represent the development effectiveness, based on the difference between a country’s rank in terms of human development (measured by the United Nations Human Development Index, compared with other countries in the world) and its income (measured by its rank in terms of average Gross Domestic Product per person) – or how much development the country gets for its income. We then compared this with the level of democracy in the country (measured by the participation index from the Ibrahim Index of African Governance, which incorporates free and fair executive elections, free and fair elections, political participation, electoral self-determination and effective power to govern).

## Participation and added development value in African countries, 2012

*Each dot represents one country*

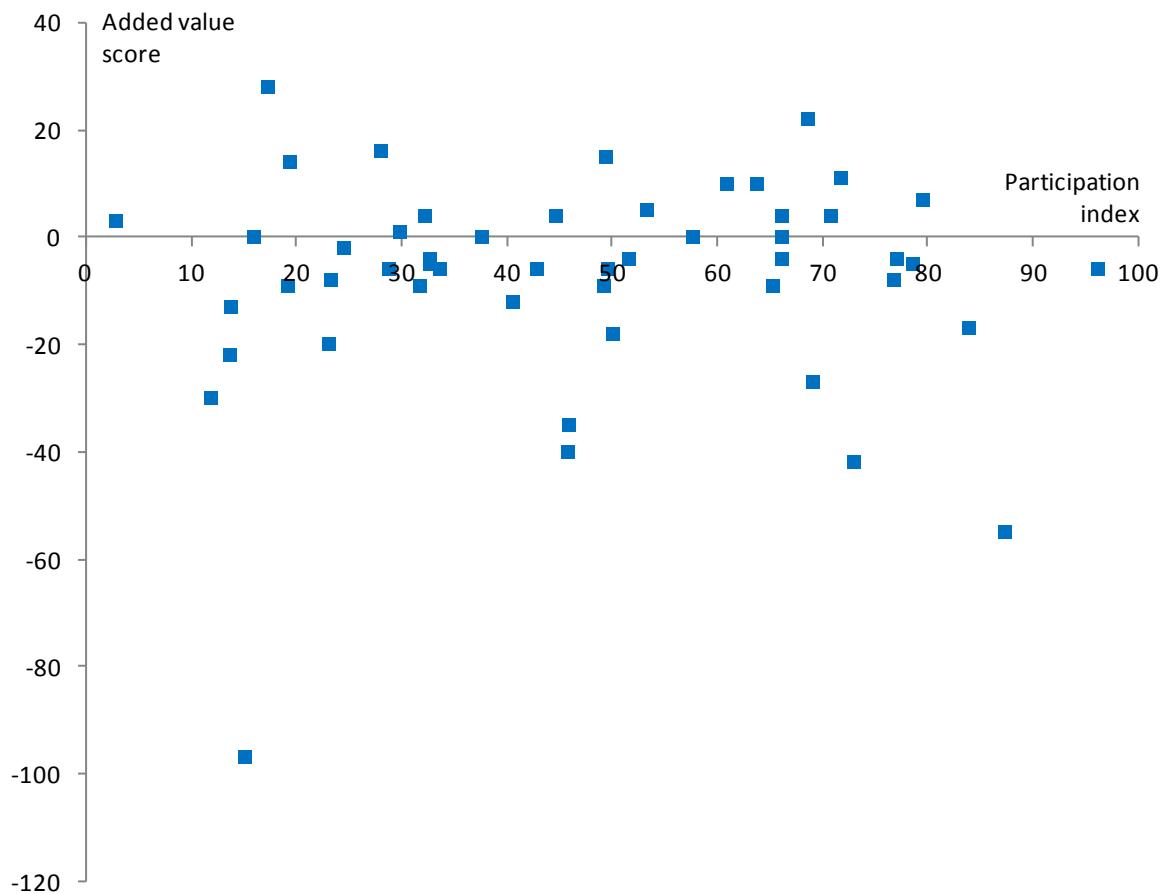


Figure 2: “Added value” score represents the effectiveness of the government and is based on the difference between a country’s rank in terms of human development (measured by the UN Human Development Index, compared with other countries in the world) and its income (measured by its rank in terms of average GDP per person).<sup>4</sup> ‘Participation’ represents how democratic the country is and is from the [Ibrahim Index of African Governance](#) and incorporates free and fair executive elections, free and fair elections, political participation, electoral self-determination and effective power to govern. Data processed by House of Commons Library.

Figure 2 shows that we found no evidence of a link between development effectiveness and how democratic and participatory the country is. Essentially, while some more democratic countries are very developmental, others are not, and while some more autocratic countries are not developmental, others are. What was suggested to us however was that more democratic countries are more likely to see a form of development that is sustainable, equitable and inclusive, and that other related factors increasingly recognised in development circles as important to development include the strength of the country’s institutions, which enable effective development to occur, and political *stability*, without which business struggles to operate and government struggles to provide basic services.

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<sup>4</sup> This indicator comes from the UN’s [Human Development Index](#) dataset.

## **Democracy and development: a case of the chicken and the egg? Theoretical and historical perspectives<sup>5</sup>**

As African countries gained Independence, the dominant thinking was that democracy was more likely to emerge in more developed countries: that modernisation culminates in democratisation. But the “Third Wave” of democratisation which swept over Africa and much of the developing world from the 1980s onwards, and in particular as the Cold War drew to a close, turned this on its head, and by the 1990s, an orthodoxy had emerged that democracy was instead a necessary ingredient to bring about development. The theory is that democracy produces a battle of ideas about what to do, as elections provide a reliable system of rewards and punishments for policy makers, and accountability mechanisms limit the abuse of executive and state power. This thinking manifested itself in the good governance agenda which has underlain much of the international community’s relationship with Africa over the last two decades.

But experience calls this into question. Democracy doesn’t always work. Not all public pressure helps development and in fact democracies may be particularly susceptible to a range of pressures. Clientelism and vote-buying is typically cheaper and more reliable for politicians in Africa than promises to deliver policies that will lead to development, in part at least because in settings where state and private sector capacity is low, it is genuinely difficult to deliver on such promises. As such, these promises aren’t credible to voters, who are more likely to opt for the candidate they believe is going to target, or indeed who already has targeted, benefits in their direction. The result is that, in reality, citizen pressure can lead to more effective clientelism, instead of better public policies.

For all the cases where democracy has benefited development in different countries and spheres in practical ways, and the APPG has received several examples of these, for example Tearfund’s submission to this inquiry outlined examples from Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Ethiopia where greater transparency had led to better budget utilisation, reduced leakages and ultimately better public services, there are examples of authoritarian regimes that have been remarkably successful in bringing rapid development outcomes – the East Asian Tigers from the 1960s to 1990s, which became democratic *after* a strong middle class had been formed, and more recently China and Vietnam. This has led to the argument that a strong, centralised and highly autonomous state with expedient decision-making based on long term horizons is required for development, a model followed by two African countries that have made some of the greatest progress in terms of development indicators in recent decades: Ethiopia and Rwanda. However authoritarian states aren’t always effective at bringing development either, as examples from Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union testify, and the often isolated nature of their policymaking processes can itself cause problems for development, as the 1994 peso crisis in Mexico, the result of unchecked actions by technocrats and their political allies, makes clear. A comprehensive study<sup>6</sup> looking at the direction of the relationship between democracy and development in 135 established democracies and democratising countries between 1950 and 1990 found that whether a country was democratic or autocratic had no significant influence on its economic growth and national income.

The lesson may be that democratic and autocratic regimes are capable of implementing similar policies; that there is no single path to development.

<sup>5</sup> This section draws heavily on submissions by David Booth and Alina Rocha Menocal both of ODI

<sup>6</sup> Przeworski, Adam, ed. (2000) *Democracy and development: political institutions and well-being in the world, 1950-1990*. Vol. 3. Cambridge University Press.

Overall we can say that different countries develop in different ways; in some, democracy enables the institutional strengthening that leads to greater development, and in others the political environment opens up as the country becomes more developed. The lesson for the international community is that if our aim is to support development, there are no hard and fast rules for how to engage with African democracies: we need to be flexible around and responsive to the specific context.

### **3. Case studies of different models of democracy in Africa**

The APPG's visits to Sierra Leone and Ethiopia allowed us to investigate two contrasting governance regimes. While it may not be possible to pick which is "best" for development, as this depends on specific local circumstances and the type of development that citizens aspire to, we can discuss some of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the different approaches in enabling development, which have important implications for how we engage with Africa's incipient democracies in different contexts.

#### **CASE STUDY: Sierra Leone**

Sierra Leone's story since the Civil War ended in 2002 is one of guarded success: the country is now considered largely peaceful and democratic, ranked 19<sup>th</sup> out of 52 African countries for participation<sup>7</sup> by the Ibrahim Index of African Governance, although it remains one of the poorest on earth, ranked 177 out of 187 countries in the UN Human Development Index. The 2012 elections were the first since the civil war to be organised without UN organisational support, signalling a democracy beginning to stand on its own two feet and a huge stride from the preceding decade. The international community, and in particular the UK, has played a critical role in supporting Sierra Leone's incipient democracy, from the High Commissioner going around the country explaining what democracy is to members of the public, to providing material support to institutions such as the police and civil society. Much of this success has been credited to the fact that democracy in Sierra Leone has built on the country's traditions and cultures, for example incorporating the traditional Paramount Chief system into a more formal justice system.

However our visit to Sierra Leone highlighted the continuing fragility of the country's democracy and the scale of the structural challenges that remain.

For example, the limited public understanding of the role of Parliament (and more broadly low literacy levels) means constituents place demands on MPs to provide them with direct material benefits worth several times the value of the MPs' salaries. MPs were quite frank about the need to undertake "consultancies" to supplement their income in order to meet these demands.

A number of factors limit the role the media plays in holding Government to account, leading to a Freedom House "partly free" press status. Journalists are often closely tied to politicians. Media outlets struggle to secure the licenses to broadcast. While the Constitution guarantees freedom of speech, the 1965 Public Orders Act allows journalists to be prosecuted for "criminal defamation", for which "the truth" is not a defence.

Corruption poses a major threat to Sierra Leone's democracy; in Transparency International's 2013 Global Corruption Barometer<sup>8</sup>, Sierra Leone ranked bottom, based on the percent of people who reported having to pay bribes, with 90% of Sierra Leoneans reporting to have paid a bribe to the police and 82% to the judiciary in the past year. While

<sup>7</sup> Participation includes free and fair executive elections, free and fair elections, political participation, electoral self-determination and effective power to govern. Data available at: <http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/interact/>

<sup>8</sup> Available at: <http://www.transparency.org/gcb2013>

we met a host of committed organisations and individuals, specifically in the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Sierra Leone Audit Service, working to address corruption, weak links in the system were letting them down. In particular the judiciary has been criticised for not prosecuting individuals accused of corruption and handing out too lenient sentences to those it did prosecute. For example during a recent high-profile case the Vice-President and a friend were filmed by Al-Jazeera taking cash to lift a logging ban but both avoided prosecution, and since the Anti-Corruption Act was revised in 2008, there has only been one custodial sentence. While parliamentarians are required to declare their assets on entering and leaving Parliament, the register is not made public, making it extremely difficult for members of the public to use the register to hold parliamentarians to account. The 2011 Audit Report was very damning, particularly relating to Government procurement, but the Audit Service and others expressed frustration that the subsequent recommendations set out by Parliament's Public Accounts Committee were not being taken forward by the Executive.

Democracy in Sierra Leone has been an intricate part of the country's development over the past decade and has been broadly successful in bringing about a peaceful society, which is enabling investment in the country, such as the recent large-scale investment in the mining sector. However a number of structural challenges to democracy continue to pose a threat and need to be addressed if Sierra Leone is to meet its target of becoming a Middle Income Country by 2035.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Strengths</b><br>Peaceful – brings different groups together.<br>Individual rights and freedoms protected.<br>Incorporates traditional structures and is culturally sensitive.<br>Based on consensus.  | <b>Weaknesses</b><br>Low institutional capacity.<br>Endemic corruption.<br>Low literacy levels mean citizens have a limited understanding of democratic processes and how to engage with them.<br>Low domestic resource mobilisation.   |
| <b>Opportunities</b><br>New found mining revenue can be used to meet development goals.<br>Very strong relations with donors and the international community, in particular the UK.<br>New donors expanding their work in Sierra Leone<br>A large level of support to civil society, the media, the judiciary etc.<br>Information from external sources, especially al-Jazeera and BBC World Service. | <b>Threats</b><br>New mining revenue and a high value of aid may make Government accountable to donors and mining companies rather than citizens.<br>New mining revenue may feed further corruption.<br>Risk of cuts to external support as the need is perceived to have reduced and due to a global climate of austerity. |

### CASE STUDY: Ethiopia

The Ethiopian Government has enabled the country to take huge leaps forward in health, education and food security over the past decade. This development has taken place under a system of tight Government control and very limited political participation: Ethiopia rates 40<sup>th</sup> out of 52 African countries for participation by the Ibrahim Index of African Governance<sup>9</sup> and is classified as “not free” by Freedom House.

Our visit highlighted some small signs that the country is opening up, for example the Government is having to relax economic control in order to encourage business into the country, and Parliament is beginning to play a slightly more active role. However, overall the political environment remains repressive and we have concerns about the absence of individuals and organisations placed to hold Government to account, which will be critical as Ethiopia moves forward. Specifically:-

- Tight controls, for example in the telecoms industry, fertiliser market and land tenure system, have detrimental effects on both development and democracy in Ethiopia.
- Limited capacity, a lack of culture of questioning authority, and broad support for the Government, mean that citizens do not expect to hold Government to account. While a growing middle class might begin to demand more from the Government in many situations, Ethiopia’s growing middle class remain dependent on Government patronage, and as such are less likely to play this key role.
- The media is tightly controlled– in particular recent Anti-Terrorism Legislation has been used to prosecute and imprison several journalists over the past two years; as of May 2013, eleven journalists had been convicted and sentenced since 2011, six *in absentia*, three of whom were in prison.
- Organisations receiving more than 10% of their funding from international sources are banned from working on human rights issues, meaning most International NGOs avoid issues related to political freedoms, and organisations such as Human Rights Watch are unable to work in the country.
- The Opposition are few and far between, disjointed and ineffective; for example at the last election they were only interested in winning or losing, rather than developing an alternative voice, perhaps part of a broader winner-takes-all mentality, they appeared to lack specific policy demands, and there was a lack of cohesion between them: some of those we met during visit had not previously even met each other. With only one Opposition MP in Parliament, Ethiopian Parliamentarians lamented the lack of “loyal Opposition” working to benefit the country.
- Recently Parliament has become more vibrant and has begun to play a larger oversight role, for example summoning Ministers to be questioned. With a weak civil society and an absence of international NGOs working on these issues, this is particularly important, and we were pleased that Parliamentarians thought there was at least some political space for debate. This space needs to be further opened however and institutional capacity, which remains very low, as well as the capacity of citizens to work with Parliament, strengthened.

<sup>9</sup> <sup>9</sup> Participation includes free and fair executive elections, free and fair elections, political participation, electoral self-determination and effective power to govern. Data available at: <http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/interact/>

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Strengths</b><br>Government committed to development<br>High level of state capacity.<br>Consistent approach based on long term horizons.<br>Little corruption; money is spent effectively.<br>High level of country ownership.<br>Quick and direct decision-making. | <b>Weaknesses</b><br>Lack of accountability.<br>Individual rights compromised for the collective.<br>Lack of a process to enable change.<br>Low levels of literacy and citizens' limited understanding of democracy and capacity to make use of democratic processes.<br>Low domestic resource mobilisation.<br>Risk of stifling local initiative by focus on big government solutions. |
| <b>Opportunities</b><br>Good state-donor relations.<br>Spread of internet providing more information.<br>Changing global norms around transparency.   | <b>Threats</b><br>Censorship and strict regulation of external sources of information.<br>Large proportion of budget from external sources may undermine the link between citizens and Government through taxation.   |

These two case studies highlight that governance regimes on the African continent vary considerably, each having its own strengths and weaknesses, and each representing a different model of development.

#### **4. What type of development do Africans want and how do Africans feel about democracy?**

We have seen that both more democratic and more autocratic regimes can produce “development”, so what is most important is the *type* of development that Africans want, and what role democracy plays within that.

We encountered a wide range of views about the importance of democracy and its various components to development during the research for this inquiry, which again makes it difficult to generalise.

We heard stories of those who have made huge sacrifices for democracy, such as an amputee in Sierra Leone who, when asked what he thought about democracy, waved his stump and said he had another hand to vote with next time, and the late Nelson Mandela, who spent 27 years in prison as part of his fight for democracy.

We heard from and about a range of organisations and individuals who campaign for greater transparency, accountability and democracy in Africa, such as Eritreans for Action, a group of over 7600 exiled Eritreans based in the UK which campaigns for the democratisation of Eritrea, and the Angola Open Policy Initiative, a think tank with an aim of promoting citizen participation, openness and accountability in government in Angola.

We heard from both African governments and African citizens about the importance of the various components of democracy to development:-

*“Mozambique and the United Kingdom as members of the Commonwealth share the values of democracy, human rights, good governance, freedom of speech and association.. Mozambique understands that democracy, human rights and good governance are fundamental for development and they should be pursued with determination and zeal.”*  
Mozambique High Commission

*“An enduring lack of transparency creates the conditions for a conflict of political and economic interests to divert the national resources and result in a lower level of economic growth and to perpetuate extreme inequality”*  
Angola Open Policy Initiative

*“I decided to join PETS (Public Expenditure Tracking Survey) because there is a lot of money that is meant to be directed towards development projects, but it doesn’t reach the intended group”*  
Joyce Chigolla, of the Public Expenditure Tracking committee at Gairo village, Tanzania<sup>10</sup>

However we also heard more critical perspectives and it is clear that not all Africans see democracy as a central part of development.

Some emphasised that other issues are more important, for example a private individual from Ethiopia who asked to remain anonymous argued that the top priorities for now are about business, investment and development, and that democracy and human rights will sort themselves in due course:-

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<sup>10</sup> Graham Gordon (2012) *A tale of two villages: where transparency is doing its job*. Just Policy blog. Available at: <http://justpolicy.co.uk/2012/08/06/a-tale-of-two-villages-where-transparency-is-doing-its-job/>

In response to a question about the importance of democracy: “*After seeing Ethiopia, development really is important. Having one meal a day is a privilege for some people. Really it is important*”.

Others saw democracy as actively damaging to development in Africa, some because of the challenges in implementing democracy effectively, but others because of the nature of democracy itself:-

*“I don’t want to bind my colleagues but I believe that my government did so well in the first ten years of its existence from 1986 to 1996, when it was a one party system and the President did not have to go and get votes, so he did what he thought was right, as compared to now when there is a tendency of people to believe that the government should allow them to do something which is almost illegal if you want votes.”*

Member of the Ugandan Parliament’s Human Rights Committee.

*“To me there is over-democracy in Uganda that is spoiling things.. in Uganda... you can find someone on the radio, a politician or not even a politician, (who) abuses the President directly... Sometimes they have evidence, sometimes (they have) no evidence, so it creates some kind of indiscipline with the people.”*

Member of the Ugandan Parliament’s Local Government Accounts Committee.

It is difficult to ascertain how representative these views are.

The UN and partners set out to investigate global opinion as to what “development” should look like, as part of the process feeding into the post-2015 development agenda, through the My World survey<sup>11</sup> which asks citizens around the world to choose their priorities for a better world. While the results are unlikely to be representative of the population at large, with 1.3 million votes already cast by citizens of 194 countries by December 2013, this makes some interesting reading. Across the world a responsive government made the list of top priorities, alongside the development mainstays of education, healthcare and jobs; while this may not seem surprising, it signals a strong need for “governance” to be included as a priority for the post-2015 development agenda. Political freedoms featured lower down the list.

Our analysis of the results for Africa suggests that people in Africa consider responsive trustworthy governments and political freedoms to be at a similar level of priority as people in the world as a whole, with responsive governments higher than political freedoms. Figures were similar for men and women in Africa, and for people of different levels of education. There was some variation between countries, with voters in Nigeria choosing having a responsive trustworthy government slightly more often than voters in certain other countries in Africa and voters in the Democratic Republic of Congo particularly likely to choose political freedoms as a priority.

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<sup>11</sup> See: <http://www.myworld2015.org/>

## CASE STUDY: Support for democracy and political engagement in Sierra Leone

A nationally representative opinion poll<sup>12</sup> of voters in Sierra Leone, conducted as part of Westminster Foundation for Democracy's Political Party Development Programme, gives us some insight into political engagement in Sierra Leone.

The poll showed strong support for democracy. Citizens placed elections at the centre of this; when asked about the most important rights in a democracy, the largest number, almost a fifth, cited the right to vote and to be voted for, with others giving access to information, freedom of speech and access to education as the most important rights. An overwhelming majority stated their support for the elections, with 96.4% planning to vote if conditions were normal and 94.1% indicating that they would accept the result of the election, even if their favoured party lost.

Sierra Leoneans were generally interested in political issues; 44.2% of voters 'sometimes' and more than a quarter 'often' discuss political issues with their friends, families and colleagues. Young males showed the highest interest in politics. However they were critical of, if not disenfranchised with, both politicians and state institutions. 46.5% "completely distrust" national politicians and only one fifth had positive views about political parties, with others citing concerns that they don't fulfil their promises, are selfish, should engage more in service delivery, and are corrupt. Specifically over a fifth of youth voters stated that parties are corrupt and both the media and international NGOs enjoyed a higher level of trust than state institutions (see table).

Citizens' expectations from democracy differ slightly from those in the UK. When asked what it would take to trust a politician, 43.3% selected service delivery (from a closed list), which was followed by fighting corruption (34.4%). This echoes our experiences in Sierra Leone where we found that voters expected parliamentarians to provide them directly with material benefits, rather than using their influence over legislation to benefit their constituents.

### Level of trust in State and non State Institutions

| Institutions                      | Completely trust (%) | Somehow trust (%) | Completely distrust (%) |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Parliament                        | 24.9                 | 42.9              | 29.6                    |
| Judiciary                         | 21.3                 | 41.8              | 33.1                    |
| Armed Forces                      | 29.7                 | 43.1              | 21.5                    |
| Police                            | 23.0                 | 46.9              | 27.3                    |
| National Politicians              | 13.8                 | 35.1              | 46.5                    |
| Local Politicians                 | 23.0                 | 43.1              | 28.3                    |
| Media                             | 46.8                 | 35.5              | 9.2                     |
| Anti-Corruption Commission        | 16.7                 | 27.2              | 45.1                    |
| Action Aid                        | 37.7                 | 27.2              | 7.4                     |
| Oxfam                             | 37.6                 | 25.3              | 6.8                     |
| Médecins Sans Frontières– Holland | 44.3                 | 20.1              | 6.3                     |
| Action Contre La Faim             | 36.9                 | 23.6              | 6.6                     |
| PLAN Int. (Sierra Leone)          | 47.9                 | 22.8              | 4.4                     |

<sup>12</sup> The poll was conducted by Conflict Management and Development Associates in February 2007 and surveyed approximately 0.2% of the voting population (5171 voters).

We noted a few possible reasons why individuals were not more committed to democracy from the evidence to this inquiry, as well as our experiences on the continent more broadly.

- Certain parts of the broader democratic system, specifically gay rights, have little political support and were seen by many, but by no means all, as western impositions. There is a risk that perceptions of democracy more broadly are tarnished by objections to specific parts of it.
- There are many vested interests at all levels and democracy is not in everyone's interest. For example it was clear from a meeting with a business owner in Sierra Leone that she was benefiting immensely from the current set up and had no desire for the system to become more open. It was suggested that Nigerians at the grassroots don't want to reform their society to make it more accountable and transparent; instead they want a system based on patronage that includes them. At a higher level, Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson argue in their book 'Why Nations Fail' that when developing countries have institutions that do not lead to broad prosperity it is largely because a powerful elite and their networks are benefiting from the dysfunctional status quo.
- We were surprised at the general difference in understanding about democracy compared to our own, and in particular the number of people who viewed democracy as little more than elections. While we might expect this in contexts where literacy levels are often low, what is surprising is that this seems to be at quite senior levels, for example some of the African parliamentarians we met in both the UK and Africa appeared to have only limited understanding of their roles.

Overall we can surmise that governance is seen as an important tenet of development, even if some are critical about the importance of broader components of democracy such as political rights.

## 5. Observations about democracy in Africa

Given that almost all African countries have now become, to greater or less extent, democratic, and that governance is seen by the majority of Africans as an important part of development, the challenge is now to support Africa's incipient democracies to become more effective for development. As the nature of democracy varies so much across the continent, it is again difficult to make generalisations and these must be interpreted with the caveat that they do not all apply in all contexts, but we can offer some observations.

**Democracy soup.** The growing of a democratic nation can be likened to making a soup – democracy soup. Various ingredients are required – a democratic government elected in free and fair elections, a truly representative parliament looking after the interests of the people and including an active opposition to hold the government to account, an independent judiciary, a well-motivated and trained police force, a non-political and professional army, an honest and hard-working public service, an independent and responsible media, and an active civil society. Sometimes when making the soup over the open fire, things can fall into the pot which have no place in democracy soup – such as military coups and corruption. These things have to be lifted out and thrown away. But each country must make their own form of democracy soup; they do not have to follow rigidly the Westminster or Washington recipe.

This analogy was developed by Peter Penfold, CMG, OBE, Former British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone to describe the process of growing a democratic nation to Sierra Leoneans following the civil war. He explained to us the ways Sierra Leonean democracy soup takes account of the country's traditions and culture, such as the Paramount Chieftaincy system: 12 of the 149 Chiefs sit in Parliament, like a mini House of Lords in the House of Commons and Native Courts operate within each Chieftaincy, thus easing the burden upon the Magistrates and High Courts. This may be a helpful model for other African countries; a recent study<sup>13</sup> conducted in 19 African countries suggests that African traditional authorities enjoy widespread popular legitimacy and that most Africans believe that traditional authorities have an important role to play in local governance.

**Institutional strengthening and democracy building are complex and long term processes.** Examples, most recently from the Arab Spring, highlight that setting up democratic elections is relatively easy, but consolidating democracy is much more difficult. Our visit to Sierra Leone emphasised the long-term nature of the process; while there has been tremendous progress over the past decade, the next twenty years will be critical if Sierra Leone is to meet its target of becoming a Middle Income Country by 2035. Unwanted things falling into the soup is not a reason to give up.

**Critical, and often missing, is accountability through the tax system.** Taxation has played an important role in ensuring government accountability in the west since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. As governments and citizens bargained over tax, a "social contract" emerged

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<sup>13</sup> Logan, Carolyn, *The roots of resilience: Exploring popular support for African traditional authorities*, African Affairs 112 (448): 353-376, 2013

whereby citizens complied with tax demands in return for less arbitrary taxation, more influence over public policy and more scrutiny by representative institutions over public finances<sup>14</sup>. The frequency of headlines in the UK relating to the spending of taxpayers' money attests that taxation continues to play an important role in our own democracy. A growing body of research suggests that if governments are dependent on citizens for revenue, they are more likely to be responsive to them, and if citizens fund Government, they are more likely to place demands on Government about how their money is spent.

However in many parts of Africa domestically sourced revenue makes up only a small proportion of the national budget; where the average tax to gross domestic product ratio is more than 29% in high income countries, half of sub-Saharan African countries have a ratio of less than 15%<sup>15</sup>, with many governments highly dependent on revenue from natural resources. While there is not an automatic link between taxation and responsive and accountable government, we are concerned that the low tax revenue means the link between citizens and government is often weak, undermining accountability. This was one of the key messages to resonate from an Africa APPG meeting on the subject of tax in Nigeria<sup>16</sup>: that one of the reasons why strengthening the Nigerian tax system is important is to increase accountability between citizens and government.

Recent oil and gas finds around the continent carry the risk of exacerbating this further by providing African Governments with a source of income that does not come from the direct taxation of their citizens, as well as increased opportunities for corruption.

**Accountability may be undermined because the legislative and judicial branches of Government are often weaker than the Executive.** For example one Opposition Botswanan MP who we met as part of this inquiry was keen to highlight that democracy in Botswana was limited because Parliament and the judiciary are under the grip of the Executive. Ugandan MPs argued that the fact that Parliament's role is primarily advisory and both the Electoral Commission and the judiciary are appointed by the President undermined democracy in Uganda. In Sierra Leone attempts to address corruption were being stifled by the relative weakness of the judiciary, who failed to prosecute or gave only lenient sentences for corruption, and in Ethiopia the Government is only beginning to be held to account by Parliament. A written submission to this inquiry by the Horn of Africa Business Association argues that many legal systems in Africa "border on the moribund" and are "woefully ill-equipped".

**The media has not always been very effective in acting as a watchdog to society for a number of reasons, both direct and indirect.** We encountered several examples of direct limitations to press freedom. For example tight state control in Ethiopia and in particular the use of anti-terrorism legislation to imprison journalists, can be considered a major limit to press freedom. In Sierra Leone, while the press is considerably freer than in Ethiopia, the 1965 Public Orders Act allows for the prosecution of journalists for criminal defamation even in cases where they have published the truth. Until recently, when two journalists were detained for 17 days on criminal libel charges pressed against them on behalf of the

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<sup>14</sup> See: Panos London (2009) *Tax Matters*. A media guide to research of taxation and good governance.

Available at: <http://panosrelay.org.uk/resources/tax-matters/>

<sup>15</sup> ibid

<sup>16</sup> The meeting was the UK launch of the Nigeria Leadership Initiatives White Papers Volume II, available at: <http://nli-global.org/WhitePapers/WhitePapersVol2.pdf>

President, the law had not been used to prosecute journalists in recent years. However a Sierra Leonean journalist, Umaru Fofana, explained that they were “reminded” about it. Limited capacity – both related to the skills and training of journalists, and technological, for example the poor telecoms infrastructure in Ethiopia, can also limit the effectiveness of the media in promoting accountability.

However less direct factors may also be important. The media in Sierra Leone for example are very close to and often owned by politicians; Star Radio, the largest commercial radio station is mostly dependent on patronage, receiving less than 1% of its expenditure from advertising, and we were told serves more to give individual politicians and political parties their own media voice, rather than providing a watchdog on society. Bureaucracy and other forms of influence can restrict the media, for example some government agencies in Sierra Leone have instructed their media handlers not to give advertisement, an important source of income, to some sections of the independent media and we discussed the granting of broadcast licenses: Fofana told us that his company, FreeMedia Group, had not been issued a radio license in over a year, part of an indefinite moratorium on the granting of radio licences since early 2012, but that this moratorium has been applied inconsistently, with licenses having been granted to a couple of other companies within that time. Literacy levels, access to information and culture also all affect the ability of a potential audience to use the information to hold Government to account.

These issues echo those explored in more detail in a written submission to this inquiry on the Nigerian media sector.

#### **CASE STUDY: What's stopping the Nigerian media from acting as a “watchdog of democracy?”<sup>17</sup>**

**Corruption** - There is no way that a young journalist can live, especially in Abuja or Lagos, on the salaries that newspapers offer. Brown envelopes are how journalists survive; it is standard practice for an organisation holding a news conference to give journalists 5,000 naira (£20) just for turning up and journalists speak openly about these payments, highlighting the degree to which corruption is institutionalised in journalism. At a slightly higher level, corruption becomes more sinister: journalists at the National Assembly are organised into a syndicate, which is responsible for handing out cash to journalists at the end of the week – often in the National Assembly car park. Nigerian newspapers are characterised by full-page colour adverts placed by politicians advertising themselves and their achievements. As 10% of the advert price goes to the person who placed it, reporters jealously guard their relationships with people of political significance, with regional correspondents often working almost exclusively out of the offices of State Governors so they can be on hand to collect money from the governor’s advertising budget. Politicians pay senior journalists retainers of up to hundreds of pounds a week to ensure they “remain relevant” in politics. Some media groups themselves operate as money-laundering tools, extracting money from state budgets for special projects such as “international symposia” or concerts, and kicking the excess budget back to the management and government officials involved.

**Career aspirations** - Many journalists come from the families of low ranking military officers,

<sup>17</sup> Based on a written submission to this inquiry by Andrew Walker, freelance journalist and writer, who has spent a number of years working in Nigeria.

academics, traders, skilled labourers and craftspeople who worked, saved and pushed their children to go to university. In many cases the family only had enough resources to send one child into education so all the family's hopes rest on them. It is in this context that journalists generally aspire to become the personal journalists for political figures, rather than focusing on the human interest stories that reporters say they "cannot eat from". In addition, poor pay and a difficult and sometimes dangerous working environment - a considerable number of journalists (at least 10 since 1998 according to the Committee to Protect Journalists<sup>18</sup>) have been killed in highly questionable circumstances – mean some of the best journalists move out of the profession entirely, taking up jobs as Public Relations Managers for Government Departments, international companies or non-governmental organisations.

**Capacity** - Beyond this, the capacity of Nigerian journalists to actually cover a real story is very weak. They often have few resources such as cars or phones to follow up stories, and the poor education system means, even amongst graduates, that writing skills are often weak and very few journalists, much of whose education is based on learning-by-rote, are able to think critically about numbers or distinguish facts from claims.

**Culture** - Nigerian journalism is also hampered by cultural factors, most to do with language and status. In many of Nigeria's cultures, direct speech is impertinent and intolerable, especially from the young. Key principles of journalism; holding leaders to account and asking them awkward questions in public are very difficult things to do and journalists would be shut down for asking "mischievous" questions. In Hausa social interaction for example, the matter of a discussion is often deliberately obfuscated and referred to only in allusion, obstructed by lengthy formalities, protocols and diversions, which makes it extremely difficult to produce powerful journalism.

Despite the poor quality and often contradictory nature of Nigerian journalism, people read it. It may be that the important question to the reader of a Nigerian newspaper is often not "what is being said?" but "who is speaking and what is their position in society?"; a trade paper for politics to find out who is up and who is down, rather than a vehicle by which to hold Government to account.

**Influence** - However even if the quality of Nigerian media was better, without more effective democratic processes, there is a limited amount that Nigerians could do with the information: most Nigerians automatically assume their representatives are corrupt but believe there is very little they can do about it.

### **New technology provides some fresh opportunities for debate and accountability.**

New technologies allow information to spread faster, with implications for both electoral processes and policy debate. For example in Senegal mobile phones played a crucial role during the 2000 elections, as the results from counts in the rural parts of the country were phoned through to Dakar to be broadcast over the national media outlets, rather than waiting for them to be transported to the capital by road, and subject to corruption en route. In 2012 a web platform called Sunu2012 played a similar role, publishing the election results live. A range of online social platforms played a crucial role in mobilising Nigerian citizens to take to

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<sup>18</sup> See: <http://www.cpj.org/killed/africa/nigeria/>

the streets in January 2012 to protest the Government's removal of petrol subsidies, which led to a reversal of the Government's proposed policy.

The spread of online media, both news websites such as saharareporters.com and social media provides an additional forum for debate which is harder to exert control over than traditional media: "the real battleground", as Richard Dowden, Director of the Royal African Society described social media, speaking in an independent capacity during an evidence session for this inquiry. While examples particularly from the Arab Spring highlight the potential impact of social media, with internet penetration rates averaging only 16% across the continent, it is questionable the extent to which social media is yet to play this role over much of Africa, for example a journalist we met in Sierra Leone argued that with internet penetration less than 2% and illiteracy over 75%, social media isn't that effective and Facebook tends to act as a forum for throwing insults rather than healthy debate. News websites can suffer from some of the same limitations as print newspapers, particularly related to capacity, culture and the ability of the audience to use the information. However if internet penetration spreads over the coming years in a similar fashion to mobile phone penetration, online and social media could become increasingly important. A recent report by the McKinsey Global Institute for example estimates that Africa could be on pace to triple its Internet penetration to 50 percent, or 600 million users, and increase the number of Internet-ready smartphones on the continent sixfold, to about 360 million, by 2025<sup>19</sup>.

**Despite considerable progress in some areas, there remain challenges in ensuring democratic processes are inclusive to marginalised groups.** We looked at two specific marginalised groups during the course of this inquiry: women and youths. These are only two of a selection that range, for example, from various ethnic groups to disabled people, and which vary considerably in the specific challenges they face. However it has allowed us to investigate some of the challenges and ways in which to ensure democratic processes are inclusive.

An APPG panel discussion on the subject of women's political participation in Africa under this inquiry highlighted that this is an area where there has been tremendous progress over the past decade; Mo Ibrahim Index data shows performance has improved in all regions, and we now see female senior political figures at all levels, including the Chairperson of the African Union, three African Heads of State<sup>20</sup>, or at a more local level, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Deputy Chief of Administration of Makeni, a town we visited whilst in Sierra Leone. Of the top ten countries in the world for women's political participation, four are African, highlighting that Africa is one of the leading continents on this subject. This may have knock-on effects for women's empowerment and development more broadly, for example Mrs. Isatu Fofanah, Deputy Mayor, Makeni City Council, described how democracy has allowed women to step forward in public life in Sierra Leone. However the speakers at the meeting argued that there remain social and cultural constraints amongst both women and men; 22% of African men disagree that women and men should have equal political and legal rights, and more young women than men in Ethiopia think it is acceptable for men to hit their wives. The three Cs of Culture, Confidence and Childcare were suggested as the main barriers preventing increased women's political participation. The meeting also highlighted

<sup>19</sup> See: Michael Pizzi (2013) *Africa on the verge of internet boom*, Al Jazeera America. Available at: <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2013/11/22/africa-on-the-vergeofinternetboom.html>

<sup>20</sup> Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, Joyce Banda of Malawi and Catherine Samba-Panza of the Central African Republic

the importance of not confusing representation with influence; we need to be sure that women's political participation brings about genuine empowerment.

We were interested to hear Hadeel Ibrahim, founding Executive Director of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, relate that, as a young woman, she has experienced more discrimination based on her age than her gender. Our experiences on the ground, for example in Sierra Leone and Ethiopia, suggest that youth unemployment is one of the most critical issues facing the continent over coming decades. According to the 2012 African Economic Outlook<sup>21</sup> which focused on this subject, with almost 200 million people aged between 15 and 24, Africa has the largest youth population in the world, expected to double by 2045 and the pace of job creation needs to accelerate significantly to match their demand. As the report concluded, and as examples from the Arab Spring testify, a disenfranchised, educated and unemployed youth population "can present a significant threat to social cohesion and political stability if they do not secure decent living conditions". We are therefore particularly concerned that if youth are not integrated into political processes, in a context of high youth unemployment, they may threaten political stability and with it, development.

There are a range of approaches to engaging marginalised groups in democratic processes, for example the meeting on women's political participation discussed the pros and cons of a quota system. It is beyond the scope of this report to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of quotas and the various structural tools available and it may be that different approaches are most appropriate in different contexts. However, the same meeting suggested that the most effective way to change attitudes may be to work with youth and teenagers, implying how deeply engrained attitudes to political power are.

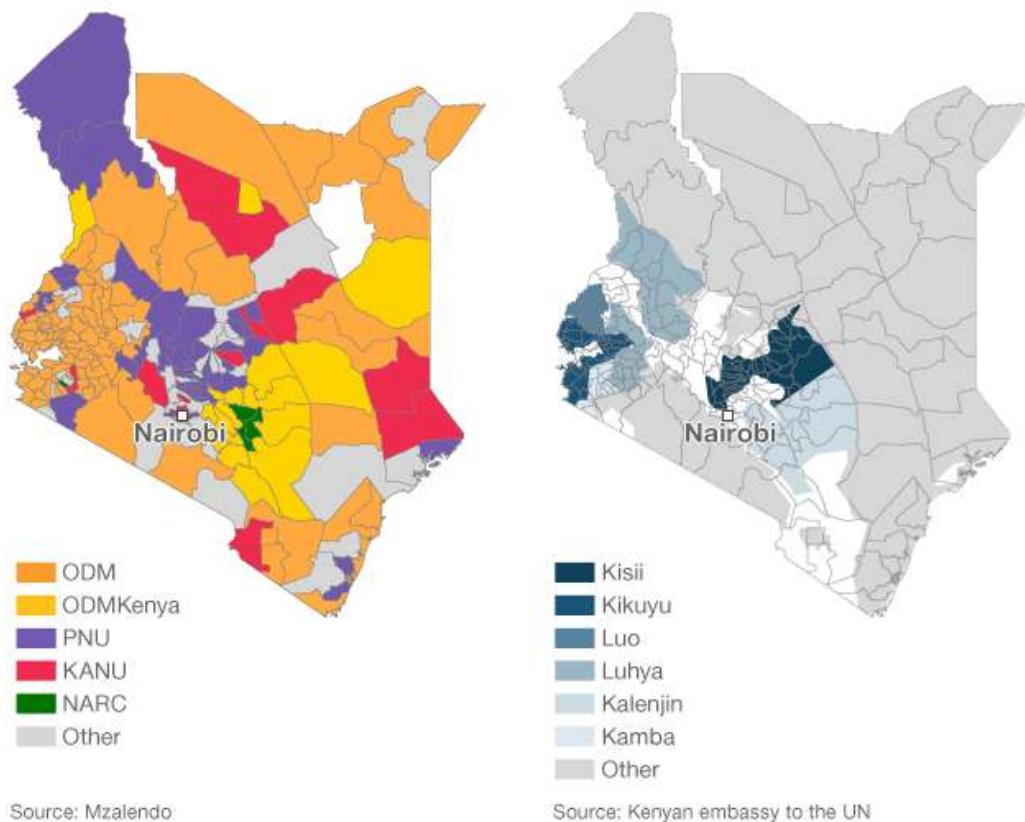
**Ethnicity and tribal politics remain barriers to democracy in some parts of Africa, particularly where the winner takes all.** Related to the need for democratic processes to be inclusive is the issue of ethnicity, which plays an extremely important role in politics in many parts of Africa, including Kenya, Uganda, Côte D'Ivoire, Ghana and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Figure 3 highlights how closely the voting patterns echoed the spread of the largest ethnic groups during the Kenyan elections in 2007 for example.

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<sup>21</sup> AfDB, OECD, UNDP and UNECA (2012) *African Economic Outlook 2012*. Available at: <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/fileadmin/uploads/PAGES-%20Pocket%20Edition%20AEO2012-EN.pdf>

### Kenya's dividing lines

Results from 2007 parliamentary election      Largest ethnic groups



**Figure 3 Comparison of results from Kenya 2007 parliamentary election and largest ethnic groups.** Source: Calestous Juma (2012) *Viewpoint: How Tribalism Stunts African Democracy*, BBC World News. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-20465752>

This example is not unique in that, with a Constitution that says “winner takes all”, the election became about which ethnic group is to be the “master”. Here, as elsewhere, the contenders and their supporters risked being completely excluded from the spoils of office if they did not win the election. There is a risk this leads contenders to do whatever they can to ensure they win, particularly damaging where this becomes a zero sum game, for example resorting to hate speech and inciting violence, as we saw in Kenya in 2007-8. The consequence is that democracy can act to exclude, rather than empower, ethnic minorities. It also means that policy debate, a key aspect of democracy, is often limited and we discuss this in further detail in the section on political parties.

A number of African Constitutions aim to address this by ensuring some form of regional representation: the 1999 Nigerian Constitution for example ensures a balance between different geopolitical zones (broadly covering different ethnic groups) while the 2010 Kenyan Constitution seeks to ensure that a president needs broad geographical support to be elected, receiving more than half of all the votes cast in the election and least 25% of the votes cast in each of more than half of the country's counties. These approaches may help but we fear that in some ways they miss the point; as David Booth of ODI puts it, “The question that really needs to be posed is what, if any, variant of power-sharing or compacted

democracy, or what guarantees to losing parties, could liberate all contenders from the compulsion to sacrifice long-term national interests to short-term partial interests”<sup>22</sup>.

**The role of a Parliamentarian in Africa is often different to that in the UK.** In particular we note that there is often a strong perception that the prime role of an MP is to provide material benefits directly to their constituents. In some cases this is institutionalised through Constituency Development Funds, for example the Kenyan Constituencies Development Fund Act (2013) gives Kenyan MPs responsibility for 2.5% of the national budget, which should be spent on projects in their constituencies. In others parliamentarians are expected to source resources themselves to help their constituents, such as paying medical bills, school fees or for funerals. MPs from Uganda for example discussed the role of an MP in terms of passing down resources. We were concerned to hear MPs from Sierra Leone explain that they avoid returning to their constituencies because of the queues of constituents who would wait outside their houses for financial assistance, and speak quite openly about the need to undertake “consultancies” to supplement their income as they are expected to pay out several times their salary to their constituents. This varies dramatically from expectations our constituents in the UK place on us, which relate to our influence over policy decisions. We believe these expectations, and MPs’ acceptance of them, are fundamentally damaging to democracy in Africa.

A degree of this may derive from a culture common across much of Africa: where those who are in a position to do so, look after their kin, but there are other steps which could be taken to address this. The MPs we met in Sierra Leone for example asked for help in sensitising their constituents about the role of Parliaments. In a discussion with Kenyan MPs about tightening the rules about the circumstances in which parliamentarians can disburse funds, although initially MPs suggested it might be politically impossible, it emerged that MPs were not allowed to make direct payments in the run up to the elections, and that there may in fact be more political space in this area than originally assumed.

In addition, some Parliaments in Africa are limited to a role that is primarily advisory, which means that Parliamentarians play much less of a role in holding Government to account than we play in the UK. For example Ugandan Parliamentarians that we met emphasised that this limited accountability in their country. In Ethiopia, it is only recently that Parliamentarians have begun to summon Ministers to question them. In Sierra Leone, when asked if they could lobby for something from Government on behalf of their constituents instead of giving it to them directly, one MPs’ response was that the Government cannot go beyond its means, suggesting he did not feel he was in a position to pressure the Government.

Parliaments have a unique role in holding Government to account as only Parliaments have a democratic mandate to represent their constituents. Overall, we have concerns about both the expectations placed on parliamentarians to provide constituents with material benefits, and the limitations on the remit of some Parliaments, which we fear may have detrimental effects for democracy, and so the ability of democratic systems to bring about development for their citizens, across much of the continent.

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<sup>22</sup> David Booth (2012), *Development as a Collective Action Problem: Addressing the Real Challenges of African Governance*. London: Overseas Development Institute/Africa Power and Politics Programme, 116 pp.  
[www.institutions-africa.org](http://www.institutions-africa.org)

**The role of political parties in Africa is often different to that in the UK.** In the UK, democracy enables a “battle of ideas” because different political parties offer different policies. Our experiences suggest that in Africa different political parties don’t always provide an alternative voice. For example we met a range of Opposition voices in Ethiopia, including the country’s one Opposition MP Girma Seifu Maru of the Unity for Democracy and Justice Party, as well civil society activities, media and others, but gained very little sense of an alternative set of policy prescriptions. It was suggested to us that at the last election the Opposition were only really interested in winning or losing the election, rather than opening up the policy space for alternative ideas. The Opposition appeared disjointed and disengaged with policy processes; we were surprised that a reception organised at the Ambassador’s Residence as part of our visit served to facilitate dialogue which might not otherwise have happened amongst the Opposition and between Government and Opposition figures. While the Ethiopian Government is keen to encourage policy debate, it seemed that most of this is *within* the ruling Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front.

Another example where much of the debate is within the main political party is Uganda. Here, the vast majority of MPs belong to a single party, the National Resistance Movement, but as seats are allocated to different sectors of the community, such as women, disabled people and youth, the party incorporates a range of perspectives. We are encouraged that there is some political space for debate within these political parties but fear that debate within a political party is a lot more restrictive than debate between political parties. Two long-standing Ugandan National Resistance Movement MPs, Emmanuel Dombo and Rosemary Seninde, recently made separate statements to similar effect, arguing that the coercive nature of party politics had meant the Ugandan House had become less vibrant because free debate is stifled<sup>23</sup>. We are particularly concerned about the case of four Ugandan MPs, Theodore Ssekikubo, Muhammad Nsereko, Wilfred Niwagaba and Barnabas Tinkasiimire, who were expelled from the National Resistance Movement and all parliamentary activities, after they were accused of undermining the party in Parliament<sup>24</sup>.

We can offer a couple of observations. In cases where one political party is seen as the one which threw off a colonial power, there is often a reluctance to question that party, even decades later, for example it is only now that we are beginning to see the development of credible alternative political parties to the African National Congress, advocating different policies, in South Africa. In countries where there are multiple political parties, there often remains a single party mentality. David Booth’s African Power and Politics Programme for example studied this in relation to Malawi, arguing that the parties are almost entirely personal vehicles, and that incumbents build the parties around themselves by buying off the parliamentarians on the losing side. While this may be good for political stability, it is extremely bad for the development of political competition.

In the UK, MPs are elected, and held to account, largely on the basis of a party manifesto. This is much less common in Africa; our experiences suggest that ethnicity and the personalities of either the leaders or the individuals involved are often more important. For

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<sup>23</sup> Julius Barigaba (2013) *Are MPs rooting for return to “no party” politics?* The East African. Available at: <http://www.theeastfrican.co.ke/news/Is-there-a-plot-afoot-to-bring-back-the-no-party-system/-/2558/2057528-/qibl69/-/index.html>

<sup>24</sup> Peter Clottey (2014) *Expelled Ugandan Lawmakers Seek Supreme Court Order*. Voice of America. Available at: <http://www.voanews.com/content/expelled-ugandan-lawmakers-to-seek-supreme-court-order/1857566.html>

example we have already discussed how strongly Kenyans vote along ethnic lines (see Figure 3, p. 31), whereas MPs from northern Uganda told us that they believed their election was mostly due to their personal attributes and local notoriety in their constituencies. Harvard Professor Calestous Juma, in an opinion piece for BBC News, argues that manifestos in Africa are often cobbled together late and with little consultation because leaders have put much of the effort into building tribal alliances first and they have little support from research institutes to provide intellectual input<sup>25</sup>. We have concerns that the lack of party manifestos across much of Africa not only stifles debate, but also leads to a lack of accountability as citizens are less well positioned to see where politicians have fallen short on promises.

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<sup>25</sup> Calestous Juma (2012) *Viewpoint: How Tribalism Stunts African Democracy*, BBC World News. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-20465752>

## **6. The influence of the UK and the international community on democracy in Africa**

It should first be noted that the many of the drivers of democracy in Africa are internal, such as the spread of social media, a growing culture of challenging authority, a growing middle class with economic influence and interests, and generation as a factor of change, and it is important not to underestimate the influence of African agency on democracy in Africa. Nevertheless, the international community has and continues to influence democracy in Africa both directly and indirectly and we must consider these different influences if we are to ensure the overall impact is positive, supporting institutions to be the types of democracies that are effective at enabling development. There is a diversity of partners and donors working with and in Africa and their influences vary widely; we discuss some of these influences below.

### **Global Norms**

Democracy in Africa cannot be seen outside the context of global norms. Taking a long term view, the advent of democracy in Africa can be traced to the end of the Cold War, as the sharp rise in democracies seen in Figure 1 (p.11) in the early 1990s suggests. More recently the spread of the transparency and accountability agenda, considered by many an important component of democracy, highlights how political developments in one part of the world affect the political environment in other parts. The 2010 United States Dodd-Frank Act<sup>26</sup>, the 2013 European Union Accounting and Transparency Directives and 2013 Norwegian legislation require oil, gas and mining companies to publish what they pay in countries where they operate. Not only do these now cover around 70% of the world's extractive industries<sup>27</sup> – companies listed in US or EU stock exchanges – but other countries, Canada and potentially Switzerland, have begun to follow suit. The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative now has 25 compliant member countries, 16 candidate countries and four suspended countries. Of these 22 are in Africa, suggesting that African countries are keen to be part of this global trend.

There is a concern that transparency legislation will give firms from countries where there are less stringent rules – particularly China – a competitive advantage with the effect of driving down standards across the board. However it seems reasonably likely that transparency legislation will have a positive impact on the practices of Chinese firms operating in Africa; out of the three largest exploration and production Chinese oil companies, Sinopec and China National Offshore Oil Corporation are listed on the US Securities and Exchange Commission and some of China National Petroleum Corporation's operations are captured through the Securities and Exchange Commission listing of its subsidiary, PetroChina<sup>28</sup>, and therefore subject to US legislation. It is imperative that Western countries

<sup>26</sup> Currently the regulations set by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to implement Section 1504 of the Dodd-Frank Act have been vacated, following a July 2013 DC District Court Ruling that the SEC must provide better justification for certain aspects of the regulations. The law itself still stands and the SEC remains bound by the statute to produce implementing regulations. The Publish What You Pay –US Coalition are calling for a revised final rule to be issued in 2014. For updates see: <http://www.pwypusa.org/>

<sup>27</sup> Revenue Watch International. See: <http://data.revenuewatch.org/listings/>

<sup>28</sup> Tearfund's submission to this inquiry

do not use the influence of Chinese firms in Africa as an excuse to lower human rights and governance standards, a risk highlighted by Thomas Wheeler from Saferworld in an inquiry evidence session.

It follows that the need to “get our own house in order” and to lead by example on issues such as transparency legislation and women’s political participation is extremely important internationally, as well as domestically. HMG deserves credit in taking a leading role globally on a wide range of issues related to democracy, transparency and accountability, for example bringing these issues to the fore at the 2013 UK-hosted G8 Summit, however there are a number of areas where there is still considerable room for improvement. For example cumulative illicit financial outflows, such as the proceeds of crime, corruption, and tax evasion from the African continent over the period 1980-2009 have been estimated at between US\$1.2 trillion to US\$1.3 trillion in real terms<sup>29</sup>, almost equivalent to Africa’s current GDP. These outflows are made possible by financial opacity in advanced Western economies and offshore tax havens. Not only is implementing transparency measures crucial to curtailing these illicit flows, it also sets a global standard for the rest of the world to follow. If we do not address the challenges we face in our own democracy, such as women’s political participation, we may risk western support for democracy in Africa being seen as hypocrisy, as His Excellency Carlos dos Santos, High Commissioner of Mozambique, highlighted during an Africa APPG panel discussion on this subject: where almost 40% of MPs are women in Mozambique, the equivalent figure for the UK is only 23%<sup>30</sup>. On the flip side, shared challenges provide opportunities for shared learning, for example during the panel on women’s political participation under this inquiry, Baroness Kinnock discussed the benefits of sharing the UK’s experiences of all women shortlists.

More broadly, opening up our own markets to trade and encouraging more migration provides more opportunities for the spread of ideas, goods and people, encouraging societies around the world to be more open. It was interesting to hear Hu Zhangliang from the Chinese Embassy discuss how an increased exchange of people is a good substitute for government to government negotiations, as it leads to an exchange of ideas, emphasising the importance of informal channels of influence in changing norms.

## Diplomatic pressure and soft power

International pressure has provided some opportunities to open up the political space in Africa, for example in their submissions to this inquiry, the Nigerian Leadership Initiative discussed that donors’ insistence for good governance has provided opportunities to push for transparency and accountability in Nigeria. As a long-standing democracy with strong links to Africa, the UK is well placed to do this, for example Eritreans for Action argued that those living under autocratic and repressive regimes look to western democracies to have a positive influence on autocratic regimes, even arguing that the UK is not doing enough to exert pressure on the Eritrean Government. It is important to recognise the limitations to our influence however, particularly in places where anti-colonial sentiment is relatively strong.

Our visit to Sierra Leone highlighted the important role British business can play in opening the door for HMG to work on governance issues. In this case, the operation of London Stock

<sup>29</sup> Global Financial Integrity and African Development Bank (2013) Illicit Financial Flows and the Problem of Net Resource Transfers from Africa: 1980-2009. Available at: <http://africanetresources.gfiintegrity.org/>

<sup>30</sup> IPU (2013). Available at: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

Exchange-listed mining companies was providing opportunity for HMG to engage with the Sierra Leonean Government on issues such as corruption and transparency in the extractive industries.

One area where the international community can play a particularly important role is in providing information to citizens, especially in contexts where the media is tightly controlled or poorly developed. In Somalia for example, radio is by far the most dominant form of media, but as (the relatively few) local FM Somali stations only have a broadcast reach of approximately 30km, many people only have access to international stations broadcasting on shortwave<sup>31</sup>. The BBC World Service has been extremely influential across the continent over past decades, providing trusted news and promoting democratic values, and has been described by Kofi Annan in 1999 as “perhaps Britain’s greatest gift to the world this century”. However, on recent visits to Africa we were surprised by the number of occasions where channels such as Al-Jazeera were played on televisions in public areas, where previously we would have expected to see BBC World Service. When we questioned one journalist in Sierra Leone about this, he suggested the BBC World Service is losing influence both because of a lack of budget (the 2010 Spending Review saw the BBC World Service’s budget being cut by 16%, allowing for inflation, compared to 10% for core FCO functions across the four years 2010-11 to 2014-15<sup>32</sup>, although the BBC Trust has subsequently announced a small increase in funding for 2014-15 as the primary source of funding passes from the FCO to the BBC Licence Fee), which means it does not have an office in the country, and because of its overall approach to the continent. We were told that some listeners moved to Voice of America and the English service of radio France International when a breakfast programme dedicated to Africa (Network Africa) was axed. In addition, over recent years the BBC World Service has cut back on shortwave transmission, in the context of budget cuts and as it has re-orientated itself towards TV and online media services, and further reductions in shortwave transmission were announced<sup>33</sup> by BBC Director of Global News, Peter Horrocks, in February 2014. While it is recognised that shortwave audiences are declining around much of the world, shortwave radio has one clear advantage over other forms of media: it is harder to block. This should be borne in mind as we consider the future of the BBC World Service and other international broadcast services.

As well as the global community, there is a role for actors from within the continent to press for democracy in African countries. The African Union (AU) may have an important role to play through the African Governance Architecture, the overall political and institutional framework for the promotion of good governance in Africa, which brings together a whole range of policies, institutions and processes<sup>34</sup>, including, for example, the African Peer Review Mechanism. We are pleased to see the leadership taken by the AU in certain instances, for example taking a consistently strong stance against military coups, however there may be opportunities for the AU to play a stronger role in promoting democracy in

<sup>31</sup> BBC World Service Trust (2011) *An analysis of the Somali media environment*. Available at: <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/rmhttp/mediaaction/pdf/AnAnalysisOfTheSomaliMediaEnvironment.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> For more details see House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee (2011) *The implications of cuts to the BBC World Service*. Available at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/foreign-affairs-committee/inquiries1/parliament-2010/implications-of-bbc-world-service-cuts/>

<sup>33</sup> Peter Horrocks (2014) *Invest to Innovate - speech to staff BBC Media Centre*. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/speeches/2014/ws-peterhorrocks-staffspeech.html>

<sup>34</sup> For more details see ECDPM (2011) *The African Governance Architecture*. Available at: [http://www.ecdpm.org/Web\\_ECDPM/Web/Content/Download.nsf/0/E7F3F83577661E13C125783A004CE258/\\$FILE/The%20African%20Governance%20Architecture\\_AUC%20newsletter%202011.pdf](http://www.ecdpm.org/Web_ECDPM/Web/Content/Download.nsf/0/E7F3F83577661E13C125783A004CE258/$FILE/The%20African%20Governance%20Architecture_AUC%20newsletter%202011.pdf)

Africa, for example the AU Election Observation Mission to the 2013 Zimbabwe elections has come under criticism for not taking a critical enough position<sup>35</sup>. Our visit to the AU at the end of 2013 highlighted that while progress is being made, for example the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, which sets out international standards of good governance and democracy in such areas as rule of law, free and fair elections, and condemning unconstitutional changes of government, was ratified in 2012 and the current AU Chairperson, Mme Dlamini-Zuma has set out that she sees governance as being at the core of peace and security issues, the AU's role in this crucial area is often limited by a number of factors. These include the heavy focus on peace and security within the AU, with over 60% of the AU's time and resources being spent in this areas, which affects both the human and financial resources of the Political Affairs Portfolio within the AU Commission, the high dependence on external sources of funding, the lack of supra-national and legislative powers, internal politics and a lack of ownership of the AU by AU member states, who do not always implement the conventions, treaties and charters of the African Governance Architecture.

The broader international community could potentially provide more support to the African Governance Architecture in order to boost the role the AU can play in promoting democracy in Africa; we noted, for example, that supporting the AU's capacity on governance is not one of the UK's top four priorities for its work with the AU, and while we would not wish this to compromise the UK's vital work with the AU in other areas, this may be an effective approach to supporting democracy in Africa in the long run.

While we did not explore the role of the Regional Economic Communities as part of this inquiry, we recognise that they may have an important role in encouraging democracy in Africa, and that there may be opportunities to provide greater support to them.

## Aid Conditionality

Making aid conditional on democratic principles is a controversial topic that has incited a lot of debate: a “chequered history” as Alan Hudson from ONE described it during an inquiry evidence session, and different countries have taken very different approaches to aid conditionality. China for example bases its aid on the values of non-interference and sovereignty, and therefore does not make aid conditional on democracy, which contrasts sharply with the approach of a number of countries from the West. There are some examples where aid conditionality has been used successfully to promote democracy in Africa, for example when donors suspended aid to Kenya in 1991, demanding the democratic elections that were then held in 1992. However such success stories have been rare for a range of reasons, and making aid conditional on democracy is only likely to be effective in a narrow range of circumstances.

A number of submissions to this inquiry argued that aid conditionality is more likely to be effective in countries where aid makes up a large proportion of the budget, but as aid becomes a smaller portion of the pie, the west's leverage through aid conditionality is decreasing. For example one submission to this inquiry argued that aid conditionality is

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<sup>35</sup> For example see Nomalanga Moyo (2013) *AU final report on Zimbabwe poll reflects ‘solidarity of the African elite’* Nehanda Radio. Available at: <http://nehandaradio.com/2013/11/04/au-final-report-on-zimbabwe-poll-reflects-solidarity-of-the-african-elite/>

unlikely to be effective in Nigeria as the contribution of aid to Nigeria's budget is negligible compared to that of oil.

More generally aid conditionality will only be effective in circumstances where the donor has sufficient influence. A number of individuals and organisations suggested that, as power relations with the continent change, the West's influence in Africa might be decreasing, for example during our visit to Addis we discussed that it is difficult for European countries to apply conditions because Europe does not have enough clout in Africa while the Horn of Africa Business Association's written submission argued that China's engagement has brought a major change in attitude and the UK is increasingly being seen as "irrelevant" in the Horn. There may be a risk that China is used as a bargaining chip against the West, but as Dan Large from Central European University argued in an evidence session, a growing diversity of donors, particularly including those, such as China, whose work is based on non-interference, means the choice of who to work with is in African hands, potentially positive for democracy overall – assuming the Africans in question genuinely represent their people.

Aid conditionality is also unlikely to be effective in promoting democracy in cases where a particular group have a vested interest in the current set-up. For example we discussed the case of Guinea during an evidence session to this inquiry. Owen Barder from the Center for Global Development argued aid conditionality will not be effective in this country; in a context where the Government makes billions of dollars selling mineral rights, telling them if they don't fix that you are not going to give them money toward an aid project will not make them change their activities, but would just make civil society suffer.

Other risks include backlash against a particular group if they are considered responsible for aid being withdrawn. This is perhaps best exemplified by the debate about conditionality based on human rights for gay people, part of a broader maximalist definition of democracy, brought to the fore by the Prime Minister David Cameron's comments in October 2011 threatening to cut aid to countries where homosexuality is illegal. Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Bill in particular has sparked a lot of debate, and while some lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender activists have been in favour of aid conditionality in this case, conditionality has received a largely negative reaction amongst this community because of a fear of backlash against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people should aid be withdrawn, a lack of consultation amongst the affected communities and the risk that it would enforce the idea that homosexuality is a western concept.

The effectiveness – and appropriateness - of aid conditionality may also depend on the types of conditions. While it is difficult to generalise, Africans we met as part of this inquiry were considerably more positive towards conditions that relate to financial procedures than those that relate to political rights. A businessman we met in Sierra Leone split conditions into the "economic" (e.g. corruption) and the "cultural" (e.g. political rights), arguing that "cultural" conditions were much more difficult than "economic" ones because people's values are not the same. Botswanan MPs made a similar distinction. They agreed that there should be some conditions attached to aid, for example if the country's leaders are embezzling funds for their own personal gain it would be appropriate to withdraw aid, but argued that the situation was a lot more complex for political freedoms and human rights, where there is much more likely to be divergence of opinion: "we might not agree on what you consider to be human rights". This discussion highlights a paradox. While human rights are considered an integral part of democracy and agreed upon at the highest level (for

example the African Charter on Human and People's Rights has been ratified by 53 African States: all AU Member States other than South Sudan), the promotion of human rights can act to undermine democracy in contexts where they are not universally popular: promoting, in this case for example, gay rights would be, as a Botswanan MP put it to us, "committing to something that probably would not go in line with the majority of the people that we represent".

The way that conditions are applied is also important. If we are to respect country ownership, critical if we want to support democracy in Africa, it is important that the relationship between African countries and the UK is one of partners with shared goals, rather than overseers of our own rules.

On the one hand, this means that if we are to make aid conditional on democratic records, the conditions should be clear from the outset, and agreed by both countries, which has the additional benefit of providing a greater degree of predictability, extremely important to Governments as they set their national budgets. This would mean using a model of conditionality that is closer to that of the US's Millennium Challenge Corporation than the approach the UK has taken in recent years, where we have seen a series of high profile cases where direct budget support has been suspended for issues related to democracy and governance, for example in Malawi in 2011 (poor governance) and then 2013 (corruption), in Uganda in 2012 (fraud by the Office of the Prime Minister), and Rwanda in 2012 (concerns about involvement in the DRC).

On the other hand, H.E. Carlos dos Santos, the High Commissioner of Mozambique, argued that where African countries were committed to deepening democracy, there is no need for conditionality anyway, again slightly paradoxical, as those countries where conditions are most needed are the countries least likely to agree to them. He also argued that the fact that there are no penalties if donors do not meet their commitments can undermine this partnership, which may be an important consideration for the future of our relationships with African countries.

## **Programmes directly promoting components of democracy**

It has become widely acknowledged that institutions matter for development, and as such governmental, international and non-governmental organisations have put a lot of effort into directly promoting democracy in the developing world. Of a total of US\$1.09 trillion of aid committed by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) countries for the year 2012, over US\$13.3 billion – over 12% - was committed to directly strengthening Government and Civil Society<sup>36</sup>, while the promotion of democracy and related concepts of governance has additionally been mainstreamed across a range of policy areas.

While two examples, the approaches taken by DFID and UN Development Programme's HIV, Health and Development Group, are far from wholly representative, they do give some idea about the types of programmes undertaken by international donors to promote democracy in Africa.

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<sup>36</sup> OECD stats. Available at: [www.stats.oecd.org](http://www.stats.oecd.org)

## **CASE STUDY 1: The “golden thread” as part of the British Government’s approach to development**

The “golden thread” is the approach to international development laid out by David Cameron in an op-ed published in the Wall Street Journal in November 2012, in the run up to his co-chairmanship of the UN High Level Panel on the post-2015 Development Agenda and the UK’s Presidency of the G8. It refers to the conditions that enable open economies and open societies to thrive: the rule of law, the absence of conflict and corruption, and the presence of property rights and strong institutions, and underlies much of the UK Government’s engagement with Africa and other parts of the world.

The Department for International Development approach this in two ways: with direct targets in the DFID Results Framework and country level operational plans, and indirectly, by strengthening institutions and improving accountability and openness across its work in other policy areas. This complements work on these areas carried out by other Government Departments.

### Examples of direct programmes promoting aspects of democracy:

In **Sierra Leone**, DFID supports a national radio programme called Fo Rod ('At the Crossroads'). This reaches 37% of adults where the programme is broadcast (764,023 listeners). Nearly all listeners (96%) believe it is a useful way for Sierra Leoneans to air their concerns about how the country is run; and 84% reported increased awareness of governance issues after listening to the programme.

In **Ethiopia**, nearly 120,000 citizens have received training to better understand the budget since 2009 with DFID support. 84% of Ethiopia’s 1,150 local governments have disclosed their budget, expenditure and service delivery information.

DFID supports the **Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative**. This has led to over \$500bn of government revenues being reported under EITI in 29 countries around the world and \$130bn of revenues reported in Africa by over 150 companies. In **Nigeria** alone \$10 to \$15 billion is stolen from the oil sector every year. This is more than 30 times DFID Nigeria’s annual aid budget, and roughly equivalent to the entire government budget of Kenya. DFID’s oil sector reform and transparency programme in Nigeria is working to plug some of these revenue losses.

In **Nigeria**, DFID helps civil society and citizens demand better performance and hold their governments to account. In one state, the programme helped increase the allocation for primary education in the 2012 budget by approximately £4.6 million, from a direct spend by DFID of £6,000.

DFID supports political and market participation across Africa, including programmes aiming to get marginalised women to vote and participate in the economy. For instance the **Ghana** women’s political participation in politics programme aims to increase women’s representation in decision making in local and government structures.

In **Zambia**, DFID supported the Electoral Commission, local observers and parallel vote tabulation for the 2011 elections. 83% of eligible voters were registered and 2.7m voted on the day. DFID also trained 14,270 police in election related public order management. The elections were assessed as generally free and fair by international observers. Zambia became the second Anglophone African country to have experienced two peaceful transfers

of power between political parties.

In **Somalia**, the UK is lobbying for the **establishment of a Joint Financial Management Board** between the new Government of Somalia and international partners. The Board would jointly control Somali revenue collection and expenditure to reduce grand corruption. Estimates for recent years are that US\$7 out of every US\$10 collected by the state are not recorded and not deposited into the Central Bank.

The **accountability in Tanzania programme** champions women's rights in Tanzania by using locally-rooted solutions to address customary and traditional attitudes that can undermine the country's gender-sensitive laws. It uses television and radio.

The **Malawi** Justice for Vulnerable groups programme aims to increase access to justice by strengthening and supporting traditional and primary justice mechanisms and improved victim support services. It utilises community based interventions to address the culture of violence against women and children.

In **Africa**, DFID are supporting media programmes that will help people in 10 countries be better informed of the relevance of Africa Union decisions on their lives. For example, "*Play for the Union*" on Facebook is helping to explain the relevance of decisions made at the African Union to ordinary people. So far, *Play for the Union* has registered over 24,000 likes.

Examples of indirect approaches to strengthening democracy: Using new technologies to make local health services more effective and accountable to users in DFID's malaria programmes. For example the m-trac programme in Uganda is using the growing telecommunication infrastructure and mobile phone penetration to implement a low cost tool for tracking artemisinin combination therapies and malaria rapid diagnostic kits. Clinics and village health teams provide monthly feedback on stock and use of anti-malarials while community members and users will be encouraged to sms their inputs whenever they choose.

The golden thread builds on the approach taken from the 1990s onwards under the good governance agenda. While there remain some reservations about this – for example in an inquiry evidence session Alina Rocha Menocal of ODI spoke about how the good governance agenda placed unrealistic demands on developing countries and could be inflexible towards specific country circumstances – it does incorporate some important developments. In particular there is a greater focus on transparency and accountability, which has been highlighted in a number of contexts – by Alan Hudson of ONE in an inquiry evidence session and by the NGO Tearfund in a written submission for example - as a component of democracy which may have particular promise for development. The golden thread additionally places strong emphasis on the inclusion of women and girls, which DFID has received a lot of credit for internationally, for example by HE Carlos dos Santos, the High Commissioner for Mozambique, in his comments at an inquiry evidence session.

Overall, as Owen Barder of the Center for Global Development argued in an evidence session, the golden thread is about finding the things that enable social change, without directing the change itself, critical if we accept that we are unable to provide precise prescriptions about how to make institutions (and politics) work for development.

## **CASE STUDY 2: Democratic Governance in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s HIV, Health and Development work.**

Democratic governance is central to UNDP's work in combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases as ensuring that institutions and processes are responsive to all citizens, including the most marginalised, can significantly impact on health and development. Legal frameworks affect both the vulnerability of highly marginalised populations, in particular men who have sex with men and transgender people, to acquiring HIV, and the effectiveness of HIV responses for these groups, for example limiting their access to broader health services. UNDP's approach varies from urgent responses to proposed punitive legislation to long-term planning and implementation of initiatives focusing on expanding the knowledge base of the impact of legal frameworks on HIV within men who have sex with men and transgender populations. Specifically their work includes:-

***Advising governments on the impact of legal frameworks on marginalised groups such as men who have sex with men and on the HIV response***, particularly important in countries such as Nigeria, Malawi and Uganda which have proposed harsh 'sodomy' laws, criminalisation of same-sex marriages and/ or criminalisation of LGBT organisations.

***Judicial sensitisation***, such as regional workshops on the harm done by 'sodomy' laws to the health and wellbeing of men who have sex with men and transgender people in West & Central Africa.

***Research*** E.g. supporting a study to explore HIV testing and infection rates among women who have sex with women, often assumed to be at low risk and rarely included in HIV policy, programming and prevention efforts<sup>37</sup>, and working with local and national government to assess urban municipality efforts to address HIV among men who have sex with men and transgender people in seven African cities – Lagos, Dar Es Salaam, Lusaka, Ouagadougou, Kampala, Maputo and Kigali.

***Facilitating dialogue between governments and civil society*** e.g. organising a series of Regional Dialogues between civil society groups and different branches of government, as the Secretariat of the Global Commission on HIV and the Law, on the impact of local, national and regional laws, law enforcement practices and access to justice on the lives of people living with HIV and those most vulnerable to it.<sup>38</sup>

***Working with financial mechanisms to ensure that human rights form part of their strategic objectives while approving grants***. E.g. working with the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis & Malaria on its sexual orientation and gender identity strategy and to build a human rights dimension into its grant-making.<sup>39</sup>

***Supporting civil society activists on advocacy strategies to advance law reform***, e.g. capacity building of civil society organisations such as the African Men for Sexual Health and Rights to participate at various human rights fora.

<sup>37</sup> Sandfort, T et al (2012), "HIV Testing and HIV Status in Southern African Lesbian Women: Outcomes Of a Community-Based Study". Available at <http://hivcenternyc.org/ias2012/San26.pdf>.

<sup>38</sup> More information on the Regional Dialogues of the Global Commission on HIV and the Law is available at <http://www.hivlawcommission.org/index.php/regional-dialogues/regional-dialogues>.

<sup>39</sup> For details on UNDP's partnership with the GF, see UNDP (2012), Strategy on HIV, Health & Development, New York: UNDP <https://www-dam.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/hivaids/English/HIV%20Strategy%20Document%20-%20New.pdf>

In addition to programmes of these types which aim to promote the broader components of democracy, the international community has supported the most direct components of democracy, for example through parliamentary strengthening and support for political parties, and support for elections.

## Parliamentary strengthening and support for political parties

A range of organisations, from bilateral and multilateral donors, to parliamentary networks, political party foundations, think-tanks, NGOs and private sector organisations, have been involved in parliamentary strengthening activities. For example during our visit to the Sierra Leone Parliament we met UNDP, who are working with the Parliament in Freetown, and the Africa APPG shares a reciprocal membership structure with the Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA), the only International NGO managed by European Parliamentarians, who work in tandem with partner African Parliamentarians to strengthen parliamentary democracy in Africa. We are grateful to both the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK Branch and the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, who both do excellent work with Parliaments in Africa, for their support to this inquiry. The role China is playing across the continent in this area is interesting: in recent months Africa APPG Members have visited the AU building in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and the Parliaments in Freetown, Sierra Leone, and Maseru, Lesotho, all of which have been built by, or received significant support from, the Chinese.

However parliamentary strengthening has historically been, and, despite some increased recognition, largely remains, a fringe concern in development policy, with donors tending to instead focus heavily on the executive. The Africa APPG's 2009 report on parliamentary strengthening<sup>40</sup> considers this subject in more detail, and rather than repeat its findings, we direct readers to that for a discussion of ways to improve parliamentary strengthening programmes, important to improve their effectiveness.

However what we do want to highlight here is that engaging parliamentarians, political parties and Parliaments, for example supporting Public Accounts Committees to scrutinise Government spending, offers a huge opportunity to promote accountability, in line with the increasing focus on accountability that we are seeing within international development discourse. Strengthening the role of Parliaments requires both increasing their capacity to work effectively, and widening the opportunities for Parliaments to engage on issues related to development. One such opportunity is the aid effectiveness framework, and Africa APPG Members pressed hard for a global agreement on the monitoring of aid effectiveness that involves parliamentarians at the 4<sup>th</sup> High Level Panel on Aid Effectiveness held in Busan in 2011, with the result that the Busan Partnership document references the importance of Parliaments in linking citizens and governments and the need to strengthen the role of Parliaments in oversight of development processes<sup>41</sup>. The First High Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, to be held in April 2014 in Mexico City, provides an opportunity to develop practical steps by which to take this forward. Parliamentary strengthening can be extremely cost effective because of the small number of MPs and parliamentary staff relative to other target groups of development interventions, the

<sup>40</sup> Africa APPG (2008) *Strengthening Parliaments in Africa: Improving Support*. Available at: <http://www.royalafricansociety.org/sites/default/files/reports/strengthening%20parliaments%20in%20africa%20-%20improving%20support.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (2011), *Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation*. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/49650173.pdf>

high potential impact that supporting parliamentarians can have given their wider influence, the ability to interact with leading representatives of all political tendencies and the fact that Parliaments can be an entry point for the promotion of a range of important development goals, such as gender equality and anti-corruption<sup>42</sup>. What is important to the success of parliamentary strengthening programmes is that the countries concerned welcome the engagement, and that the programmes are responsive to specific country circumstances, for example sharing ideas on best practice, rather than exporting a Westminster or Washington model wholesale.

## Support for elections

While it is established that democracy goes well beyond elections, free and fair elections remain a central part of democracy, and as such donors aiming to promote democracy in Africa have become heavily involved in their funding, planning and monitoring.

This does not come without cost however, to both African countries and international donors. The 2011 elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo for example cost over \$700 million, 37% of which was donor funded<sup>43</sup> and the 2013 Kenyan elections, where six ballots were held on the same day, biometric technology was used to identify voters and the results were transmitted by mobile phone back to Nairobi, cost over \$20 a head, compared to an average of \$1 to \$3 in established democracies<sup>44</sup>. Perhaps even more important, politically motivated violence occurred in 60% of African elections held between 1990-2008<sup>45</sup>. As the Democratic Republic of Congo Prime Minister Augustin Matata Ponyo Mapon said, talking to *the Africa Report* in September 2013 “Elections are a luxury item. For democracy, yes, they are indispensable. But in terms of cost, they are a luxury”<sup>46</sup>.

If the international community is to support elections in Africa it is imperative it does what it can to minimise these costs and risks. As concluded by a 2010 DFID report, “a range of evidence suggests that international support to elections often falls short of the desired standard”<sup>47</sup>.

## Observations about programmes directly promoting democracy

Our experiences suggest that, overall, international support appears to be focused in certain areas.

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<sup>42</sup> Africa APPG (2008) *Strengthening Parliaments in Africa: Improving Support*. Available at: <http://www.royalafricansociety.org/sites/default/files/reports/strengthening%20parliaments%20in%20africa%20-%20improving%20support.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> Africa Research Institute (2012): Diehards and democracy. Elites, inequality and institutions in African elections Briefing Note 1202. Available at: <http://africaresearchinstitute.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/BN-0712-Diehards-and-democracy.pdf>

<sup>44</sup> Michela Wrong (2013) *Africa's election aid fiasco*. The Spectator. Available at: <http://www.spectator.co.uk/features/8890471/the-technological-fix/>

<sup>45</sup> Africa Research Institute (2012): Diehards and democracy. Elites, inequality and institutions in African elections Briefing Note 1202. Available at: <http://africaresearchinstitute.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/BN-0712-Diehards-and-democracy.pdf>

<sup>46</sup> Gregory Mthembu-Salter (2013) *Democratic Republic of Congo: Elections are a luxury item – Prime Minister*. The Africa Report. Available at: <http://www.theafricareport.com/interview/democratic-republic-of-congo-elections-are-a-luxury-item-prime-minister.html>

<sup>47</sup> DFID (2010) *Electoral Assistance and Politics: Lessons for International Support*. Available at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/67646/elect-asst-pol-lsns-int-supp.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67646/elect-asst-pol-lsns-int-supp.pdf)

- We have already highlighted that donors tends to focus on the executive branch of Government, at the expense of the legislative and judicial branches. We have concerns that a relatively weak legislature or judiciary can undermine democracy, for example in Sierra Leone, we found the weakness of the judiciary was stifling attempts to address corruption, and in Ethiopia a lack of parliamentary oversight meant there were few effective processes for Government to be held to account.
- While there are some programmes supporting local government, for example we visited Makeni City Council in Sierra Leone, which had received funding from a UK and EU funded project called ENCISS to review their development plan, support to Government appears primarily focused at the national level in a model of state-to-state dialogue. In a written submission the African Commission for Local Government Improvement argues that many of the reforms implemented at the central level have not filtered down sufficiently to the local level, and makes a case for more aid being used directly to support local government.
- On the converse, programmes supporting those who might hold Government to account appear to largely be focused at the grassroots. For example an Africa APPG meeting on women's political participation suggested that most western funding aiming to promote women's political participation goes to the bottom of the pyramid, to grassroots civil society organisations or investing in girl-child education for example, but that there is a need for support at the middle and top as well.
- Donors appear to favour working with non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations over Parliaments as a means to involve citizens' voices and ensure Government accountability. For example the World Bank Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper process involved civil society, but not Parliaments, and while more recent consultations, such as those around the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness and the High Level Panel on the post-2015 Development Agenda, have begun to involve Parliaments, they remain highly under-represented compared to other civil society actors, despite being the only actors with a democratic mandate to represent their constituents.

## **Political consequences of external interventions**

All external interventions in Africa, whether focused on democracy or not, have political impact. This can be a positive impact on democracy in Africa, for example bringing a minority group to the table, but there is also a risk of external interventions undermining democracy in Africa in a number of ways. It is critical that these risks are acknowledged so we can ensure we avoid them.

Specifically this inquiry highlighted there is a **risk of making universal issues appear as western concerns** if the west becomes too involved, blunting their impact. This discussion paper has already highlighted the risk of portraying homosexuality as "western" and "un-African" should the west take too strong a stance. In an evidence session for this inquiry Africa Research Institute Director Edward Paice gave two further examples where he argued that western involvement could be damaging to democratic processes in Africa. The first was the Public Affairs Committee in Malawi, which is an inter-faith organisation with the power to hold the Government to account, and the second was the process of participatory budgeting in the municipalities in the capital in Cameroon, which is a form of grassroots democracy, allowing people to become involved in how their municipality spends its money.

There is a risk that external sources of funding – whether aid or minerals revenue - can **undermine the relationship between governments and citizens** because they provide governments with a form of revenue that does not come from taxing their citizens and mean African governments may look to donors, rather than their citizens. Na Ncube from diaspora organisation the Global Native argued in an inquiry evidence session that aid has put a wedge between the population and politicians, a point echoed by a number of members of the African diaspora in particular. This is more likely in countries where aid makes up a large proportion of the national budget, such as Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone and Malawi, where aid constitutes 37.3%, 28.7% and 26.2% of GDP<sup>48</sup> (over the period 1998-2003: this figure is liable to fluctuate from year to year).

There is a risk that **aid itself can fuel corruption or support repression if it is not made accountable to citizens**. This is a common assumption in relation to Chinese aid and investment and various discussions highlighted the risks of this, for example the UN Economic Commission for Africa highlighted that Chinese bribes continue to make their way to corrupt officials in Africa and Thomas Wheeler from Saferworld, in an evidence session on the influence of China on African democracy, discussed the risk of Chinese support fuelling patronage networks. However it is equally relevant to western aid: for example a Ugandan MP, arguing that UK aid should be conditional on governance, was keen to highlight that “You should understand this money you are sending to us is causing problems”, while a 2010 report by Human Rights Watch<sup>49</sup> documents how western aid has been used by the Ethiopian Government to suppress political dissent by making access to government services conditional on support for the ruling party. More recently a report published by the Oakland Institute accuses the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) of ignoring first-hand accounts of human rights violations in an investigation into Ethiopian re-settlement programmes, which have received donor support<sup>50</sup>. Efforts to increase the transparency of aid are a step in the right direction, for example DFID publishes International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) data for all its programmes and encourages others to do the same, but this does not in itself provide a mechanism for citizens to hold donors, Government and others to account for aid spending.

Dr PB Anand from Bradford University has completed an analysis of the first available systematic dataset of Chinese aid, which is based on publicly available financial information about 1673 Chinese-backed projects in Africa<sup>51</sup>. He described to us that he had found that patterns of China’s aid flows were remarkably similar to patterns of OECD-DAC

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<sup>48</sup> IMF figures

<sup>49</sup> Human Rights Watch (2010) *Development without Freedom: How Aid Underwrites Repression in Ethiopia*. Available at: <http://www.hrw.org/news/2010/10/18/ethiopia-donor-aid-supports-repression>

<sup>50</sup> Will Hurd (2013) *Ignoring Abuse in Ethiopia. DFID and USAID in the Lower Omo Valley*. The Oakland Institute. Available at:

[http://www.oaklandinstitute.org/sites/oaklandinstitute.org/files/OI\\_Brief\\_Ignoring\\_Abuse\\_Ethiopia\\_0.pdf](http://www.oaklandinstitute.org/sites/oaklandinstitute.org/files/OI_Brief_Ignoring_Abuse_Ethiopia_0.pdf)

<sup>51</sup> For a discussion of the methodology, limitations and applications of this dataset see Austin Strange, Bradley Parks, Michael J. Tierney, Andreas Fuchs, Axel Dreher, and Vijaya Ramachandran (2013) *China’s Development Finance to Africa: A Media-Based Approach to Data Collection* Center for Global Development Working Paper 323. Available at: <http://www.cgdev.org/publication/chinas-development-finance-africa-media-based-approach-data-collection>

aid flows, suggesting that, in contrast to conventional wisdom, China's aid and investment benefits corrupt and undemocratic regimes no more than that from the West<sup>52</sup>.

The fact that international actors with very different approaches to Africa appear to focus their energies in similar countries may relate to a shared need for political stability in order to work effectively. It also means we must be particularly careful about the political impact donors might have on each other. We have already discussed the need to avoid a situation where the West uses China as an excuse to lower governance standards. In an inquiry evidence session we also discussed **the impact any rivalry between the West and China** might have in African countries, which **could be particularly problematic in fragile and conflict affected states**. Our experiences, particularly the visits to Sierra Leone and Ethiopia, suggest there has been little cooperation between British and Chinese Embassies to date, which is supported by research conducted by Saferworld on this subject, but that there is potential for more. For example we met with the Chinese Ambassador to Sierra Leone, who was extremely pleased to have the opportunity to meet with British MPs, agreeing to meet us at 8am to fit in with our schedule.

Strengthening the voice of one actor can have implications for the strength of the voice of others and **there is a risk that Parliaments in particular are disempowered if other civil society groups are invited to the table in their place**. For example Parliamentarians we met in Sierra Leone felt they were by-passed by international NGOs. A disempowerment of Parliaments is damaging for democracy.

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<sup>52</sup> Anand PB (2013) *Assessing China's aid to Africa using AidData2.0*, Working paper (mimeo), University of Bradford, Bradford.

## 7. Implications for policy and questions for further consideration

We have documented our observations about the state of democracy in Africa and a variety of the ways in which the international community affects this. A whole range of external actors including individual countries, foreign business, UN organisations and pan-African institutions affect democracy in Africa, directly and indirectly, and intentionally and inadvertently. This has implications for how the international community should engage with democracy in Africa, which we explore in this section. While these do not take the form of recommendations, we hope that they will be useful in guiding discussions about the overall direction of international support to democracy in Africa.

### **Systematic Issues**

We have seen that democratic strengthening is a complex and long-term process, and examples from the Arab Spring suggest that consolidating democracy can be more difficult than getting it in the first place. Where democracies are poorly developed, there is a risk that they lead to violence, with politically motivated violence occurring in 60% of African elections held between 1990-2008<sup>53</sup>. Political stability has implications for development, as without this, business struggles to operate and government struggles to provide basic services. This suggests that gradual change may be better than revolution and points to the need for **long-term support for institutional change, focusing on consolidating democracy**.

We are concerned that accountability in many parts of Africa may be undermined because low tax revenue means the link between government and citizens is often weak; half of sub-Saharan African countries have a tax to gross domestic product ratio of less than 15%, compared to more than 29% in high income countries<sup>54</sup>. It is imperative that where African Governments rely heavily on external sources of funding – either natural resources or aid – they remain accountable to *the local population*, otherwise the international community may risk undermining democracy in Africa. The emphasis on transparency of external sources of funding, for example through the International Aid Transparency Initiative and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, are extremely positive steps, however **it is worth considering in further detail how to ensure the effectiveness of mechanisms to ensure external sources of funding are accountable to local citizens**.

We recognise that global norms can be highly important in driving the spread of democracy in Africa, as the sharp increase in countries defined as “democratic” seen in Figure 1 (p.11) following the end of the Cold War suggests. For this reason, and to avoid being seen as hypocritical, **it is important we “get our own house in order” on issues related to democracy**. This also enables us to share experiences and learning with African countries, for example we discussed experiences of all-women shortlists with the High Commissioner

<sup>53</sup> Africa Research Institute (2012): Diehards and democracy. Elites, inequality and institutions in African elections Briefing Note 1202. Available at: <http://africaresearchinstitute.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/BN-0712-Diehards-and-democracy.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> ibid

of Mozambique during this inquiry. We should be careful not to use the rise of China as an excuse for lowering our own governance standards in Africa.

Democracy has become by far the most dominant form of governance in Africa, but the form this takes varies substantially between different African countries, as our varying experiences in Sierra Leone and Ethiopia testify to. In addition the leverage of the UK, and the international community more broadly, varies significantly between different contexts. There are a wide range of approaches to strengthening democracy in Africa that the international community can take, some of which may be more or less appropriate in different contexts, for example we discussed that aid conditionality is only appropriate in limited cases, and it may be worth considering whether less direct approaches to promoting democracy, for example through our influence over global norms, are more appropriate in certain cases, perhaps, for example, for the less popular aspects of democracy such as human rights for gay people. It is difficult to draw hard and fast rules about which forms of democracy to engage with and how best to engage with them, which may point to the need for a **case by case approach**.

Democracy and governance are inherently political and we have discussed instances of vested interests at all levels, from journalists surviving off brown envelopes to elites selling mineral rights in Guinea and tribal politics in Kenya. It is important the international community **considers the domestic politics carefully before any intervention** or risks the intervention being unsuccessful. The politics are not necessarily something the international community has much control over, but the current focus on transparency may be helpful in opening up opportunities for internal political debate. In addition we have seen how external interventions have political consequences which can risk undermining democracy in Africa; **it is extremely important that risks of external interventions undermining democracy are acknowledged so we can ensure we avoid them.**

### **Who to work with**

There is an on-going debate about whether and how to work with repressive regimes: whether engagement is important in enabling reform, or whether it simply acts as a show of international support to the regime. This issue requires further consideration, and as previously discussed may require a case by case approach, but we can highlight the **need to manage carefully the risks involved with engaging with regimes that undertake repressive practices**. For example a recent report published by the Oakland Institute accuses the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) of ignoring first-hand accounts of human rights violations in an investigation into Ethiopian re-settlement programmes supported by donors<sup>55</sup>, highlighting some of the risks.

This inquiry has highlighted that it is critical to look at the whole system as weak links undermine progress in other areas; for example in Sierra Leone the weakness of the judiciary was undermining attempts to curb corruption and MPs from Botswana and Uganda

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<sup>55</sup> Will Hurd (2013) *Ignoring Abuse in Ethiopia. DFID and USAID in the Lower Omo Valley*. The Oakland Institute. Available at: [http://www.oaklandinstitute.org/sites/oaklandinstitute.org/files/OI\\_Brief\\_Ignoring\\_Abuse\\_Ethiopia\\_0.pdf](http://www.oaklandinstitute.org/sites/oaklandinstitute.org/files/OI_Brief_Ignoring_Abuse_Ethiopia_0.pdf)

both argued that democracy in their countries was limited as Parliament and the judiciary were overly influenced by the Executive. However international support appears focused in certain areas: on the national level Executive branch of Government, and at the grassroots. It may be worth **considering the balance of international support between the different branches of government and at different levels.**

We are particularly concerned that democracy in many parts of Africa may be undermined because there is often a strong perception that the prime role of an MP is to provide material benefits directly to their constituents, and that different political parties do not always provide an alternative set of policies as elections are not always conducted on the basis of party manifestos. However **parliamentary strengthening and support for political parties** largely remains a fringe concern in development policy. **Engaging Parliamentarians, Parliaments and political parties offers a huge opportunity to promote accountability,** in line with the increasing focus on accountability that we are seeing within international development discourse.

The role China is playing in promoting democracy in Africa is interesting; despite a policy of non-interference in domestic politics, in recent months Africa APPG Members have visited the African Union building in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and the Parliaments in Freetown, Sierra Leone, and Maseru, Lesotho, all of which have been built by, or received significant support from, the Chinese, and it has been highlighted that Chinese companies want political stability in the same way that British companies do. There may be more opportunities for collaboration, or at least coordination, in these areas that often assumed, however there appears to have been little cooperation between British and Chinese Embassies to date. It would be worth having **more dialogue with the Chinese** on these issues, even if it does not make sense to manage joint projects. This also places us better to influence the transparency of Chinese processes and reduces the risk of African countries using China as a bargaining chip against the west.

In Sierra Leone we discussed the important role British businesses were playing in opening doors to the British High Commission on politically difficult issues such as corruption. Our experiences in Sierra Leone and Ethiopia as well as written submissions to this inquiry suggest that, while some British businesses are ready to collaborate on these issues, others feel this debate side-steps them. It is worth considering how **HMG can work closer with British business in promoting democracy in Africa**, building on the High Level Prosperity Partnerships programme.

There may be opportunities for the African Union to play a larger role in strengthening democracy in the continent through the African Governance Architecture. **Supporting the AU's capacity on governance** is not one of the UK's top four priorities for its work with the AU, and while we would not wish this to compromise the UK's vital work with the AU in other areas, it would be worth considering whether working with the AU **might be an effective approach to supporting democracy in Africa in the long run.** This inquiry did not investigate the role of the Regional Economic Communities but it would also be worth considering how the international community supports these to strengthen democracy in Africa.

There remain challenges in ensuring that democratic processes are inclusive to marginalised groups. We looked at women's political participation, an area which has received significant

international attention. It is difficult to say how much of the considerable progress in this area can be ascribed to international support, but the High Commissioner of Mozambique stated that although much of the progress on women's empowerment in Mozambique is internally driven, DFID's work in this area has been helpful, and it seems likely this would also be the case elsewhere. This suggests there may be a greater role for the international community in **working with other marginalised groups**, such as disabled people and different ethnic groups, **as well as women**. In particular our meeting on women's political participation highlighted the need to address generational discrimination as well as gender discrimination, and suggested that where attitudes to political power are deeply engrained, **working with youth and teenagers may be the best way to change attitudes**.

Some issues, for example the pressures placed on MPs to provide material benefits directly to their constituents, are specific to Africa and there may be opportunities for sharing learning between parliamentarians from different African countries. It would be interesting to consider what role the international community can play in **facilitating dialogue between African countries on these issues**.

### **What to work on**

Although there is not the evidence to say categorically that democracy leads to development, many Africans have placed governance, in some form, amongst development priorities, implying the type of development that many Africans aspire to does include governance issues. This suggests **governance should be incorporated into development frameworks**. The Open Government Partnership and the post-2015 process may be opportunities for doing this.

Some aspects of democracy are more or less popular in Africa than others, for example human rights for gay people has received little popular support across much of the continent. There is a paradox here; while protecting minority rights is a critical component of democracy, pushing an agenda that is not supported by Africans is not democratic. There is a **need for further discussion about which is more important: supporting an African agenda or conveying to Africans the rights we now consider to be part of what citizens should expect**.

We have seen how even where formal democratic processes exist, this does not necessarily mean different groups have *influence* over policy-making. For example we discussed how women's political representation does not necessarily mean they have influence. We should be careful that **the form of democracy supported by the international community enables different groups to have influence, as well as representation**. This requires looking at broader barriers to effective participation, for example in the case of women parliamentarians, support needs to go beyond ensuring their election, to include, for example, capacity and childcare.

A particular threat to political stability is the high level of youth unemployment across much of the continent<sup>56</sup>, which was seen as a top development priority by a wide variety of

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<sup>56</sup> AfDB, OECD, UNDP and UNECA (2012) *African Economic Outlook 2012*. Available at: <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/fileadmin/uploads/PAGES-%20Pocket%20Edition%20AEO2012-EN.pdf>

stakeholders during our visits to Sierra Leone and Ethiopia. In addition there is a need to address generational discrimination. Furthermore engaging youth and teenagers may be an effective way of changing engrained negative attitudes over time. It may therefore be important to **address the economic, social and political empowerment of youth as part of and complementary to democratic strengthening.**

Some investments could benefit both democracy and development, for example in Ethiopia we saw how weak communications infrastructure was a limit to both democracy and development. It would be interesting to **investigate interventions which benefit both democracy and development, with a view to providing more support in these areas.** In particular, while domestic revenue collection is typically seen as a development concern, we have discussed how important taxation is to the relationship between government and citizens, critical to democracy. **Greater support to revenue collection and tax systems in Africa could benefit both development and democracy.** The UK has played a leading role in the international tax agenda, following the focus on tax at the 2013 UK-hosted G8 Summit, and it may be worth expanding this to merge with the democracy agenda, increasing the links between citizens and government.

We have seen that the international community can play an important role in providing information to citizens, for example through international media such as the BBC World Service and through initiatives such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and the International Aid Transparency Initiative. We should ensure we **value highly initiatives that provide information to citizens with which they are empowered to hold government to account.** Transparency legislation may also be helpful in this regard, in particular as it may influence global norms as well as the companies covered directly, in particular including Chinese companies. The UK should implement EU transparency legislation quickly.

We have been particularly concerned about the expectations put on MPs in many parts of Africa to provide material benefits, and in some cases cash, to their constituents as this undermines democracy. **A range of means**, which may include changing the rules on what MPs are allowed to give to their constituents, capacity building of MPs and community sensitisation, **may be used to address the expectations placed on MPs to provide material benefits to constituents.**

### ***Managing expectations***

We have seen that the relationship between democracy and development is complex and that democracies do not automatically bring about development. This means **we should not expect too much from new democracies too soon.**

Citizens have often referred to the expected development benefits of democracy, rather than the value of the process itself. We fear this may lead to unrealistic expectations about what democracy can achieve and that citizens may become disenfranchised with democracy if it fails to live up to these. There is therefore a need for a **greater understanding of democracy as a process in order to ensure expectations are realistic.** One way to

approach this may be through support to education in general and capacity building around democracy specifically.

We have also seen that not everyone has bought into the democracy agenda, for example one Ugandan MP spoke about “over-democracy” in Uganda, and certain aspects of it are seen as western impositions. **It is important to recognise that there will be hurdles in getting people on board.**

In addition there are many issues where international involvement would either be ineffective, for example we considered international leverage in the case of Guinea where an elite is benefitting from the current set up by selling mineral rights, or where international involvement would even blunt the impact of the initiative, for example the Public Affairs Committee in Malawi, and the process of participatory budgeting in the municipalities in the capital in Cameroon. **The international community must accept that a lot of the spread of democracy is internally driven and that it is not possible to change everything.**

Some issues and approaches are place-specific and will not work everywhere, for example we discussed that a growing middle class can contribute to greater government accountability as the middle class are more likely to place demands on government, but that this was unlikely to be effective in Ethiopia as the middle class remain dependent on government patronage. **We should recognise that not all approaches will be effective in all contexts.**



# Africa All Party Parliamentary Group

The Africa All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) was established in 2003 by Hugh Bayley MP and Lord Lea of Crondall. Its purpose is to raise the profile of Africa and pan-African issues in Westminster.

## Officers of the Africa APPG:

|                              |   |
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| Lord St John of Bletso           |

The Group has a membership of over 180 MPs and Peers. The administrative costs are covered by the Royal African Society ([www.royalafricansociety.org](http://www.royalafricansociety.org)).

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