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Will Africa make the Millennium Development Goals?

Holding the G8 and African governments to account

Jamie Drummond, Executive Director,
DATA (Debt AIDS Trade Africa)

Every reader of this publication knows about the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Fewer may think any African countries can achieve them. DATA was formed because we believe that many sub-Saharan African countries can achieve them and that this underestimated continent can be an equal partner in global peace and prosperity. As African entrepreneurs demonstrate daily, the continent has great potential – but for millions of Africans there are great obstacles lying in the way of success.

DATA's focus is to ensure that the G8 offers the best policies possible towards Africa. We do this by leveraging high level contacts and presenting them with evidence-based, pragmatic approaches to reaching the visionary goals of the MDGs. We also encourage G8 politicians by catalysing popular campaigns. Whether African leaders take advantage of the opportunities created by this political and public pressure is for Africans to decide. We believe increased G8 support should aim to increase political space for Africans to hold their own governments to account.

When it was founded, DATA planned three phases in its advocacy strategy. As an NGO start-up we knew we could not do everything at once. The first phase focused on the USA. Back in 2001-2002 we decided that improved Africa policies from the new Republican Administration would be essential to the overall drive of the G8. The second phase

was to build on the opportunity we thought would be presented by the G8 Summit in the UK in 2005. The third and current phase aims on the one hand to ensure the G8 keep those promises and on the other to support African efforts to take full advantage of them.

First phase: outreach to the Bush Administration

Following the Jubilee 2000 campaign and lobbying for increased resources to pay for the enhanced Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt cancellation programme, DATA inherited contacts with Republicans in Congress that were unusually strong for a development advocacy outfit. This facilitated our introduction to the recently elected Bush Administration. It was not an instant and easy sell – many meetings were required by Bono and others, but eventually we secured White House support for an innovative development concept called the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA).

The MCA aims to give increased resources only to those countries with clear country owned processes for fighting corruption and promoting democracy. DATA insisted that the MCA should be all new money and that at least half should go to Africa. We also pressed the administration to simultaneously work on an historic initiative to tackle the AIDS crisis in Africa.

Bipartisan support for such a programme had already formed in the US Senate through the Kerry-Frist Bill. DATA



At the Gleneagles Summit in 2005, the G8 made historic commitments to Africa on aid, debt and trade.

worked with UNAIDS, faith groups and leading activist groups to press the administration to support a scaled up effort that would include treatment, which at that time was being administered in small scale programmes. With debt cancellation and AIDS, we also pushed for an extension and improvement of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) which gives African producers duty-free access to the US market. And we supported the ongoing efforts of groups like Oxfam America working to reform US farm subsidies that harm African producers.

President Bush announced the Millennium Challenge Account – a US \$10 billion, three-year programme – just before the Monterrey Summit in 2002. Although the MCA has been slow to get going, it is a crucial new tool. In May 2003 he announced PEPFAR, the Presidents Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, a US \$15 billion five-year programme. It was a huge increase in funding for HIV/AIDS globally and a major point of leverage with other G8 donors ahead of the G8's Evian Summit. The AGOA programme was extended in 2004 and multilateral debt cancellation was finally agreed in 2005 in Gleneagles.

DATA achieved none of this alone and deserves credit for success and blame for errors along with other players. But taken together, these initiatives amount to a considerable improvement in American policy. Nevertheless the challenge remains to ensure each promise is kept and policy weaknesses are ironed out. For example:

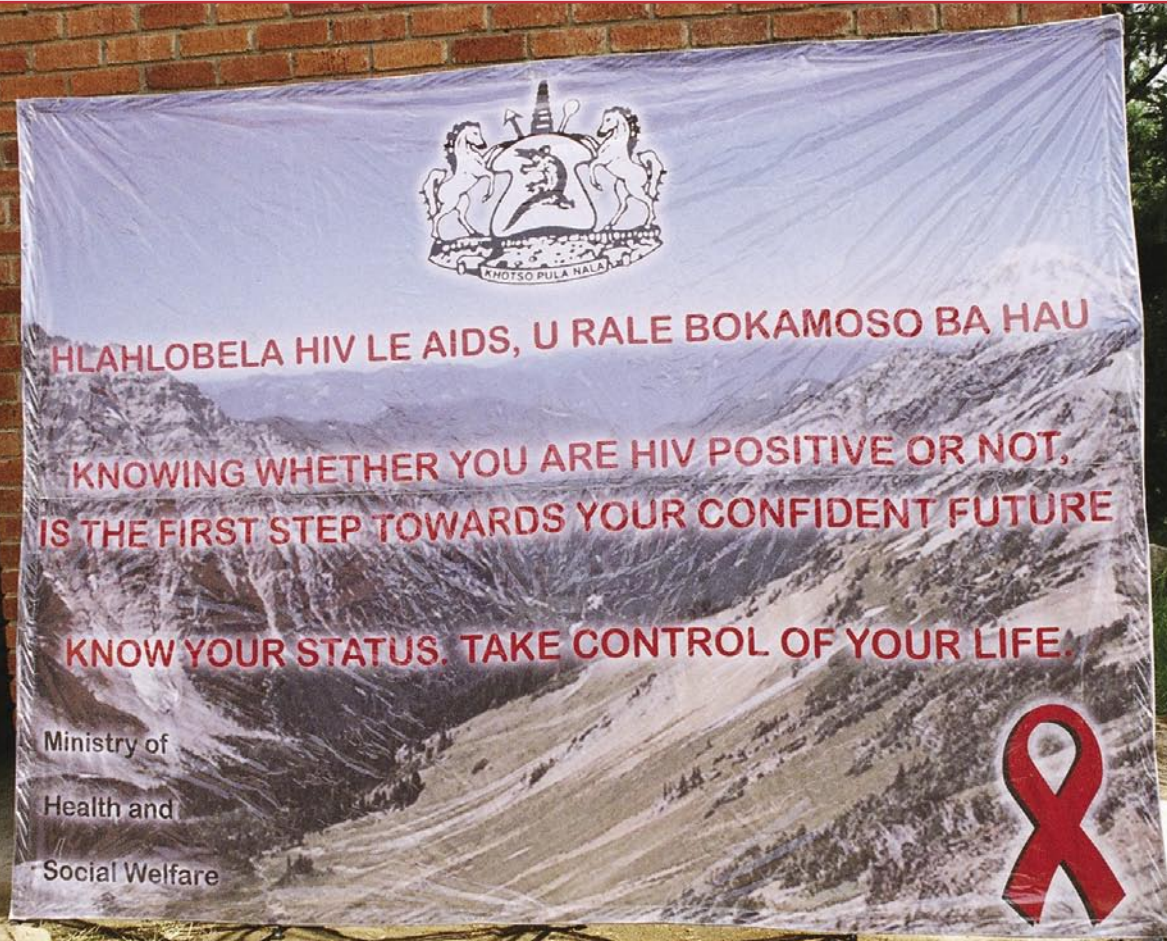
- Earmarking specific proportions of PEPFAR funds for abstinence or treatment programmes limits country level flexibility and appropriate public health strategies.

- The MCA should be allowed to offer multiple compacts to winning countries, should focus more on democracy as a precondition, and should focus funding only on countries which cannot get capital from other means, particularly Low Income Countries.
- AGOA could be extended to include African products such as sugar, cotton and tobacco and should provide complimentary funding that helps African farmers, small businesses and producers export, for example through improved infrastructure, access to capital and help to meet technical and safety standards.

The result of this phase of lobbying is still playing out. Although US overseas aid is low as a percentage of GDP, its assistance to Africa has trebled and is planned to double again. These increases are going to programmes which are delivering real results and saving lives.

Second phase: UK leadership and the G8

The G8 Summit in Birmingham in 1998 was an important moment for the growth of the Jubilee 2000 debt campaign globally and we knew that the next UK-based G8, in 2005, could be an even greater moment for global development issues and specifically for Africa. Perhaps the most important breakthrough was the UK government's commitment to deploy 0.7 per cent of GNI for Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) by 2013 in early 2004, at the beginning of the UK's last Comprehensive Spending Review. Tony Blair and Gordon Brown reinforced this commitment in speeches at the Labour Party Conference. Their firm commitment to 0.7 per cent gave them the ability to persuade others towards 0.7 per cent



A government banner encouraging HIV testing in Lesotho.

as well. France had already committed, but Germany, Italy and others had not. A broad coalition including DATA created a groundswell in many countries for doing more, promoting the Global Call to Action Against Poverty and its national affiliates, such as the ONE campaign in America and the Make Poverty History campaign in the UK.

With the UK already committed to increase aid spending and the launch of the Commission for Africa report setting out the policy detail to beat poverty and AIDS and promote good governance in Africa, the next key milestone was the EU's commitment to reach 0.51 per cent by 2010 and 0.7 per cent by 2015. Development ministers who made this commitment were at first deemed to have exceeded their mandate but finance ministers eventually agreed and the G8 collectively promoted this goal at the G8. The Live 8 concerts, organised by Bob Geldof, who works closely with DATA, helped create a dramatic moment to capture the public's attention just before the summit.

The result of this massive popular campaign was based on sound policy analysis and months of political lobbying: a US \$50 billion commitment by the richest countries to the poorest, with half for Africa. This summit was both historic and a compromise. An increase of US \$25 billion for Africa in the year 2010 over the 2005 ODA level is an increase of about US \$5 billion per annum. Since 2000 (and the turnaround in aid flows that began with Jubilee and encouraged by the Millennium Declaration and Monterrey) aid flows to sub-Saharan Africa had

increased from about US \$12 billion to US \$25 billion, a doubling over five years. The proposal in 2005 was to double again. Over 10 years, 2000 – 2010, this would amount to approximately a fourfold increase. Such a steady ramp up is not a massive aid hike derided by some but it is steady enough to tackle absorption capacity and to be directed towards more effective programmes and governments. Aid critics may think it's too much. Most advocates criticise it for being too little. This was a fair compromise and by the standards of previous G8s, historic. Above all, these sums were not the result of an obsession with abstract aid targets. The numeric goals flowed from specific, costed programmes for health care, education, infrastructure, rural development, governance strengthening and peace and security.

Third phase: ensure delivery – quality and quantity

There were many commitments covering debt, governance, AIDS, malaria, education and even something vague on trade in the Gleneagles agreement. The annual DATA Report, www.thedatareport.org, monitors all these commitments. It does not currently monitor the African side of the equation – whether African leaders are keeping their promises to their citizens. This is a job for DATA's partners such as the African Monitor and African chapters of GCAP. However, next year's DATA Report will summarise the findings of these African advocacy groups.

The findings of the DATA Report 2007 are discouraging. While the UK is largely keeping its collective promises, others are faring less well. Most disappointing is the performance of the continental G8 nations – Germany, France and Italy. All had ODA figures inflated by the inclusion of debt relief at full nominal value. This practice should be halted and going forward the G8/OECD should be more transparent and make available the true costs of debt cancellation to their treasuries.

In terms of accountability, the 2007 DATA Report also tried to show 'pipeline' figures, that is, how much is in the ODA pipeline from political promise to legislative passage to disbursement by the Finance Ministry to the arrival at various intermediaries to the actual arrival in Africa in effective programmes. This pipeline is too long, too opaque and must be open to scrutiny. Along with self-reporting aspects of the OECD process, this leaves a bad smell at the heart of development policy and advocacy. We hope the next Development Assistance Committee report of the OECD will report ODA pipeline figures. This will assist transparency and accountability in the system and also help African finance ministers estimate their budgets for coming years.

As DATA pointed out at the G8 in Germany this year, the pipeline facts highlight a dire crisis of credibility for the G8. Without a massive effort over the next 12 months, (as called for recently by UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown) the G8 will miss their promises. The rich world cannot make promises to the planet's poorest, declare partnership, then walk away from the compact. We need stronger bonds of trust at both policy-making and citizenry level if we are to work together on the massive global challenges we face: poverty, climate change and security. The G8 and particularly the EU undermine their efficacy as lead partners in this process if they break these pledges.

New challenges and the path to 2010

Going forward, DATA will be active on a number of fronts and we welcome partnership and collaboration with a range of actors in the following fields:

- Show results – explain that G8 assistance is often achieving tremendous results, especially in the area of health, and get this good news back to G8 policymakers and taxpayers.
- Keep promises – pressure the G8 and EU into keeping and in some areas exceeding existing promises on governance, debt, aid and trade through the next three summits to 2010 in Japan, Italy and Canada.
- On debt cancellation – advocate for more countries to be included in the process, ensure IFIs are fully replenished for lost reflows from MDRI, and introduce a more fair and transparent process in debt workouts, including efforts to ban 'vulture funds'.

- On trade and investment – if Doha finally dies, call for a special Africa-OECD trade deal, and advocate for more FDI into Africa.
- On governance – help strengthen African civil society and African media to keep African leadership accountable.
- On ODA – encourage and leverage the leadership offered by UK Prime Minister Brown to reinvigorate the push to achieve the MDGs, especially with Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Sarkozy.
- On climate change – collaborate with environmental policy and advocacy groups to ensure that adaptation policies in Africa are funded and supported in addition to current development policies.
- On China – engage with Chinese policy-makers to improve governance aspects of China's engagement and responsibly utilise Chinese firms' ability to deliver many of the major infrastructural needs of African nations.
- Use the US presidential political process to boost awareness and support for the fight against poverty and AIDS in Africa – DATA is already doing this through the ONE Vote 08, a ONE campaign initiative to persuade all Presidential candidates to support a renewed drive for the Millennium Development Goals.

About the author



Jamie Drummond is executive director of DATA – Debt, AIDS, Trade, Africa – which he co-founded with Bono, Bobby Shriver and others in 2002. Mr Drummond was formerly global strategist for Jubilee 2000 'Drop the Debt', and prior to that spokesperson for Christian Aid. He has traveled widely in Africa and Asia and has an MA in Development from the School of Oriental and African Studies.

About the organisation

Debt Aids Trade Africa (DATA) was founded by Bono and activists from the Jubilee 2000/Drop the Debt campaign in 2002. The aim was to capitalise on the network of contacts and allies created while lobbying the G8 on debt relief and refocus this network on helping Africa beat AIDS and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Today DATA has almost 40 staff with offices in Washington, London, Abuja, Berlin and Los Angeles.

Enquiries

DATA
1400 Eye St, NW
Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
USA

Tel: +1 (202) 639 8010
Website: www.data.org

