



**Initiative for Policy Dialogue
Task Force on Africa
Pretoria * July 9-10, 2009**

Africa Task Force Meeting: Background and Agenda
July 9-10, 2009, Pretoria

Akbar Noman and Joseph Stiglitz

Initiative for Policy Dialogue (IPD), Columbia University
With the support of Japan's International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
And in collaboration with JICA, the African Center for Economic Transformation
(ACET) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Government of South Africa.

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The Initiative for Policy Dialogue (IPD) established a Task Force (TF) on Africa in 2006 (here and elsewhere Africa refers to Sub-Saharan Africa). It is co-directed by Kwesi Botchwey, Akbar Noman and Joseph Stiglitz. The initial meeting was funded by the Brooks World Poverty Institute, Manchester University. The last meeting was held in Addis Ababa in July 2008, with the support of Japan's International Cooperation Agency (JICA), as is this one.

The report on the last meeting is attached. A volume emerging from the meeting is nearing finalization for publication. As the attached report indicates the dominant themes of the previous meetings pertained to how to put Africa on a path of sustained, rapid growth and the associated structural transformation. Indeed a central motivation for establishing the TF was to address the question of why economic growth in Africa had lagged behind and more to the point, what are the policy options for reversing that trend. A dominant theme of past meetings was the issue of whether the dominant discourse and the policy prescriptions of the past 25 years or so, had paid adequate attention to the lessons for Africa of successes in East and Southeast Asia (hereinafter E. Asia) or indeed in Africa itself. Had the policy options or conditions presented to African policy makers been sufficiently informed by these lessons, or more to the point, how might they be better informed?

Previous meetings have recognized that learning policy lessons involves not merely documenting and interpreting them but also translating and adapting them to particular country contexts. The venues of this and the previous meeting attest to the substantial diversity within Africa in terms of country characteristics, past performance and future prospects: clearly South Africa has a very different economy facing a rather different set of policy issues than that of Ethiopia or a "typical" African country, whatever that means. Perhaps rather less obvious is the diversity of the successful cases of Asia, where country circumstances and the mix of policies exhibited considerable diversity across space and time.

The discussions at the previous meeting revolved around the set of issues raised by these questions. Whilst the TF does not represent or aim for a monolithic or uniform set of views and there were conflicting positions on many matters, there was widespread recognition that the policy space and debate in Africa had been for the most part within too narrow confines, especially during the roughly two decades starting circa 1980. Whilst there has been some broadening of the space in recent years the scope for further expansion remains considerable.

The main thrust of the discussions is summarized in the attached report on the last meeting. At that time Africa had been through a period of about a decade or so of reasonable growth averaging some 5 percent per annum and restoring per capita incomes to roughly the level preceding the two "lost" decades of the 1980s and 1990s. That

period of relatively good growth, especially in countries like Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique and Tanzania, had led some people to declare a victory, albeit belated, for the reform agenda of the 1980s and 1990s. Others were less sanguine, pointing to the stagnation or sluggishness in investment and saving rates, in manufactured exports, in non-extractive FDI, in economic structures and more generally in technology and learning. On this view, the accelerated growth of the 21st century was more akin to the familiar cycle of boom and bust depending on commodity prices and exports.

At any rate, since the last meeting the world economy has gone into a full blown crisis. Growth prospects have dimmed very considerably in the near-term. In the longer term the crisis has highlighted the need to pay attention to the issues of economic transformation and sustained, rapid growth that has been the focus of this task force.

This meeting is to address the issues of the impact and implications of the financial and economic crisis on Africa. The background documents include the highlights of the report of the committee appointed by the President of the UN's General Assembly on the crisis (aka the Stiglitz Commission) as well as other papers focused more exclusively on Africa. Aside from the immediate impact of recession in the world economy via commodity prices, exports and remittances, there are also concerns about the longer term impact, especially the crowding out of aid budgets on account of the shrinking of the future fiscal space by the bailouts of the financial sector. Thus issues of aid and trade are a related item on the agenda of this meeting.

Africa is undergoing a major transformation from land abundance and labor scarcity to the opposite. Land tenure systems and agricultural technology need to adapt to this profound change that African agriculture is undergoing. Agricultural productivity remains well below the levels achieved in other regions, reflecting, inter alia, poor infrastructure and markets as well as inadequacies of agricultural research and extension services. Several initiatives are aiming to address some of these, including by NEPAD as well as by a coalition of foundations and agencies for a green revolution and those focused on specific crops, such as rice. The set of issues around land and agriculture are the third item on the agenda of this meeting.

The fourth and final item is that of climate change. Each new assessment provides a more grim outlook with accelerating change and a narrowing of the window for actions before tipping points are reached. Whilst the main burden of mitigation is on the developed countries and the BRICS, no part of the world can be immune from the needs for mitigation and adaptation. Africa, especially its agriculture, is likely to be greatly affected by changes in temperatures and associated rainfall patterns. Most of the people we had invited to this meeting were unable to participate because of a conflicting meeting of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). However, we hope to make a start on discussing the issue and outlining an agenda for future work.



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Overview

July 8

7:30 to 9:30 pm

Dinner hosted by JICA

Shuttle will leave from lobby at 7 pm

July 9

9 am to 5:30 pm

Meeting at Sheraton

7:30 pm to 9:30 pm

Dinner

Shuttle will leave from lobby at 7 pm

July 10

9 am to 2 pm

Meeting at Sheraton

2:30 pm to 5 pm

Public meeting at Sheraton



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Day 1

9 am to 10am	Introduction <i>Joseph Stiglitz, Keichi Tsunekawa, Akbar Noman</i>
10 am to 11:30 am	Global Recession and Africa I <i>Louis Kasekende, Joseph Stiglitz, Valpy Knox, John Weeks Pierre Jacquet</i>
11:30 am to 12 pm	Break
12 pm to 1pm	Global Recession and Africa II <i>Seeraj Mohamed, Jean Claude Maswana, David Hulme</i>
1 pm to 2 pm	Lunch
2 pm to 5 pm	Land and Agriculture <i>Howard Stein, Shinichi Takeuchi, Roy Prosterman, Hans Binswager</i>
7 pm	Dinner

July 10

9 am to 10 am	Aid and Trade <i>Afikumi Kuchiki, Julia Cage</i>
10 am to 11 am	Climate Change and Africa <i>Alessandra Gianni</i> Discussant: <i>Pierre Jacquet</i>
11 am to 12 pm	Agriculture and Africa I <i>Akbar Noman, Kjell Havnevik, Simon Roberts</i>

12 pm to 1 pm	Agriculture and Africa II <i>Katsuro Saito, Koichi Fujita, Francis Wilson</i>
1:00 pm to 2:00 pm	Lunch
2:30 pm	Public panel “Macroeconomic management and industrial- technology policy in the South: Some salient issues for South Africa” <i>Joseph Stiglitz, Mushtaq Khan</i>