



Juraj Mesík

Giant and Dwarf

“New Europeans” and Perspectives of Africa



Juraj Mesík was involved in ecological issues for many years; first as consultant for the then Czechoslovak Minister of the Environment and later as director of the Ecopolis Foundation. He worked for the World Bank in Washington from 2003 until 2008. Currently, he teaches about global problems and challenges at the Palacký University in the Czech Republic and at the Comenius University in Slovakia.

Juraj Mesík

Giant and Dwarf

“New Europeans”
and Perspectives
of Africa

Giant and Dwarf

Juraj Mesík

Published by the Pontis Foundation, Bratislava 2013.

Edition no. 1

© All rights reserved.

ISBN 978-80-971310-0-5



This publication was produced within the Knowledge Makes Change!
project that is supported by the European Union.
The information and views set out in this publication are those of the author
and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union.

To my father

(1933 – 2011)

Contents

Preface	7
Why Should We Be Interested in Africa?	9

SECTION ONE: CONTINENT OF GIGANTIC PROBLEMS

Population Growth: A Thorn in Africa's side	16
Could Malthus Be Right? Memento from St. Matthew's Island	25
When Ideology Rules Over Reason and Sensibility	32
The First Bounce from the Tropics: South Africa—a Fragile First World in the Third One	36
The Second Bounce from the Tropics: Population, Oil and Climate Change or When the Dust Settles over Arabia	47
The Third Bounce from the Tropics: China, Africa and Pakistan Memento	56
Nigeria: Disaster Waiting to Happen	63
South Sudan or “Be Careful about What You Wish For—The Gods May Fulfill Your Wishes!”	80
Damocles' Sword of Food Crisis: Climate, Oil, Water, Phosphorus and Africa's Prospects	90

SECTION TWO: FROM DIAGNOSING THE PROBLEMS TO REMEDIATION

The White Man's Burden: Europeans on the Road to Development Aid	106
Vanitas Vanitatum?	109
The Dark History of Europe in Africa: Slavery and Slaves	112
From Colonization to the Millennium Development Goals	118
Millennium Development Goals	124
Why Africa Remains Impoverished: Collier's Bottom Billion and the Four Development Traps	131
How to Get Africa Out of the Development Traps	147
Military Intervention as Development Aid?	165
Who Helps More?	175
Schweitzer's Dream	181
Stop the Aid! Radical Criticisms of Development Aid	185

**SECTION THREE: LOW HANGING FRUIT. CENTRAL EUROPE
AND DEVELOPMENT AID FOR AFRICA**

Central Europe, Slovaks, Czechs and Development Aid: Old News or New News?.....	196
An Individual Face to Face with the World: A Passive Bystander of Development Actor?	200
Primum Non Nocere—First Do No Harm; When Ideology Rules over Logic and Feeling	203
Money Is Not Everything	208
Turning Over What We Know: Save Him, White Doctor! Doctors and Women in Africa	211
Atheism, Sexuality and Homosexuality, or Cultural Wars and Differences	223
Doing a Lot with Very Little and the Lone Soldier on the Battlefield	229
From Engaging Individuals to Engaging Cities and Communities	235
Local Non-Governmental Development Organization Scene	242
Official Development Assistance	246
Making SlovakAid more Effective	255
A Few Words in Closing	264
Biographical Note	267
Photos	268



Preface

At the time when I started to work on this book, Africa was again on the front pages of the newspapers. As usual when it comes to African news, it was not good news. Headlines of summer 2011 reported about 10 to 12 million people in East Africa, in particular in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya, were being threatened by famine. Newspapers, even tabloid TV stations, broadcast pictures of vast landscapes burned by an unforgiving sun and covered by skeletons of dead cattle and shots of skinny women and children creeping through the semi-desert to the “promised land”. The promised land of salvation presented itself as refugee camps in Kenya and Ethiopia, where people had the chance to at least get water and one meal a day. Stories spread to the world about women, who had to leave their weakest children dying alongside trails in the bush, so at least the stronger ones would have a chance to survive. One of them was a story of a mother who lost four of her children on the march, another about families that lost all their cattle—their only property. The largest refugee camp of the current era was their desired goal, laying out there in Kenya, near the border with Somalia—a fictitious country that has not existed for many years and was ruled by chaos, misery, violence and desperation. Dadaab was the name of camp. It was designed to provide shelter for 90,000 people, but 440,000 people were staying in this tent city in the middle of semi-desert in 2011. It is a city of tents larger than Florence, Bonn, Toulouse, Graz, Brno or Bratislava. 1,300 new people were arriving at Dadaab every day during the summer of 2011 at least 800 of them were children¹. Famine is also in Eritrea, but

1 Somalia: Increase in refugees fleeing to Kenya. BBC, 2011-06-28. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13937486>.

the military regime there is so oppressive that very little information is finding its way out of country².

Another piece of news reaching the headlines in the summer of 2011 was one about the split of Sudan, until then the largest country in Africa. This split is the result of the longest civil war in the history of the continent: around 2 million people fell victims to the hostilities between the north and the south since 1955. The new state, established by separation of the southern part, chose to name itself Southern Sudan. It covers 620,000 km²—almost as much, as Germany and Poland combined. It has only 8 million inhabitants, but 200 ethnic groups, or as Africans say, tribes. As soon as this state was formally established, it became one of the poorest in the world: 90% of its citizens live on less than 1 dollar per day. Fanfares were still sounding when the Murle tribe attacked the Lou Nuer tribe. 600 people were killed, 1,000 wounded and victorious Murle took 38,000 heads of cattle with them as a spoil of war.³ By the spring of 2012, a border war with Sudan was added to ethnic fights— aerial bombardments, oil supplies cut; a free-fall of the new country's shaky economy.

Over the last few years most of the news from East Africa you find in Europe is about Somali pirates and also tourists' stories from Kenya and Tanzania. But if you dig deeper you can also find reports about election violence in Kenya, genocide in Rwanda and AIDS epidemics in Uganda.

Africans do not like our description of their continent as a world of poverty, desperation, violence, corruption and backwardness. They would love to get rid of these negative stereotypes and see the world appreciate their positive side—the amazing nature of the African savannas, rivers, mountains and coasts, their music, vitality, cultural richness and ability to enjoy life. I will try not to ignore these beautiful sides of Africa, but it would be too far from reality to throw a blind eye on many serious problems and challenges that the continent faces today and will be facing during the next few decades. When my wife visited Africa the first time, she captured it in these words: “This is the cradle of humanity that mankind has never out grown”.

My curiosity about Africa was born long time before I first set foot on the continent. Working for the World Bank in Washington during the first decade of the 21st century meant I travelled to several West, South and East African countries on numerous occasions; from the banks of the Niger delta heavily contaminated by spilt oil, through to the deserts of Namibia to the vast savannas of Kenya and Tanzania. This book is my attempt to share with the readers at least some of my observations and thoughts about what we can do for our distant African relatives and which of our expectations are unrealistic and why we should not be indifferent towards people and countries of the black continent.

Banská Bystrica—Bratislava, May 2012

2 Drought in Eritrea: hunger despite government denial. BBC, 2011-09-04. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14779344>.

3 South Sudan attacks leave 600 dead. BBC, 2011-08-23. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14595368>.

Why Should We Be Interested in Africa?

We are all Africans. Out of Africa migration. Large fauna. Raw materials and trade. Schweitzer's vision of the world of solidarity and humanity.

It was in the summer of 1963, when U.S. president Kennedy said his famous historical words in front of 450,000 West Berliners in the besieged city of Berlin: "Two thousand years ago the proudest boast was *civis Romanus sum*. Today, in the world of freedom, the proudest boast is "Ich bin ein Berliner!"

While president Kennedy's statement was a metaphor expressing moral support to the besieged citizen of Berlin, when I, a native European of white skin, say "I am an African", it is by no means a metaphor. From anthropological and genetic studies we know with almost certainty that we are all truly Africans.

Our species, proudly naming itself *Homo sapiens*, evolved around 200,000 years ago somewhere in the East Africa Rift Valley. The oldest skeletal remains of *Homo sapiens* were discovered near the Omo River in southern Ethiopia—a river entering Lake Turkana near the borders of Ethiopia and Kenya. For a very long time our ancestors spread out, but only within Africa. The long-term presence of our species in Africa has many interesting and also serious consequences; one of them being genetic but also linguistic, variability among people in Africa is significantly bigger than variability among people inhabiting all other continents. All of us living outside of Africa are the progeny of a very small group of African men and women, who, sometime around 70 thousand years ago, crossed the Strait of Aden and, some time later, a strip of land connecting Egypt with the Sinai Peninsula. Great-grandchildren of these small groups gradually colonized southern and central Asia, eastern Asia, Australia and some Pacific islands, ice-covered Europe and eventually also northern Asia, and from there, crossing through the land bridge of Beringia, also both Americas.

For the sake of accuracy it must be noted that the crossing at the Mandab Strait, between current Djibouti and Yemen, some 70,000 years ago was not the first attempt made by Africans to leave the continent. Other hominids successfully migrated out of Africa several hundred thousand, or even more than a million years ago and are known

to us under names such as the Peking Man, Java Man, Heidelberg Man, Neanderthals or Denisovans. None of these, however, are direct ancestor to us.⁴ These were also not even the very first attempts by our own species to leave Africa; in present day Oman and at Mount Carmel in Israel artifacts and remains of modern people dating back 100,000 years have been found. However, it appears these groups failed to expand further and in the case of Mt. Carmel, the horizon of modern people is covered over by the younger Neanderthal horizon. So it seems the first modern people who left Africa fell victim to their more robust cousins, the Neanderthals. It was not until the next “out of Africa” migration, that *Homo sapiens* fully succeeded. Unfortunately for the Neanderthals they lost the competition against modern man and became extinct around 25,000 years ago.

You may ask another question: how did our predecessors manage to cross the 25 km wide Mandab Strait 70,000 years ago? Were they capable of building crafts which could carry several people and cross such wide expanses of water? Well, we know the answer from paleoclimatology at the time of successful migration from Africa, the world was deep in the last ice age and sea levels were around 110 meters below their current level. The islands in the Mandab Strait were connected with the mainland and the strait itself was much narrower than it is today. Nevertheless, to cross it a relatively robust craft was necessary, as well as a good deal of luck!

Further migrations of Africans throughout Asia, Australia, Europe and eventually the North and South Americas have been the subject of research. Modern genetics enables scientists to map genetic variations that we all possess in our mitochondrial as well as nuclear DNA.⁵ Archeologists are able to trace human migrations through archeological findings; however, unfortunately sea levels have since risen by 110 meters preventing archeologists from uncovering any archeological sites which would have provided information about these coastal migration routes along the beaches of southern Asia and Europe.

The relatively late exodus of our ancestors from Africa means that Africa has by far the biggest genetic diversity of humankind. Therefore, a European, Chinese, Australian Aborigine or Native American from the Amazon jungle may be genetically more closely related to each other than individuals from two different African tribes that live just a few hundred miles apart.

For many people Africa is fascinating due to her spectacular nature, particularly the animals. No other continent offers you such a variety and number of large species, reminding

4 This statement may not be absolutely true: scientists of Max Planck Institute in Leipzig, Germany published a paper in 2010 providing evidence about small elements of Neanderthal genes being present in genome of the modern people. The assumption is that some 50,000 to 100,000 years ago, interbreeding between modern people and Neanderthals happened, leaving with us 1% to 4% of our genes. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/7685610/Humans-share-Neanderthal-genes-from-interbreeding-50000-years-ago.html>.

5 Those interested to learn more about these topics may choose to turn to a number of excellent books such as *The Journey of Man: A Genetic Odyssey* by Spencer Wells (Random House, 2003) or *The Seven Daughters of Eve: The Science that Reveals Our Genetic Ancestry* by Bryan Sykes (W.W. Norton Company, 2001).

us of Pleistocene megafauna inhabiting all other continents in the past. Just some 15,000 years ago herds of mammoths roamed the plains of Europe and Northern America accompanied by woolly rhinoceros, cave lions, bears, saber-toothed cats, giant ground sloths and other spectacular animals which today we only know about from their skeletal remains. But in Africa many large mammals, such as elephants, hippos, rhinoceroses, giraffes and buffalos survived, and some species, such as zebra and wildebeest, still perform their magnificent, mass annual migrations today. Alongside these species, large predators survived as well—lions, leopards and cheetahs—and also several species of our closest living relatives, chimpanzees, bonobos and lowland and mountain gorillas.

As of now no generally accepted explanation for the reasons for extinction of Pleistocene megafauna in Australia, Europe, Americas and Asia is known. However, in many cases the time of their extinction corresponds with the time of human arrival to the territories previously occupied by big animals. This coincidence provides fertile ground for an assumption that both events—the arrival of humans and the extinction of megafauna—are closely connected. There is not convincing evidence that people successfully and extensively hunted large mammals, for example mammoths, but it is quite possible that humans were at least one of the factors that contributed to the demise of these magnificent animals.

But why did megafauna also not disappear in Africa? The answer may lie in the fact that humans were evolving in Africa much longer than elsewhere, so big mammals had the time to gradually gain a healthy respect for this small, bare, seemingly defenseless bipedal primate and its increasingly effective weapons. Whereas, large animals outside of Africa were confronted with “finished” men, equipped with sharp stone tools, spears, spear-throwers, bows and, of course, fire and human intellect. Without appropriate respect, the “naïve” large animals outside Africa became relatively easy prey for humans, whose populations could, thanks to sufficient food provided by large animals, grow relatively quickly.

Another possible reason why Africans did not kill off large animals could be due to the relatively low populations of humans in Africa. While populations outside of Africa were growing rather quickly, albeit nowhere close to the population growth of the last hundred years, a harsh climate, limited development of agriculture and large numbers of pathogens and tropical diseases, for instance malaria and parasitic worms, kept human population in Africa rather limited all the way up to the 20th century. This too could have contributed to the survival of many large African animals to the present times.

Interest in Africa, of course, can also draw on the interest of its natural resources—timber, minerals, oil and agricultural products. In the past, the interest included hunger for slaves and ivory. It was the interest in commodities which led the Europeans and Arabs to build ports, fortified bases, towns and colonies alongside the African coasts in the West (Europeans) as well as the East (Arabs). Towards the end of 19th century, European powers subdivided the whole continent—with the exception of Ethiopia and Liberia. Similar interest in commodities and raw materials motivates Chinese and many other companies and governments from Asia, Europe and the Americas in the early 21st century. It may be

nothing negative in itself; many European countries have acted the same way. African economies and people can benefit from foreign investments in their industries and agriculture. However, an absolutely legitimate question is how do foreign companies behave in an environment that usually has very weak and poorly implemented environmental and social legislation, on top of a tradition of extremely corrupt politicians? The temptation to apply double standards in order to achieve extremely high profits may be irresistible—and a consequence of such business for the host country is very negative. With dual standards, the oil giants in Nigeria—the most “famous” among them being Shell—caused oil contamination in the delta of the River Niger that would have been absolutely unthinkable in Europe or the USA. They contributed to the worsening of the social, environmental and political situation in the country and to the incredible growth of corruption. At the other end of the spectrum, after a controversial start, the diamond mining company, De Beers, contributed by improving the situation in what were extremely poor countries, such as Botswana and Namibia. Both countries are now peaceful and, by African standards, relatively prosperous.

However, other interests in Africa stem from other motives, including human solidarity and pure humanity. I think that these motives were best captured by the doctor, organ virtuoso, Protestant theologian and humanist Albert Schweitzer in his book *“On the Edge of the Primeval Forest”* almost 100 years ago. Allow me to quote him:

“Those who themselves experienced what is anxiety and physical pain belong together all around the world. They are bonded by the mysterious bond... Who was liberated from the pain, must not think he is now free again and can happily go back to his life as before. That, who himself experienced the pain and anxiety, must help in the fight against pain and anxiety as long as human power is capable to do something... That, who was set free from a serious illness, must help, so those who otherwise would not have a doctor can obtain the same assistance, as he had.”

And alongside his deep human empathy Schweitzer appeals to the responsibility of us, Europeans: “What did the white people of all nations inflict on the people of color since they discovered distant lands? What does it mean that so and so many nations went extinct or are on the brink of extinction or their populations are dwindling everywhere, where the European humanity decorating itself by the name of Jesus set its foot!... Who dares to guess how much misery among them was caused by the evils of alcohol and diseases that we have brought to them?... Great is the guilt that lies upon all of us and upon our culture... Even would we do everything in our power, we would not wash away one thousandth of our guilt. This is the basis of any philanthropic work held in distant countries.”

As someone who studied medicine in order to go to Africa to help the suffering, and as a doctor who was for many years helping Africans suffering in his hospital at Lambaréné today on the River Ogooué in Gabon, Schweitzer sent immediate medical help to the suffering by sending doctors—funded by “gifts of gratitude” from patients healed in Europe—as the most important and most urgent form of assistance to Africans. Back in Strassbourg in 1920 he wrote the words at the end of his book *“On the Edge of the Primeval Forest”*:

“Sooner or later, the idea that I express, will overwhelm the world as its inexorable logic conquers the minds and the hearts.”⁶

Ninety years since these visionary words were written we know that his vision has still not been met. Millions of people, particularly children, still die every year in Africa, killed by diseases which have been successfully prevented or treated in the developed world. Millions more suffer and die of hunger, malnutrition and violence. Schweitzer’s vision of solidarity and a humanistic world did not become a reality by the early 21st century and perhaps it will never be fulfilled. Nevertheless, his humanism still inspires many people, including doctors and health professionals from countries which never had colonies, to leave the safety and comfort of their homes and hospitals and help the poorest in Kenya, Sudan, Rwanda and many other countries of black Africa.

6 On the Edge of the Primeval Forest: Experiences and Observations of a Doctor in Equatorial Africa, Read Books, 2008



SECTION ONE:
Continent of Gigantic
Problems



Population Growth: A Thorn in Africa's side

From population depression to overpopulation—basic figures. Why African soldiers armed to the hilt did not ride on zebras and rhinoceros to conquer Europe? Treacherous geography of the continent: climatic zones, impassable desert, short coasts, high altitude, rapidly declining rivers. Malaria, tropical diseases, infant mortality and fertility cults. The slave trade.

While Albert Schweitzer and many of his contemporaries in the early 20th century wrote about the epidemics and the disappearance of entire African nations, contemporary analysts point to the population explosion at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st as one of the key problems of Africa. They are hitting the nail on the head—population growth is an absolutely crucial issue for the present status and future prospects of Africa. Was Schweitzer wrong with his observations?

We need to look at this question through the prism of time and numbers. Maybe I recommend to those readers who do not like figures to skip the next few paragraphs. For the rest, the ride through the times and figures is about to start.

It took 200,000 years for the number of people on Earth to reach one billion in around 1800 A.D. However it took only 120 more years for our population to rise to two billion by 1927 A.D. At around 1960—at a time when Africa was rapidly decolonizing—the Earth was already inhabited by 3 billion people. By the year 2000 there were six billion and in 2012 we reached a population of seven billion.

At the beginning, Africa was lagging behind the rest of the world in population growth. Despite having only limited data about the number of inhabitants during the previous centuries, qualified estimates suggest that only 90 to 110 million people lived in Africa between 1500 and 1850. The number of Africans started to climb only after 1850, which seems paradoxical as this was during the colonization of Africa by European powers. This however, was also the time when the ships of the British royal majesty started to vigorously suppress the African slave trade which undoubtedly contributed to previous slow population growth on the continent.

By 1900, the number of Africans had increased by almost one third to reach 133 million and by 1950, by two thirds—to 220 million.⁷ As far as the middle of the 20th century, Africa’s population more-or-less kept pace with population growth around the world. In 1900, Africans accounted for 8% of the world population; in 1950 this had risen to 9%. Truly explosive growth followed in the following decades after the decolonization of the continent. By 2000, the number of Africans had reached approximately 800 million and in 2011 around one billion. Today Africa alone is home to as many people as was the total world population just 200 years ago. The number of Africans, including the Arabian part of the population, increased almost fivefold in 60 years!

Let us now look in more detail at the population trends in the countries of eastern Africa, as this is the region that we will look at most closely throughout this book. Back in 1900, the British colony of Uganda had 1.8 million inhabitants, Kenya had 1.7 million, while 3.5 million people were living in German East Africa, which included countries which today are Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi.⁸ In 1900, the entire territory of more than 1.8 million km² was inhabited by only 7 million people, in comparison the population of Denmark and Norway at the time which was 2.2 million people each—more than Kenya or Uganda. 50 years later colonial Kenya was already home to 6.1 million people, Uganda to 5.5 million people and Tanzania to 7.9 million people, with a combined population of 19.5 million.⁹ The famous Czechoslovak travelers and journalists Jiří Hanzelka and Miroslav Zikmund traveled throughout British East Africa in 1948 and since the defeat of Germany in World War I, Tanzania, known at the time as Tanganika, was part of the region too. In their fascinating travel log “Africa of dreams and reality” they state the population of the whole colony to be 13.5 million people. Their figure however is inevitably outdated, so we can consider 19.5 million inhabitants in 1950 as an accurate figure. That means that in just 50 years from 1900 to 1950 the population of the given territory increased almost threefold. Let us compare with Denmark and Norway again; by 1950 the number of Danes had reached 4.3 million and the number of Norwegians 3.3 million. Their populations increased by 50% to almost 100%. However it means that population growth in Western Europe in the first half of 20th century was already substantially slower compared to East Africa.

But the real population drama was still only ahead of Africa. But before we start to crunch more data, let us have a look at more remote history about African populations.

Even if it is hard to believe when confronted with recent data, most of the long human history in Africa was marked by a long and hard struggle to populate the continent. Africa, the cradle of the human species, is a huge continent. With 30 million square kilometers she is the second largest continent on Earth, but her population up to the 20th century was very sparse. In his Pulitzer Prize winning book “Guns, Germs and Steel” subtitled “The Fates

7 All presented figures cover whole African continent, i.e. include also Arab countries of North Africa. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population.

8 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population_in_1900.

9 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_past_population_\(United_Nations\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_past_population_(United_Nations)).

of Human Societies”, erudite American author Jared Diamond superbly described how the historically sparse population of Africa has its deep roots in a number of fundamental reasons originating to a large degree from the location and geography of the continent.

To anyone who desires to have an understanding why the human world is as it is, the book “Guns, germs and Steel” is “a must read”. The book opens with Jared Diamond asking the question, that he himself was asked as a young scientist doing his research in the jungles of Papua New Guinea by his local guide Yali—a man born in the culture of the Stone Age despite living in the 20th century. “Why is it that you white people developed so much cargo?”—was Yali’s fundamental question. Why it is whites who flooded the world with a deluge of goods, why not members of other nations and races? Diamond rephrased this question into a number of mutations, one of them being: Why did Bantu shock troops riding on rhinoceros not smash Roman legions and conquer Roman Empire? Why did the opposite happen and Europeans subdue Africa and—with a small exception—the rest of the world?

Diamond’s answer is clear: “It did not happen, because Africans never had—and could not have—human nor material resources for such an invasion of Europe. But why did they not have these resources?”

One needs to look at the map in order to search for the answer to this question. Compare the map of Africa with her closest neighbor, Europe, and the differences will leaps out at you immediately. The Northern third of Africa is covered by a vast desert—an ecosystem almost unknown in recent Europe. The Sahara presents an almost impassable natural barrier, dividing the continent into the Arabic North and Sub-Saharan South, inhabited by dark skinned people. Before the domestication of camels and the invention of the camel saddle, with an exception of a narrow strip of land around the Nile River, people had no means of crossing the Sahara—they could only navigate around the continent.¹⁰ This is the reason why development in Sub-Saharan Africa was happening in more or less isolation from the developments in Europe and Asia for such a long time.

The long axis of Africa is north-south oriented with the continent cutting through several climate zones of which each requires specific adaptation of ecosystems and people, including their agriculture. Despite intuitive views shared by many people and stemming from images of lush tropical jungles, tropical ecosystems are very fragile and their soils are mostly shallow and infertile. Contrary to this, almost the whole of Europe is located in one moderate climate zone without large climatic extremes and most of the land is covered by thick, rich soils. Therefore, the conditions Europeans had for agriculture—and for feeding larger populations—was much better than those of the Africans.

In comparison to Africa—and in fact to the rest of the world—Europe, or more precisely Euro-Asia, was endowed with many more animal and plant species that proved to be suitable

10 This statement is valid for at least the last 7,000 years since vast parts of the Sahara today have transformed into unforgiving desert. Archeological findings and rock carvings and paintings in several locations of currently uninhabited parts of the Sahara provide evidence about savannas, rivers and lakes spreading more than 7000 years ago where desert rules today. People and large animals inhabited these regions.

for domestication and cultivation. Out of the three main crops sustaining the majority of the world's population, wheat, corn and rice, none of these originate in Africa. Similar if not worse is the situation with domesticated large mammals that are the basis of livestock production. Of the 14 large domesticated animals, 13 originate from Euro-Asia, the remaining one being South American llama alpaca. The “big five” domesticated species—sheep, goats, pigs, cows and horses—all originate from Euro-Asia, and partly from North Africa. At the time of their domestication Sub-Saharan Africa was already isolated from Europe and Asia by sands and rocks of the Sahara. From the perspective of population and power the two most important species were cows and horses. Cattle provided milk and also draft power enabling a population growth unseen before their domestication, while horses provided physical strength and speed making them ideal for providing land transport and the primary military mobility. They remained the main form of transportation until the middle of the 19th century.

However, is it not a paradox that there are 51 species of mammals bigger than 45 kilograms living in Africa (there were 72 such species living in Euro-Asia)! For Africans the misfortune is that none of them were suitable for domestication. Africa is for instance inhabited by four species of zebra which are close relatives of the horse, however, unlike horses zebras have an aggressive nature and are prone to biting, thus preventing their domestication. This meant that African nations were prevented from building black and white striped cavalries and mobile armies. It was not just Africans who tried to domesticate the zebra, using the most modern techniques Europeans also had the same disappointing results.

There are also three species of wild pig living in Africa, however, none of these were domesticated either. Herbivore hippopotamus with its two to three tons of meat could be an ideal candidate for farming, except they have the same characteristic as zebras—aggression and uncontrollability. Year on year more people are killed by hippos in Africa than by lions. Efforts to domesticate African elephants ended up with similarly poor results. It is true that Hannibal's armies crossed the Alps on elephants from Africa, but it seems likely that Carthaginian elephants were a North African species, that—similar to Indian elephants—were more suited to being tamed and domesticated than elephants from the Sub-Saharan savanna. A fact of life is that while you can commonly see tame elephants in India or Thailand you do not encounter anything similar in Africa—or if you do, then it is very exceptional.

Let us now leave fauna and flora aside and return back to the geography of Africa. When you pay attention to the coast of Africa you will soon notice how smooth it is with very few peninsulas. Relative to the gigantic size of the continent (30 million km²) the coastline is very short, only about 30,500 km. Yet, Europe which is three times smaller in size, has a coastline that is approximately three times longer, at 89,000 km long. This comes with profound consequences on the potential for the population to access sea resources and marine trading routes. Throughout history, in comparison to Africans, a much higher percentage of Europeans had access to fish and seafood, while many more benefited from the possibility of transporting heavy and bulky goods, such as grain or wood, across long distances.

On top of the very short coastline, in comparison to Europe, Africa's average altitude is twice as high and Africa's landscape is much more rugged. The majority of Europe, from

Normandy throughout the whole of France, Germany, Poland, Ukraine and Russia, as far as the Ural, is one vast, fertile lowland. There are mountains in Europe, however they do not interrupt this large lowland and, as famously proven by Hannibal's expedition across the Alps, even those highest European mountains do not create an impassable barriers. One of the serious consequences of the high altitudes across large parts of Africa is the fast running rivers with rapids and cascades. While the Nile or Congo did not allow navigation deep into the heart of this black continent, in Europe, Europeans could navigate and trade across most of the continent using the Rhine, Danube, Volga and many other minor rivers.

Yet there is still another important reason for the low human population density in Africa prior to the 20th century and it relates to both the tropical climate and the evolution of our species. Throughout history the evolution of humans and other hominids and great apes took place in Africa. Long before our own species, members of the *Homo erectus* species and ancestors of Neanderthal people lived in Africa and left it to colonize Euro-Asia. The oldest remains of our own species, *Homo sapiens*, were found near the river Omo in what is now southern Ethiopia, not too far from the Kenyan border (the remains were 200,000 years old.) Two other candidates for this primacy are from South Africa. The prevailing view is that our species started to successfully move out of Africa some 70,000 years ago, although stone tools discovered in locations on the Arabian Peninsula suggested this could have happen as long as 100,000 years ago. According to genetic studies, the original group that left Africa could have numbered only a few hundred individuals, maybe as few as 150. Fundamentally, from the perspective of slow population growth in Africa before the 20th century, our species lived in Africa many times longer than on other continents. This fact is also the reason why Africans are genetically the most diverse within the human population.

With our long evolution in Africa, the wide variety of pathogenic microbes and parasites had plenty of time to evolve in relation to humans and related primates. The end result of this is a continent plagued with a number of pathogens such as malaria, sleeping sickness (trypanosomiasis), yellow fever, diseases caused by parasitic worms, and AIDS to mention one of the newer diseases and also by a number of animal vectors, which transfer diseases, including mosquitoes, snails and flies. Since Portuguese sailors opened routes around Africa for navigation in the late 15th and 16th century, contact with Europeans added to this deadly cocktail with many new infectious diseases coming from Europe. Fortunately, these diseases penetrated into the depths of Africa slower than was the case in the Americas, where contact with Spaniards triggered devastating epidemics and massive depopulation of the whole continent. Nevertheless, these diseases still had a serious influence on African populations, which in addition to a limited potential for food production, repeated famines, lack of long distance trade due to a short coast and non-navigable rivers, tropical and imported diseases kept causing high mortality of both African infants and adults.

Adding salt to the wound were the European and Arab slave traders and their domestic trade partners, who for several centuries hunted people in the coastal areas as well as in the interior of Africa and exported them as slaves to Arabia, India, Europe and the Americas.

We only have fragmented information about birth rates and child mortality in traditional African societies, but according to expert estimates one third of children born in many parts of Africa did not live to see their first birthday and many more did not survive to five years of age. Records from an ethnic group living on today's Ivory Coast territory show that a woman only had the right to ceremonially bury her fourth child; with extremely high child mortality expensive ceremonial funerals for all children would have been economically unsustainable. Demographers, as well as the oldest colonial testimonials, estimate that women gave birth six to seven times during their lifetime. This low number of births per woman, in the absence of reliable contraception was likely caused by long-term breastfeeding of children. Long-term breastfeeding in conditions of poor nutrition, miserable hygiene and an environment infested with pathogens on one hand increased chances of survival, but on the other hand long-term lactation suppresses the next ovulation cycle and likelihood of another pregnancy. There were also various social taboos banning sex for breastfeeding women, on top of biological factors, although we may only speculate about the effectiveness of such taboos. If the child survived, the interval between individual births was often three to four years during the early colonial period.

Giving birth and raising a child in these conditions was extremely hard, this naturally led to the spread of cults celebrating fertility and children across Africa. Capacity to procreate fueled man's pride, fertile women reached high social statuses; infertile women were seen as outcasts. In his book "Africans: The History of a Continent" Cambridge University professor John Iliffe states:

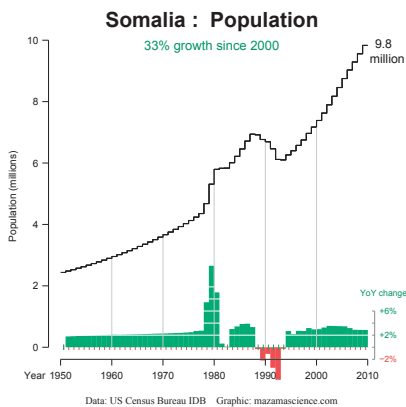
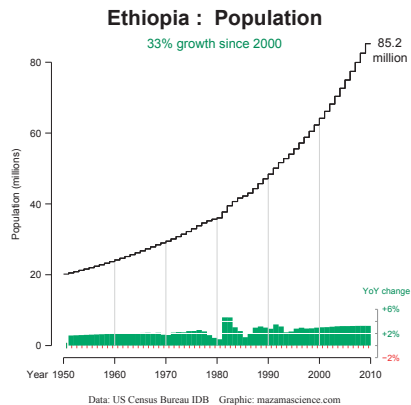
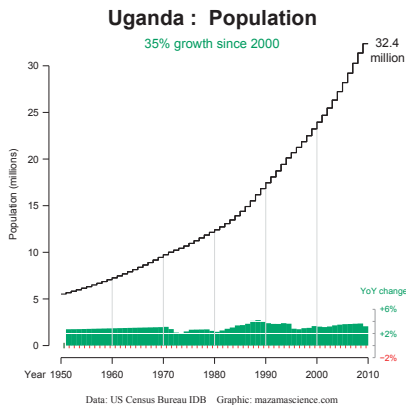
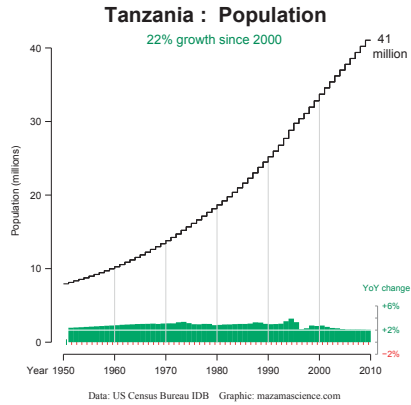
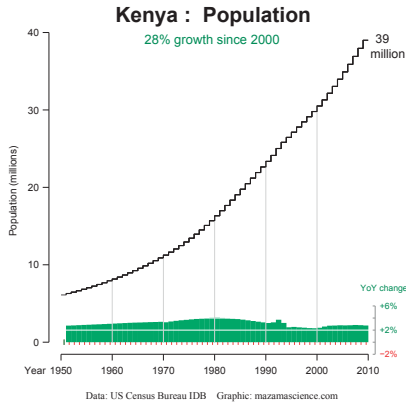
"The important objective of the wars was to capture people. The important theme of the art was fertility of women. Healing rituals focused on the care for pregnant women and newborns. This African obsession with reproduction later surprised anthropologists who were familiar with the regions of the world where the natural conditions are more favorable."¹¹

Exactly this cultural attitude towards fertility, this "fertility obsession", was met shortly after colonization of Africa by European powers, but in particular in the second half of 20th century, with achievements of western civilization. While European colonial masters throughout the 20th century plundered Africa's natural resources, they also brought resources and knowledge to Africa. The most significant from the perspective of population growth were modern epidemiology, vaccines, higher hygiene standards, ports, railroads and roads capable not only of exporting African hard woods and minerals but also food aid where needed. And later it was the "green revolution" which also enabled growth in Africa's food production.

This interplay of local cultural factors and the effects of Western technology led in the second half of the 20th century and in the early 21st century to an explosive growth of African populations.

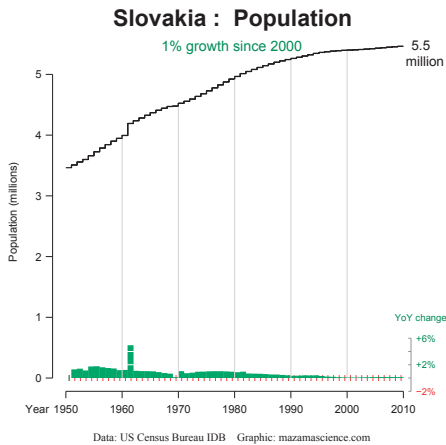
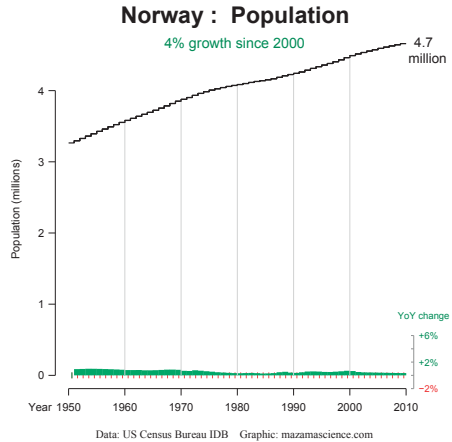
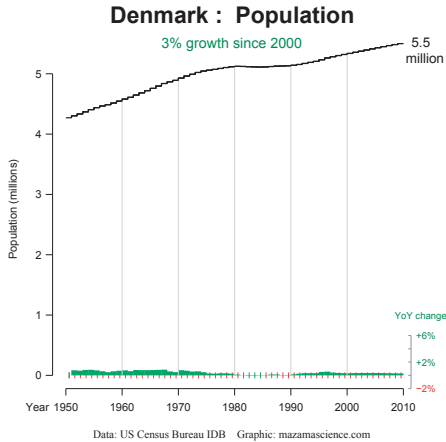
11 John Iliffe, *Africans: The History of a Continent*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK 1995. Professor Iliffe's book is available to Czech and Slovak readers in a Czech translation and can be warmly recommended to anyone with deeper interest in African history.

60 years of population growth in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia and Somalia is captured in the following graphs¹²:



12 All graphs are from website <http://mazamascience.com/Population/IDB/>.

Let us compare this data with population development during the same period in Denmark, Norway and Slovakia, that is in the countries which back in 1950 had similar or only slightly smaller population sizes than Kenya Tanzania and Uganda and much higher than Somalia.



A high birthrate, high infant mortality, perinatal mortality and sharp population growth are in general, processes for which societies inevitably pay very high prices. If we put aside elementary humanism and use only the language of economists, each child dying before he or she becomes an economically active person is a net economic loss. He or she consumed food, water, energy, absorbed work time of their mother and other relatives and took a seat behind a school desk—all this without any economic return to the rest of society. Too many children means that a society—if the prosperity of its members matters—must build

numerous schools, train and pay teachers, built maternity wards and children's clinics and pay obstetricians, paediatricians, children's nurses or at least midwives. A labor market in a country without fast economic growth is filled with a mass of frustrated young men and women waiting around for any opportunity to earn an income.

The roadsides in Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, Kampala and all other African cities are full of people like this. Some of them will not be able to resist the lure of criminal gangs, some of the women drift into prostitution in order to earn some money and become a vector for the spread of venereal diseases, while a number may start to rebel and revolt. In such a flammable social environment a small impulse may serve as a spark starting a fire which is difficult to extinguish. Therefore, a mass of frustrated youths costs society a lot: what is saved on schools is diverted towards the police and the army to suppress unrest and uprisings. In the process the natural resources of the country are disappearing in order to feed too many hungry mouths, the forests are cut down, poor soils are exhausted of minerals, rivers, lakes and coastal seas suffer from overfishing and water levels in aquifers are declining.

Population growth cannot be sustained in the long term¹³ and fast population growth can only be sustained for a short time. Sooner or later the limits are reached, as can be seen in the broad belt of the Sahel stretching from Mauretania and Mali in the west as far as Somalia in the east of the African continent. Africa, neither her people nor her ecosystems can prosper with unchecked population growth. This does not apply only to Africa, but also to the rest of the world. Is this reality reflected in development aid strategies? We shall look for the answer in the following chapters.

13 Readers are recommended to see the lecture by Professor Albert Bartlett of University of Colorado titled "Arithmetic, Population and Energy" (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-QA2rkpBSY>). The lecture was described as "the most important video you'll ever see" and it may well be the most popular lecture about mathematics, which, at the time of writing this book, had been seen by more than 4.7 million people.

Could Malthus Be Right? Mementos from the St. Matthew's Island

Da Vinci's 400 year-long mistake. The myth of apocalypse and the myth of eternal progress. The story of 29 reindeer in a predator-free paradise. The collapse of Rapa Nui and Northerners in Greenland. Sofia's choices in East Africa. Human, economic and ecological consequences of overpopulation. The one-child policy and 400 million missing Chinese. The challenge of the formulation and enforcement of policies in fragile states. Ethnic and religious races fueling population growth.

It is some two hundred years since Thomas Malthus wrote his six editions of "An Essay on the Principles of Population". In them he postulated, that human population cannot grow indefinitely, as it would inevitably encounter a lack of food and raw materials. There were one billion people living on the Earth at his time. At the time I was born, there were 3 billion people. In 2012 the human population had reached seven billion. "Do we need yet another population increase to prove Malthus was wrong?" ask many today.

Well such could have been the thoughts of many people around the 1900s as they were looking at 400 year old drawings of Leonardo da Vinci's flying machines. Do we really need more than 400 years to prove that the great Leonardo was wrong and people cannot fly? However, in December 1903, the Wright brothers flying machine flew its first 60 meters. Just a short five years later the pilots were able to keep their planes in the air for more than an hour and flew tens of kilometers. Soon the first plane crossed the English Channel. The 20th century has become, among other things, the century of airplanes and flying.

The success of the Wright brothers, as well as numerous other scientific and technological achievements only strengthened our belief in the human ability to solve problems. If so, then Thomas Malthus was most likely wrong because the problem he postulated will be eventually be somehow solved. In his book "The Long Descent",¹⁴ John Michael Greer

14 John Michael Greer, *The Long Descent*, New Society Publishers, Canada, 2008

characterizes two basic and conflicting tendencies in the way people see human prospects in the world: he calls the first one “the Myth of Apocalypse” and the other one “the Myth of Eternal Progress”. The biblical myth of apocalypse has accompanied humans for at least the last few millennia, while the myth of eternal progress started to dominate western societies only relatively recently. Regardless of their age, both myths are dangerous for recent human-kind: the first myth suggests people do not need to do anything about the global challenges of today, because whatever we do, it will anyhow end up in an apocalypse. The other myth leads to the same conclusion but by a different means: people do not need to do anything, because technological progress and free market will solve our problems for us. Did we end up in a mental trap, sentenced to wait while the wind buffets our fragile barge?

Let us jump, for a short while, from Africa many thousand miles North West, to the northern Pacific. Back in 1944 the U.S. Coast Guard landed 29 reindeer on the small island of St. Matthew in the Bering Sea between Alaska and Russia. The reindeer were supposed to serve as an emergency source of food for military sailors or airmen in case of shipwreck during the military operations against Japan. The war ended, and a few years later, the Coast Guard left the island, leaving the reindeer to their fate. On the island, free of natural predators, the reindeer flourished and in 1963 their numbers reached 6,000. A year later, however, researchers found the island dotted with white reindeer skeletons and 43 emaciated reindeer, mostly females, remained grazing on poor pastures. By 1980 no living reindeer were left on the island. Scientists later explained that the collapse of the reindeer population was due to a limited supply of food in conjunction with an extremely harsh winter in 1963–1964. The extreme cold increased the energy consumption of the reindeers and at the same time reduced the availability of food. In places where reindeer populations were kept at bay by predators, reindeers were lost, but the overall population survived—but on St. Mathew Island they became extinct. A shortage of food resulted in 6,000 malnourished reindeer which eventually died. Had there been a population of 500 or maybe a 1,000 reindeer on the island during the harsh winter of 1963–64, it is more than likely many would have survived and their species would continue to live on the island today.

Can something similar happen to people?

Jared Diamond, a scientist and author mentioned in the previous chapter, describes in another of his books, “Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed”¹⁵ several cases of total human extinction on several islands due to the exhaustion of their natural resources or changing climatic conditions. A classic example is the collapse of Rapa Nui, a society that succeeded in building the huge stone moai statues on Easter Island in the remote Pacific. When the Rapa Nui people reached Easter Island sailing on their boats from Polynesia, they landed on an island covered by the largest palm trees in the world and surrounded by deep waters full of fish and dolphins. Pollen grain analysis shows that by around 1650 all the trees

15 Jared Diamond, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, Penguin Group, USA, 2005

on the island had been cut down for use by the islanders as material for their boats, which allowed them to fish far from the shores of the island. The wood from the trees was also used for transportation and raising of the moai stones. The construction of the moai had deep ritual significance for the people of Rapa Nui, but it was also the way in which individual clans on the island competed for prestige and power. At the time, when they recklessly cut down the last tree, Rapa Nui started a long decline as the islanders lost the opportunity to fish offshore or grow enough food on the soils exposed to accelerated erosion due to loss of protection by the trees. Once they plundered the island's natural resources, inhabitants of Rapa Nui fell into a state of absolute poverty. They fell into clan wars, accompanied by the destruction of the moai and eventually reached the margins of extinction. In order to get at least some animal protein they finally began to practice cannibalism.

Another bitter example of a similar development is the story of the Norsemen colonies in Greenland. Northerners arrived in Greenland from Iceland under the leadership of Erik the Red in 986. The first settlers in Greenland were later strengthened by additional new immigrants from Norway. For a long time the two major colonies—Eastern and Western settlements—maintained commercial, social and religious ties with their original homelands in Scandinavia, to which they belonged politically and religiously. Their main export goods were walrus tusks, but the demand for them in Europe started to decline after the trade routes for importing ivory from Africa and Asia opened up. Without valuable export goods, fewer and fewer ships started to arrive in Greenland. Eventually the last ship arrived, traded, and left to be followed by no more. At the same time the climate started to change and the warm period known as the “Medieval thermal optimum” (a period to which Europe owes for food surpluses that enabled Europeans of the High Middle Ages to build cathedrals and other great works) started to be replaced step by step by a cooler climate known as the “Little Ice Age”.

The expression “Little Ice Age” is quite misleading. Unlike the real ice age, this period was just a little bit cooler compared to previous centuries, but even a small change in climate was sufficient to put Europe into repeated crises and famines. For Northerners in Greenland it was the death sentence: circa 1350 the Western settlement ended. The last written document from the Eastern settlement is a record about a marriage in 1408. Then sometime between 1480–1500 a winter arrived during which the very last progeny of Vikings in Greenland die out. From archeological findings we know that before they died the last Norsemen killed and ate their last cattle, including the hooves. Over the next few centuries the only people living in Greenland were family groups of Inuit hunters perfectly adapted to surviving in the harsh Arctic conditions. Jared Diamond writes that before their demise Northerners encountered Inuit hunters, but their arrogant sense of cultural superiority prevented them from learning and adopting any of the key Inuit technologies such as kayaks or strategies for survival, such as the technique of seal hunting, a failure which ultimately predetermined their starvation and death.

You may argue that both cases mentioned above were just small isolated island populations forgotten by the rest of the world and isolated by vast distances. That indeed is true.

But the small population of Rapa Nui and Northerners potentially had the best chances of survival: current radical overpopulation increases the risk of collapse in societies that are not completely forgotten, nor isolated from the rest of the world.

At the time of writing this, tragedies were unfolding in both East and West Africa. These are warnings of what could lie ahead for mankind in the not so distant future. Large parts of Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya were hit by the worst droughts in 60 years. The result was that in the summer of 2011 hunger seriously threatened 12 million people. The number of areas recognized by the UN as famine areas was growing week after week with the situation lasting until the end of the year. In August 2011, Reuters reported that in the preceding 90 days 29,000 children under 5 years of age had died in the drought affected regions. Not just one mother, but thousands of Somali, Ethiopian and Kenyan mothers had to face the tragic decision of which of their children to save and which to refuse food and water—just as Sofia in the famous Styron's novel. Which children should be put aside and abandoned at the side of a dusty road on the long march through arid savannah?

Although the immediate cause of the famine in East Africa in 2011 was exceptional drought, the situation in Somalia and South Sudan deteriorated dramatically due to many other factors. These included the collapse of the state, civil war, violence from criminal gangs and religious fanatics and also poor roads which prevented the small amount of international assistance provided by the rich world from reaching the suffering and dying in time. However, one of the most fundamental causes of the disaster was overpopulation. If there had only been 4 million people living in Somalia, 15 million in Kenya and 35 million in Ethiopia as were the numbers in 1980, and not a total population of 140 million as is today, the impact of the drought would have been far less tragic.

There doesn't appear to be a single problem in developing countries that would not be aggravated by fast population growth. Whether it is a lack of schools and weak educational achievements, substandard health care, high child mortality and malnutrition levels, widespread extreme poverty, the clearing of forests, soil erosion, overgrazing and desertification of savannahs or traffic congestion in the overcrowded streets of Nairobi, Dar Es Salaam and Kampala, each of these problems is worsened by overpopulation and eventually becomes unmanageable.

A key element of the sustainable and effective aid aiming to assist Africans to move out of poverty and dead ends must therefore inevitably make an effort to slow and stop recent population growth. Without this step, development aid is doomed to failure. If African governments do not purposefully use Western donor help, nature will make its mark using its brutal tools—famines and epidemics. Raising children in conditions where they have no opportunity of an education and an unbearable life is not only inhumane it is also a terrible waste of resources; it is an iron ball at the feet of the efforts to achieve social progression. Every child who dies before they reach maturity and fulfills, at least, part of his or her human potential is not only emotionally distressing, but also a huge economic loss. The extremely poor environmental conditions in African countries cannot sustain such losses. Water, wood, a mother's time or food consumed by each child who does not survive

is lost forever and missed by those who barely survived, at the cost of malnutrition, weakness, sickness and lack of education.

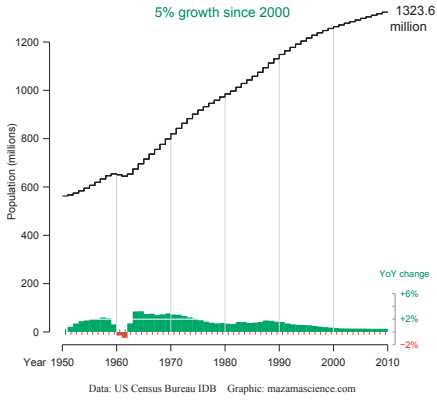
It is possible that historians will at some point judge communism in China not through the prism of political oppression or disregard for human rights, as they are understood in the West, but mainly through the prism of one key policy: the one-child policy. Introduced by the Chinese government in 1978 as a tool to alleviate social, economic and environmental problems of the country, the one-child policy is estimated to have prevented population increase by some 400 million by 2011, despite the policy only applying to about one-third of the Chinese population, predominantly urban. We only realize what this means when we remind ourselves that the entire population of the European Union is about 500 million people and the combined population of the entire North America continent is only about 340 million.

It would be completely naïve to expect that any large swing in the human population dynamics—be it downward or upward—can happen without challenges of its own. Critics of China’s population policy highlight its human rights aspects as well as serious practical implications. China will in the near future face challenges presented by aging its population. The demographic shift will have serious social consequences as the pensions of a growing number of pensioners will have to be covered by a decreasing number of people of working age. While in the past an elderly person was supported by his or her five or six children, this number will drop in the near future to, figuratively speaking, two aging parents just supported by their only one son or daughter. The economic consequences of demographic aging as a result of the one-child policy are even more pressing when you consider that until recently far fewer Chinese lived long enough to achieve retirement age and those who did enjoyed pensions for a shorter period of time than today.

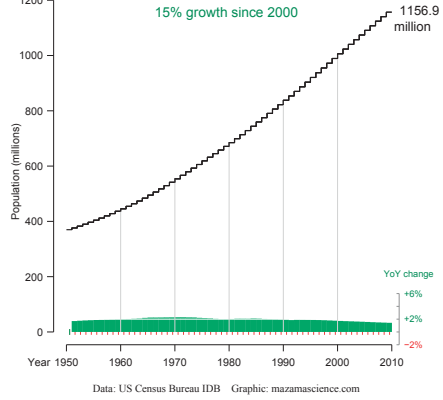
Moreover, the one-child policy is not only going to be a problem for the elderly; a cultural preference favoring boys over girls (also seen in Indian cultures, among others) combined with the availability of affordable technologies enabling prenatal sex diagnosis, has led to widespread selective abortions of female fetuses. A study by a young American economist Avraham Ebenstein indicates that during the period from 1980 to 2000, about 22 million more boys than girls were born in China. It is estimated that more than 10% of these “excess” boys will not be able to find a female partner to establish a family. Among the possible impacts of this situation we can anticipate a growth in prostitution as well as a higher risk of sexually transmitted diseases in China in the future.

I have talked about the high price of the one-child policy for China, now we will explore another perspective. If we imagine that the same policy at the same time was introduced in India or in the three most populous countries in Sub-Saharan Africa—Nigeria with its population of 170 million people, Ethiopia with 85 million people and the Congo with 70 million people, how different would the perspectives of children and adults living in Nigeria, Ethiopia or the Congo be? At what rate would the number of hungry mouths in these countries have increased? During a single decade from 2000 to 2010 China only saw a population increase of 5% in comparison to 21% in Nigeria, 33%, in Ethiopia and 32% in the DR of Congo.

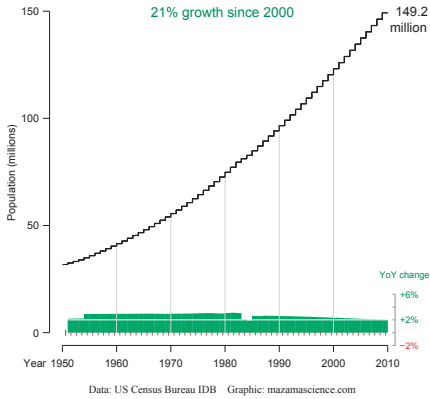
China : Population



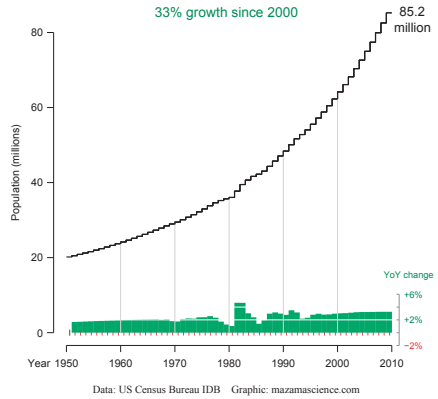
India : Population



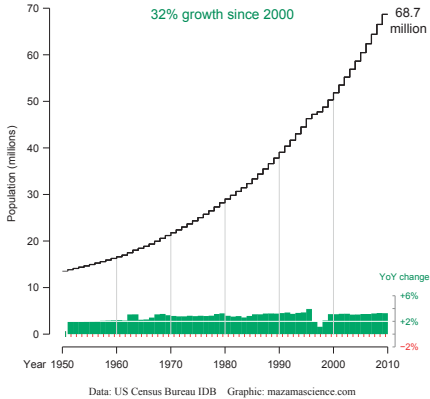
Nigeria : Population



Ethiopia : Population



Congo – Kinshasa : Population



Source: <http://mazamascience.com/Population/IDB/>

Obviously this reasoning assumes that the governments of Nigeria, Ethiopia and the Congo are not only able to frame rational national population policy, but also to enforce them among their citizens. It would require governments that are sufficiently free from religious ideologies, free from ethnic championships in the sadly popular competition “which is the more numerous tribe?” and of course, strong enough to motivate desirable behavior, whether by incentives or penalties. The Chinese government has all this. African governments—and Indian too—do not command such influence and power over their people, despite the fact that some of these countries have a long history of military dictatorships (e.g. Nigeria and Ethiopia).

Unfortunately, it is not only the lack of capacity to pursue intelligent policy; the understanding and political will to formulate such a policy is also often missing. In Nigeria, for example, 80% of government revenue comes from oil. The federal funds stemming from oil are then divided among the 36 federal states according to the formula, which is based on population: the more people a state has, the more money state officials get from the federal government. This inevitably leads to a race between individual states to report higher populations and—surprise, surprise—their representatives have no interest in a drop in local fertility rates. On top of this yet another factor enters the game, long-term tensions between the Muslim north and the Christian south and the mutual fear by both religious groups (whose ratio is now about 50:50) that the other group will “overgrow” their own. This creates a truly malignant cocktail.

When Ideology Rules Over Reason and Sensibility

Controversial activities of the Catholic Church in Africa: right hand helps, left hand harms. Pope's visit and preaching about condoms in Cameroon and Angola: condoms are sinful and do not protect against AIDS. Is breast ironing, an indigenous "method of contraception" in Cameroon, the method to be acceptable and preferred?

Support for population growth control, especially the education of girls and women about sexuality and reproduction plus wide access to contraceptives should undoubtedly be one of the basic strategies for effective development aid in Africa. In some African countries, but also in many donor countries, this fact is confronted by ideological barriers determined by the teachings of some religions. Due to the size of the Catholic Church and the political influence of the Vatican in many countries, the Catholic sexual doctrine is an exceptional barrier to improving human misery in Africa. It is a sad paradox, considering that many people doing excellent humanitarian and development work in many African countries (such as doctors, nurses and social workers) offer their services to the poorest people inspired by their Christian faith with the Catholic Church helping to provide an institutional background for their hard and dedicated work.

Taking a risk that some members of this valuable and noble group of people may feel insulted, I decided to published an article entitled "When the devil wears tiara"¹⁶ in April 2009. The article was my response to the tragic performance by the Roman Catholic Pope during his visit to Cameroon and Angola in March 2009. Both of these countries have an extremely high mortality rate among toddlers and during the previous decade, 96 out of 1,000 children born in Cameroon did not live to see their first birthday, while in Angola 119 out of 1,000 children didn't live to their first birthday.¹⁷ Figures illustrating the mortality rate of under-fives are even more tragic. According to WHO data from 2003 (the last available data at the time of writing this book) 260 children out of 1,000 born in Angola and 166

16 The text was published in the Slovak language on <http://www.changenet.sk/?autor=370572&x=417614>

17 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_infant_mortality_rate

out of 1,000 in Cameroon died before reaching five years of age.¹⁸ Hundreds of thousands of people infected with HIV live in both of these countries and tens of thousands die from AIDS each year. It would have been difficult for donors to have chosen more inappropriate countries to visit and preach to the uneducated and also suggestible people that condoms are sinful and do not protect against AIDS.

Here is the article mentioned above:

When the Devil Wears Tiara

Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and believers of long forgotten gods as well as atheists can reasonably well agree on what is evil and what is good. For most of them, good is embodied in healthy, well fed, happy people, in the joyful prattle of children, in beauty, peace and harmony, in the hope of the future.

On the opposite side, evil is for all of them embodied in disease, poverty, suffering, war, death, loneliness and despair. Many painters of the European Middle Ages and Renaissance very clearly depicted this universal idea of evil in their paintings. My list of the features of good and evil does not aspire for completeness, but it captures the essential.

In recent years I have repeatedly had the opportunity to see the many faces of the elemental evil of human existence on the African continent. I saw endless pain and despair of young dying women and men in South Africa, I have seen coffin shops around the roads off the coast of Lake Victoria, I saw women selling their emaciated bodies for food so they could feed their children, slums full of poverty around Johannesburg, Nairobi and other cities, burned buildings and fresh graves of tribal war in western Kenya, I saw malnourished children with their bloated empty tummies, packed orphanages... To me evil has a very clear and concrete face.

The first face of evil in Africa is called poverty, hunger and malnutrition. One of the root causes of this evil is explosive growth of population. There were around 100 million people living in sub-Saharan Africa in 1900. By 2005 the number was close to 800 million. With such growth, two billion people would live south of the Sahara in 2050—there are 6.7 billion people living on our entire planet today (author's note—7 billion in 2012). There was just one city with more than 1 million people in Africa back in 1960. Today there are 40. The result of population explosion is the chronic malnutrition and starvation of tens of millions of children, and when the famines break out periodically, deaths of millions. Recently, Africa has produced one third less food than the continent needs to feed its population and the situation is getting worse year by year. Millions of Africans annually survive thanks only to food aid. Famines are common. With each new million hungry mouths, however, Africa is coming closer to the time of mega-famines, the days of evil, anger and sadness.

The second face of evil in Africa is called AIDS. Since the HIV virus emerged and started to spread among people, death reaps especially on the African continent. There were

18 <http://www.who.int/healthinfo/statistics/mortchildmortality/en/index.html>

22 million adults and children infected with AIDS living in Africa last year and the disease killed 1.5 million Africans. So far the epidemic has left behind 11.6 million orphans. There are 540,000 infected people in Cameroon, and AIDS took parents from 300,000 children. There are “only” 190,000 people infected in Angola and “only” 50,000 AIDS orphans. In Kenya the epidemic left 990,000 to 1.5 million orphans. In Tanzania, 1.2 million. In South Africa, 1.4 million.

To come to Africa massacred by population explosion and AIDS epidemics and to preach to the masses about the immorality of contraception and condoms in particular is like putting automatic guns and napalm into the hands of children. When Joseph Ratzinger denied the effectiveness of condoms in preventing AIDS during his trip to Africa in March 2009, the Vatican, through his mouth—Galileo, how many times will history repeat itself?—stood once again against science and scientific knowledge.

Merchants of death selling weapons in Africa are criminals, but at least they do not pretend to be something else. Ratzinger’s church however spreads death throughout Africa, while hypocritically hiding itself under the rhetoric of the “culture of life”. The Catholic church is vehemently—fortunately in vain—fighting against embryonic stem cell research, against contraception (all those killed sperm cells in a single used condom!) and, of course, against the rights of women to decide about their bodies and whether and when to have children. This throwback to the Middle Ages is amusing to modern Europe and we can only hope that all those who believe in it can find some small pleasure. However, in Africa this teaching is but a tragedy of unimaginable proportions. Health, life and the childhood of millions and millions of innocent beautiful people will fall victim to the deep sexual trauma which in itself carries the Catholic Church’s hierarchy and infects the world by its sexual ideology.

If there is a devil other than the one which we carry in ourselves in the form of ignorance, indifference, anger and arrogance, then in March 2009 he walked in Africa wearing a tiara.

PS: The purpose of this article is to highlight the tragedy perpetrated by the Catholic and other churches in the name of religious ideologies. I am sincerely sorry if by doing this I touched religious feelings of some of my friends.

This text was published on the Slovak portal www.changenet.sk and by November 2012 was visited by more than 45,000 people—a large number by Slovak standards. As expected, it aroused great resentment among parts of the Slovak Catholics and Catholic clergy.

A bizarre paradox was that the Pope preached about the harms of condoms to the crowds in Cameroon, in a country where the brutal practice of “ironing” girls’ breasts with hot objects became widespread. Through this traumatizing and painful experience the mothers of Cameroonian girls are trying to stop the growth of their teenage daughters’ breasts and mutilate them with the aim of making the girls unattractive to men and thus avoid the risk of early pregnancy. A recent study revealed that every fourth girl in Cameroon is subject to this torture and that breast ironing is practiced in more than 200 ethnic groups

in the country. The U.S. State Department, in a report from 2010, states that “many girls” in Cameroon suffered breast ironing and in some cases the practice led to serious burns, deformities and mental health problems.

What happened in Cameroon? Physicians assume that improvements in nutrition caused earlier onset of puberty among Cameroonian girls. The risk is that these girls became pregnant prematurely, before they are educated about human reproduction and contraception, in a society which does not respect a woman’s right to decide about her own body. Mothers wanting their daughters to finish school first and then become mothers turn to this drastic—and of course inefficient—method of preventing of unwanted pregnancies. Well—what can a rational person think about preaching to the very same mothers about the sinfulness of condoms, sexual education and modern contraception.

I am certainly far from being the only one who considers it much more human and responsible to prevent and avoid the births of children which cannot be fed and to give children a decent chance for a dignified life, rather than perpetually giving birth which is like a treadmill leading to poverty, malnutrition, suffering and often premature death.

The First Bounce from the Tropics: South Africa—a Fragile First World in the Third World

The first impressions of African cities. Subtropical climates known to Europeans. The history of colonization of southern Africa—the Portuguese, the Dutch, the English and the natives. Boers and the great trek. African Attila and collision with the Zulu nation. Miraculous victory in the Battle of Blood River and the birth of the national mythology of the Boers. Boer Republics and the war with the British. Fall of British rule. The Origin and fall of apartheid. Economic, social and political developments after 1994. Malema phenomenon. Where to go after the death of Nelson Mandela: an uncertain future for the country and her white minority.

While the primary region of our interest in this book is the countries of tropical East Africa, the picture of the continent would not be complete without a few “bounces” away from the Equator and to western Africa. Our first bounce will head to the southern subtropics of Africa, then we move to North Africa on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, and finally a short wander to Asia.

With a few minor exceptions, all African cities and countries share many common features. Just a short visit to Nairobi, Arusha or Dar es Salaam and one can identify these commonalities. To a greater or lesser extent they can be found in almost all African cities, narrow and broken asphalt roads on major routes, streets without sidewalks, roads crowded with old, smoky minibuses, side streets and dusty roads full of deep potholes, large trampled areas serving as marketplaces and parking lots, and reddish dust or mud everywhere.

This skeleton of roads chaotically connects suburbs with slums which are built of corroded metal sheets and wooden huts, with the better neighborhoods consisting of one storey brick houses and zones of multi-storey villas with fenced lawns and ornamental gardens and the town centers have a varying number of multi-storey and high-rise buildings serving as hotels and offices.

All this is like an ant-hill teeming with people seeking any opportunity to earn a living, children in school uniforms moving to or from school, women carrying wood or water on their heads to prepare the evening meal. After dark, a typical African town immerses itself in darkness, interrupted by bright lights shining from buildings with their own electricity generators and by a magic glow and smoke from countless fires, on which women and vendors prepare food for their families and customers.

The only sizeable exceptions from this stereotypical picture of large African cities are the cities of South Africa and several other cities in Namibia and Botswana. From looking at their roads and sprawling suburbs, the large cities of South Africa—Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, Durban and others—are more reminiscent of the United States of America than of Africa. And their villa quarters and tree lined alleyways may remind you of pictures of Mediterranean Europe. South African cities, of course, also have their slums—just let us mention Johannesburg’s slum Soweto, famous for its role in the fight against apartheid, or the huge slum with the proud name of Alexandria. But still—the difference compared to other African cities is striking.

The foundations of this distinction are wealth, well-developed infrastructure and a high level of order and spatial organization. Why and how did South Africa, and in particular in the urban areas, become an island of the rich and developed “First” world in sub-Saharan Africa? These are questions that require some digression into the history of the region.

Let us start this tour by having a look at the map of the continent. Attentive readers will surely recall the chapter on the impact of geographical and climatic factors on the development of civilizations. The southern tip of Africa is different from the rest of sub-Saharan Africa—and significantly different due to the climate zone in which it is located. Most of the territory of South Africa today is situated in subtropical climates quite similar to the Mediterranean and the southernmost end of the country has a characteristically moderate climatic zone. This is exactly the climate that Europeans were familiar with, and to which European crops and livestock were adapted. Another huge advantage is that due to a favorable climate, the southernmost tip of the continent was not infested by malaria and other tropical diseases that had been decimating Europeans in the wet tropics closer to the equator.

Paradoxically, the area where Cape Town stands today, inhabited by 3.5 million people, did not attract much attention from the first European explorers and colonists. Vasco da Gama circumnavigated the Cape of Good Hope back in 1498, but the Portuguese did not show interest in establishing a colony here and instead settled on the northeast coast of present-day Mozambique. This promising region had to wait another 150 years for the first European settlers. In 1652 the Dutch East India Company established the first permanent European settlement in the place where Cape Town sits today. The Dutch gradually expanded the territory of their colony funding farms in the surrounding area. Free Dutch-speaking farmers who imported their crops and farm animals from Europe were able to grow a surplus of fruit, vegetables, grapes, grains and meat. This excess food production generated conditions which led to the establishment and growth of a stable white population. From

this population gradually a white African nation was born: the Afrikaners. Dutch colonies also brought slaves from Madagascar and Indonesia to the Cape region, thus adding more newcomers of different ethnic origin and skin color. As the farms and colony expanded to the north and east, white settlers got into repeated conflicts with native Africans from the ancient Khoikhoi ethnic group.

It took a further 150 years before a new naval superpower showed interest in the region. By the time the British occupied the Cape Colony in 1795, it was inhabited by about 20,000 Afrikaners, a similar number of slaves and about 15,000 Khoisan. As the British population started to rise, tensions between the British and the “indigenous” Afrikaners began to increase; this was tension between two white, but linguistically and culturally different groups. When the British Parliament abolished slavery in 1833, the move was met with great reluctance among Afrikaner farmers, known as the Boers (*boer* means farmer in Afrikaans). Eventually the Boers had enough of the British. In 1835, the great exodus of Boers began. This mass migration was matched only by white settlers moving west of the Mississippi noted in history books under the name the “Great Trek”. Around 12,000 Boers—men, women, children, servants and slaves who all became known as the “Voortrekkers”—moved north in several waves of oxen-drawn wagons.

The Great Trek is one of the monumental events in the history of Europeans in Africa—and is also a source of controversy and dispute over the interpretation which lives on today. Why? The reason is the interplay of historical coincidences.

At the same time that tensions between the Boers and the British were mounting in the Cape Colony, a militaristic state of Zulu tribe was formed several hundred miles northeast. It evolved into a strong kingdom thanks to the leadership of an extremely efficient and brutal chief, Shaka. Like Genghis Khan long before him, Shaka came from a small, about 2,000-strong, clan and gradually managed to unite a quarter to half a million Zulu and form a kingdom covering a territory slightly smaller than the Netherlands. Shaka built up a frightening military, its combat units known as *impi* consisting of thousands of well trained and frightening fighters. In the 1820s Shaka’s units undertook brutal raids into the interior of South Africa, for which history has given him the nickname “African Attila”. The indigenous people of South Africa were either killed by spears of *impi*, or those lucky to avoid massacres, fled deep into the interior of the continent. The Sotho people refer to this bloody period by the expression *difagane* (meaning “expulsion”) while in the Zulu language the era is called *mfecane*—“crushing”. The two terms can hardly leave anyone in doubt about the nature of the Zulu expansion. As a result of Shaka’s military invasions, Boers moving north and east during the Great Trek found a substantial part of the interior of South Africa deserted and devoid of other populations. There is no surprise then that present day Afrikaners still argue that they did not take the land from anyone else, but colonized mostly uninhabited territories.

A clash between Boers and the Zulu warriors became unavoidable after some Boer columns crossed over the Drakensberg Mountains, the highest mountain range in South Africa, and entered territory controlled by the Zulu, in present day Natal. The killing of 70 men from

one of these groups at a banquet organized in their honor by King Dingane was followed by the slaughter of around 500 women, children and men who did not attend the treacherous feast and stayed in the Boer camp nearby. This tragic betrayal contributed to deepening the mistrust of Boers in relation to the black population and became part of the emerging Boer national mythology. It immediately led to a Boer retaliatory expedition against the Zulu.

On 16th December 1838, near the River Ncome, 470 Voortrekkers armed with several cannons and firearms met on a carefully selected battlefield with around 10,000 Zulu warriors. The Zulu encountered a crushing defeat: only three Boers were wounded, while around 3,000 Zulu fighters fell. Their blood changed the color of the water in the river to red and thus the battle became known as the *Battle of Blood River*. It is of interest from the perspective of Central European history that, more than 400 years after the Hussites, the Boers used the Wagenburg tactics. For many Afrikaners, even today, the 16th December is an important holiday and sculptures of the 64 cars that once formed the wagenburg at Blood River—a symbolic wall protecting the “white civilization” from the dangers of wilderness—are part of the Voortrekker monument on the hill over Pretoria. The monument itself is perhaps the greatest monumental structure in Sub-Saharan Africa. The deeply religious Voortrekkers saw their victory at Blood River as a miracle sent by God, which further strengthened their belief that they had a legitimate claim to their new land.

The Boers eventually retreated from Natal and this coastal region was annexed by the British just five years after the Battle of Blood River, becoming a new British colony with Durban as its capital city. The British later repeatedly encountered Zulu armies, including the famous defeat of the British at Isandlwana.¹⁹ The British also started a process that imposed a permanent seal on the face of South Africa. In 1860 they brought the first Indians to Natal. By the late 19th century the number of Indians in South Africa exceeded the number of whites.²⁰

Boers continued to live their lives on the plains in the South African interior where they declared the independent Republic of Transvaal in 1852 and the Orange Free State in 1854. In the next half of the century, both Boer republics experienced heavy fighting with the British. Only in 1902, after a long heroic struggle during the Second Boer War they succumbed to superiority of numbers. Out of the 500,000 British soldiers fighting 80,000 Boer fighters, around 45,000 lost their lives. The British finally broke the resistance of the Boer’s “asymmetric” guerilla war by burning Boer villages and towns to the ground and the mass deployment of concentration camps. They herded Boer women and children into concentration camps 40 years before Adolf Hitler. 26,000 Boers died from hunger, disease and poverty in these British concentration camps.

19 This event—an exceptional defeat of a modern European army by “savages” at which around 1,300 British soldiers lost their lives—is suggestively depicted in the film *Zulu Dawn*, filmed in 1979 to mark the centenary of the battle with an all-star cast (Peter O’Toole, Burt Lancaster, and others).

20 One of them was a man who became a part of world history—Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi lived in South Africa between 1893 and 1915 and it was there that he began his struggle for racial rights of Indians and formulated the basics of the philosophy and practice of satyagraha—non-violent dedication of the truth.

The Boer wars, especially the second one fought from 1889 to 1902, are remarkable not only from the perspective of South African history, but also from the perspective of world history. Even if Great Britain eventually won the wars, the losses it suffered definitively ended the country's position as the world's superpower. The British loss of life in the Second Boer war was comparable to the loss of life suffered by the British during more than eight years of the American War of Independence (1775–1783)! This led to a further increase in British government debt. The usage of concentration camps and tactics of burning lands against the civilian population meant a deep moral defeat of Britain in the eyes of the civilized world. The Boer guerilla fighters in a way put an end to centuries of a Britain's status as a superpower.

The aim of this book is not to summarize a long and complex history of South Africa; European readers can study those in a number of comprehensive monographs. The only ambition of this short excursion into South African history is to help the reader to understand the historical struggles that ultimately led to what is critical from the development aid perspective: the emergence of a modern and prosperous country in Sub-Saharan Africa.

An imperative question arises from history—why have Africans failed to establish a thriving and prosperous civilization in a favorable climate zone on the southernmost edge of the continent? The answer may not be as difficult as it might seem. We just need to understand, that the crops and plants used by the people in tropical areas of Africa, further in the north, from where San Khoikoi and farmers of the Bantu language group arrived, were not suited to being cultivating in subtropical and temperate climates. Indigenous South Africans had no crops and no domesticated animals from the northern temperate and subtropical zones—these only came with the Europeans. Therefore, native South Africans had no sufficient food base to build sufficiently large populations that would be able to accumulate excess wealth, create urban societies and resist the pressure of Europeans once they appeared on their doorsteps in the south of the continent. For the same reasons they were unable to discover and start using South Africa's mineral resources on a large scale—diamonds, gold, platinum and other minerals that might have helped to make the country rich.

On the other hand, the same climate zone combined with crops and animals imported from Europe created excellent conditions for settling and building up the number of Europeans in the region. Eventually the Boers established several essentially European states in the south of Africa. Those that eventually succumbed to the British were attracted to the South African interiors by the diamonds and gold discovered in the Free Orange State and Transvaal in the second half of the 19th century. The Boers did indeed become part of the British colonial empire, but only at the cost of unbearable human sacrifices and many concessions forced from the British. No other African nation or tribe was able to resist their future colonial masters with such determination and for such a long time and enforce similar concessions from European colonizers as the Boers. The Boers achieved their right to self-government in 1909 when the Union of South Africa was established and Dutch was recognized as the second official language in the Union. In 1925 this privileged position was granted to Afrikaans, the daughter language of Dutch spoken by the Boers. Unfortunately

the system of racial oppression and segregation introduced by the Boers and the British in South Africa became a great misfortune for the country and the continent.

Let us have a quick look at the demographic of the country. In 1910, 6 million people lived in what is now South Africa, in 1980 there were 24 million and by 2010 the population had reached 50 million. As the overall population was growing, the proportion of the white population has declined: 22% of South Africans were Caucasian in 1910, 16% in 1980 and only 9% in 2010. This relative decline is the result of both higher population dynamics of the black population and a large and poorly mapped immigration from other African countries for which South Africa—despite all its social problems—is still the “Promised Land”. After the fall of the apartheid system, a wave of emigration took place among the white population, free elections in 1994 and a shift in power into the hands of the black majority all contributed to a racial change in the composition of the population. It is estimated that around 450,000 white South Africans permanently left the country after 1994. In more recent years, however, this trend was reversed. South Africa began to accept large numbers of the British as well as white farmers from Zimbabwe who had been driven out of their country by policies of the local dictator, Robert Mugabe, and the economic disaster which these policies have caused.

Fast forward to today. In the autumn of 2011 I had the opportunity to participate in a conference in South Africa and to witness a presentation that took me by surprise. As somebody with a great interest in developments in Africa I was well aware of the deepening social and economic problems, the increase in criminality and the fears held by many about the future of the country once Nelson Mandela passes away. Yet, I was unprepared to hear what was to follow. The speech was given by a high ranking black official and executive director of the National Department for Social Development, in front of 150 participants. Here are excerpts from the notes I took during her speech:

“A Long time ago we learned at school that there are three key parameters informing us about the state of the national economy: trends in poverty, unemployment and social inequality. If all three—poverty, unemployment and social polarization—are growing at the same time, it is clear we are doing something wrong! And that exactly is development in our country after 1994! We did not succeed to decrease poverty, or to increase social justice, or to give jobs to young people. On the contrary, we have created a system of social dependency. We taught people to wait for the government to provide them with everything; we taught people to ‘milk’ the system. Some are masters in doing that and use social support from various government departments which did not communicate with each other. We created passive receivers of social support out of people who used to cooperate and work hard to improve their conditions. We do not have citizens anymore—we have social cases!

Poor communities were better off before 1994 than they are today; they had internal cohesion, and they were able to make a living through their own work. We have seen a drastic change, a total erosion of communities since 1994. Today our people know only their rights—they know nothing about their responsibility!”

Had I heard such a harsh critique from a white South African during a personal conversation, I would not have been too surprised; I would have surmised that the person was expressing his or her personal disappointment in the country's developments and was maybe even exaggerating a bit. But this was a completely different situation, this was not a personal conversation with a white South African, this speech was made by a high level black South African official at a large public forum! As chair of the panel I made no secret of my astonishment at the courage of this civil servant to so harshly and openly criticize the developments since the fall of the apartheid. I expressed my expectation that this speech would certainly create a heated debate.

It turned out that I was totally wrong. This contribution did not create any debate at all. Later I verified whether the lack of discussion was as a result of a fear to debate such critical issues. The conference organizers have assured me that this was not at all the case; people did not discuss it because the lady had expressed a well-known and widely accepted view of the development and conditions of South African society at the end of 2011. Had she spoken about something with which the participants do not identify, a sharp polemic debate would have followed.

The reason things evolved as they did after the fall of apartheid in 1994 is a complex question. The truth is things could have been much worse. A crucial recognition must go to the extraordinary personality of Nelson Mandela and the prudent policy of South African President de Klerk for the fact that South Africa did not fall into violence, racial conflict, civil war or deep economic and social decline. After the defeat of the South African army by Cuban forces in Quito Cuanavale in southwestern Angola (you will find more about this little-known episode of African history in another chapter of this book), Afrikaner political elites further recognized the unsustainability of the apartheid. As early as 1990 President de Klerk ordered the release of Nelson Mandela from the prison on Robben Island to legalize the African National Congress (ANC) and also to stop and completely dismantle the South African nuclear weapons program. Then in March 1992, 68% of white South Africans—the black population did not have the right to vote yet—approved negotiations about the end of the apartheid system. In the first all racial election in April 1994 the African National Congress won and in May the same year Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as President of South Africa. Nelson Mandela and Frederick de Klerk were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993 for their decisive contribution to peace and nonviolent regime change.

Had Nelson Mandela not made special efforts to achieve reconciliation between the black and white portions of the South African population after the takeover, and had he behaved like his neighbor in Zimbabwe, things could have been much worse. However, even Mandela's exceptionally charismatic personality failed to remove negative sentiments on both sides. The economic and social stagnation in South Africa, after 1994, and the deteriorating situation in recent years have led to growing concerns that after Mandela's death the situation may worsen dramatically. If this was to happen and the largest and most

prosperous economy in sub-Saharan Africa was plunged into turmoil and decline, it would be a disaster for the whole continent with consequences beyond common imagination.²¹

Maybe the most expressive embodiment of the threat to the future stability of South Africa came during 2010—2011 in the leader of the African national Congress Youth League Julius Malema. This young populist (born in 1981) became “famous” through publicly singing the song from the times of fight against apartheid “Shoot the Boer”. The lyrics of the song speak for themselves:

Ayasab' amagwala	The cowards are scared,
dubula dubula ayeah	shoot, shoot, hey,
dubula dubula	shoot, shoot,
ayasab'a magwala	the cowards are scared.
Dubula dubula	Shoot, shoot,
dubula dubula	shoot, shoot,
aw dubul'ibhunu	shoot the Boer,
dubula dubula	shoot, shoot,
aw dubul'ibhunu	shoot the Boer,
dubula dubula	shoot, shoot.
Aw dubul'ibhunu	Shoot the Boer...

Boer is an Afrikaans expression meaning “the farmer”, but it can be pejoratively used for any person of white skin. In March 2010, Gauteng provincial court ruled that singing this song publically violates the Constitution, it is against the law and anyone who sings it should be judged as inciting murder. However, the ANC announced an appeal against the judgment, trying to protect Malema. At the end of August 2011, Malema supporters convened a rally in Johannesburg which disintegrated into riots and the biggest outburst of street violence since the anti-apartheid struggle. Some demonstrators carried slogans “South Africa for blacks only”. Malema was convicted of inciting hatred in September 2011.

Unfortunately calls to kill Boers in the country with extremely high crime rates may not be, and it seems they are not, just empty words. Journalist Adriana Stuijt recently wrote: “*Why has the South African farmer become the world’s most endangered species?... They are being murdered at 264 per 100,000 population group. It is the highest in the world!... Had these farm murders occurred in Zimbabwe, they would be global news.*”²² If the figures pro-

21 The nominal gross domestic product of South Africa in 2009 was 287 billion US\$ or 5,823 US\$ per capita. Expressed in purchasing power parity, the South African GDP was 505 billion US\$ or 10,240 US\$ per capita. By the size of economy, the country ranked 26th to 28th place in the world, which is ten times larger than the economies of Kenya, Tanzania or Ethiopia. The exceptional position of the South African economy is also recognized by its inclusion in international BRICS group consisting of the largest emerging economies of the world—Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

22 Kill the Boer: a brief history, Daily Maverick, 2010-03-29. <http://dailymaverick.co.za/article/2010-03-29-kill-the-boer-a-brief-history>

vided by Ms. Stuijt are correct, then the number of farmers killed is truly monstrous, the average number of murders per 100,000 inhabitants in South Africa is eight times lower, reaching “only” 32 people killed per 100,000 inhabitants. To get an idea about the level of murders elsewhere, a comparison of figures is required. In Spain and Germany there were 0.8 murders per 100,000 people in 2010. There were 0.9 in Italy, 1.0 in France and 1.1 in Poland. Even in the USA which is among the richest countries with one of the highest homicide rates, they “only” had 4.2 people killed per 100,000. 32 murders per 100,000 inhabitants places South Africa—alongside several other African and Latin American countries—firmly in the group of countries at the top of this list.²³

The call of the young black populist Malema did not remain unnoticed by the world. As a result of Malema’s hate speeches, the international organization “Genocide Watch”—an alliance fighting to end genocide—moved South Africa to Category 6 on the list of countries at risk of genocide. Category 6—“preparations for genocide” is only one step below the start of genocide. One step lower is the fifth stage which is called “polarization”: in this stage extremists spread polarizing propaganda, and intimidate the “silent majority” in the middle of society. In the sixth stage extremists identify and locate future victims (in this case the Boers), compile lists of people to be murdered, appropriate the property of the victims and try to concentrate future victims into ghettos.

According to Genocide Watch, at this stage it is necessary to formally declare the threat of genocide, to start to mobilize the international community including the U.S. Security Council for an emergency situation and to prepare armed forces for an international intervention as we have seen, for example in Libya in 2011. An alternative is to provide at-risk groups with humanitarian aid and weapons so they can defend themselves. Once the future victims are marked, there are only two more phases of genocide that would follow in the case of international inaction and helplessness. The first phase is the extermination and mass murder known as the genocide itself—think of Rwanda or Srebrenica and other sites in former Yugoslavia. The last phase which follows once blood is spilled is a phase of denial. This comes after each genocide and in this phase perpetrators repeat again and again that nothing has really happened and that reports of murder are exaggerated, and if some murders actually happened, those were only acts of self defense against the aggression of victims.²⁴

ANC eventually began disciplinary actions against Malema for splitting the unity of the party and damaging its reputation. Finally, in the spring of 2012, Malema was excluded from the party and lost his position as ANC youth leader. However he was not sentenced and his impunity gives him the freedom to spread his ideas and racial hatred. At least for now, Malema’s expensive lifestyle has for a long time evoked the question how does

23 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_intentional_homicide_rate

24 Current Countries at Risk of Genocide, Politicide, or Mass Atrocities. <http://www.genocidewatch.org/aboutgenocide/countriesatrisk2011.html>

he finance it? It can be expected that since his exclusion from the ANC there may be an increase in interest in him from investigators and prosecutors.

In his campaign, Malema skillfully exploited what every populist before him did as well, the worsening social situation of the poor. Youth League actions in Johannesburg in the summer of 2011 got out of control—people were throwing stones and bottles, attacking and injuring journalists and the police had to use water cannons and tear gas. In October 2011, Malema led a march of the unemployed and under-employed youth, landless, homeless, slum dwellers and other black paupers in Pretoria. He had no shortage of followers in this march with the official unemployment rate in South Africa in 2011 at 26% and youth unemployment reaching 51%.

The Government is trying to create jobs to reduce unemployment, but is failing as the jobs created on average last for only 46 days and then disappear.

The question is to what ends could Malema lead his dissatisfied, poor and unemployed followers? His publicly expressed admiration for the leader of Zimbabwe, a leader who has expropriated the farms and businesses of white people, does not leave much room for doubt. Malema publically calls for black South Africans to appropriate land which “was stolen by the white thugs.” The fact that Mugabe managed to completely ruin Zimbabwe by his policies—so millions of impoverished Zimbabwean refugees currently languish in the slums of South Africa—apparently does not bother Malema.²⁵ He also called for nationalization of the mines. The ANC government officially rejected such a policy because it is aware of the risks it could bring, but at the same time began to explore how it could be done. The President of the South African Chamber of Mines Bheki Sibiyi warns that “*to nationalize the mines would be like killing a goose that lays golden eggs.*”

Malema and his Youth League helped Jacob Zuma to win presidency in 2009 (and thus, thanks to Zuma’s polygamy, South Africa gained seven first ladies through a single vote!), but he soon became a sharp critic of Zuma, accusing him of being too afraid to anger the white economic leaders. Thus, according to Malema, the economy will never transform and white supremacy, racism and the subordination of the majority will continue forever. In addition to Robert Mugabe’s administration—the dictator who ruined Zimbabwe’s prosperous economy and drove its people to famine, emigration and the threshold of civil war—Malema’s admirers have some other notable heroes, which does not bode well for the country. Shortly after the killing of long-term dictator Gaddafi by Libyan rebels, Youth

25 Uncontrolled floods of immigrants from Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Somalia and other countries did not escape the attention and wrath of the locals in South Africa. A wave of xenophobic violence which broke out in 2008 drove some 100,000 immigrants from their homes, hundreds of shops owned by the foreigners were burned to ashes and nearly 60 foreigners were killed, some of them burned alive in the form of so-called “necklacing”. Necklacing—in Nigeria, a popular “street justice” punishment for suspected criminals—it means that a tire is placed around the victim, gasoline is spilled over and person is burned alive. For details see for instance “Zimbabwe exodus to South Africa continues”, BBC, 2009-12-10. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8403701.stm> or “South Africa: No safe haven for Somalis”, BBC, 2011-01-10. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15076486>

League activists demonstrated in T-shirts with a portrait of Gaddafi holding a Kalashnikov in his hand. For Malema and his companions Gaddafi is the hero of the fight against colonialism, murdered by the “western imperialists” and “agent-provocateurs”. The corrupt regime of the Swaziland king, renowned for his luxurious lifestyle he and his 13 wives led, banned political parties and totally ruined the economy of a country with 1.2 million people, but was not criticized by Malema.²⁶ However, neighboring Botswana—one of the most prosperous and peaceful countries of Africa—is a thorn in Malema’s side and he openly called for “regime change” in Botswana. It was only after this brawl that the ANC lost patience and finally removed Malema from his Youth League leadership position.

The challenges that South Africa faces deserves a book of their own, but that is not our goal. On the other hand, to write about Africa without mentioning this single island of the developed world on the continent would not give an accurate picture. South Africa illustrates that African societies can be, in certain circumstance, relatively prosperous, but also how fragile such prosperity and peace can be. Those reading this book a few years after the death of Nelson Mandela, will be in a much better position to assess how significant the role of this extraordinary man was in maintaining peace and relative prosperity in the most advanced country of the African continent. Is the steady growth of Cuban doctors and teachers in the country is just a form of humanitarian aid, or does it, as some South Africans believe, herald a future revolution, alongside which the Malema phenomenon would be just a transient insignificant episode? In 2012 we can only hope that South Africa finds not only a youthful mutation of Mugabe but also an equivalent successor to Nelson Mandela. And we can also hope that if the situation dramatically worsens in the future as Genocide Watch warns us, the international community will act and it will not result in the devastation of this beautiful country, which is so important for this continent.

26 Swazi king must give up power, says Bishop Mabuza. BBC, 2011-11-14. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15718890>.

The Second Bounce from the Tropics: Population, Oil and Climate Change or When the Dust Settles over Arabia

Arab Spring 2011. Population explosion in the Arab world. Can the desert feed a hundred million people? Peak oil: when oil production reaches peak and starts to decline. Food self-sufficiency versus dependency on importing food. Russian heat wave 2010. Food Price Index FAO. Economic crisis in Europe, oil price and tourism perspectives. Where do unemployed young men without a chance to start a family find their self-fulfillment and dignity? Prospects of further drying of the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Implications for Sub-Saharan Africa.

Let us move from the southernmost tip of the continent to the northern edges on the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea, to the countries of Northern Africa and the Middle East. At the beginning of 2011 this region was engulfed by a wave of unrest, which gained the poetic name the “Arab spring”. Many analysts were fast to explain the Arab revolt as a fruit of cell phones and computer networks. This interpretation of events glides over the surface; it does not answer the question “why?” and most fundamentally the cardinal question “what will follow?”. The answer to this question will have profound implications also for countries south of the Sahara.

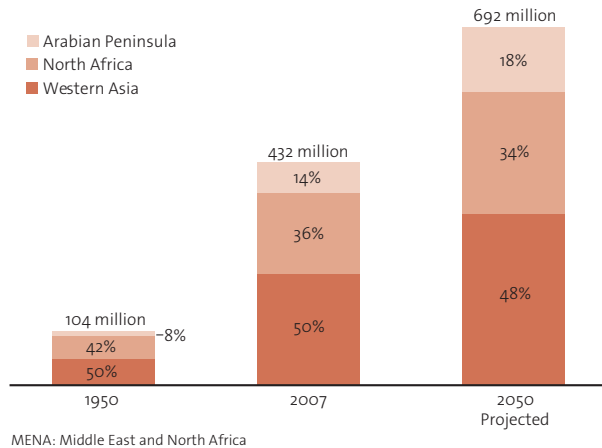
Just a few years ago, the then Libyan leader, Gaddafi, addressed a group of European women in a tent erected symbolically in Rome about how Islam would conquer Europe within one generation. His recipe was simple and wonderfully imaginative. Through population growth in the spirit of the biblical “make love and multiply”, humble and fertile Islamic women would “out-produce” the spoiled and infertile women of the West. As the Europeans disappeared, their *Lebensraum* would be occupied by a growing population of immigrants from the Islamic world.

However, the bizarre Libyan colonel was not the only one captivated by this vision. Perhaps it was not even his idea—he could easily have borrowed it from frustrated jihadists.

Their vision of an Islamic Europe certainly did not go unnoticed, finding fertile ground not only in parts of the Islamic world, but also in the minds of American evangelical Christians and European xenophobes. Some of them coined the fearsome expression “Eurabia” and flooded the internet with images of a European future as envisioned by Gaddafi et al. In the video “Immigration—the World is Changing!”²⁷ with snappy music and a mesmerizing voice attempt to spread fear into the hearts of impressionable Europeans. Enjoy a horror film about the collapse of western “culture” in the form of a semi-literate product made in some Republican corner of the United States.

The apocalyptic vision of a Europe dominated by minarets and governed by Sharia law is partly based on the extremely high population growth in the Middle East and North African (MENA) region. In 1950, there were only 44 million people (slightly more than the current population of Poland) living in all of North Africa, and only just over 8 million on the Arabian Peninsula.

Current figures are dramatically different with 157 million people—3.6 times more—were living in North Africa in 2007. The population increase in the Arabian Peninsula was even higher, rising seven-fold to 58 million. To compare, there were 200 million people living in Europe in 1800. In a century the European population doubled, reaching 420 million in 1900. Today there are some 700 million people in total in Europe from Lisbon to the Urals. In more than one hundred years the population of Europe has increased by only 70%, in comparison to more than a 300% increase in the population of the Arab world in a mere 60 years. According to UN forecasts, this growth will continue until 2050, albeit at a slower rate.



Source: <http://www.prb.org/publications/populationbulletins/2007/challengesopportunitiesinmena.aspx>

Readers of this book already know that the populations of many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa were growing by a similar and in some cases faster pace than the Arab

27 Enjoy it at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b7akU2R3RwY>.

population. Sub-Saharan Africa, however, is not covered by the Sahara. How could the desert feed 230 million people—and almost twice as many in the future? The answer is simple and clear: it cannot. The desert has not been able to feed such populations in the past, cannot do so today, and will not be able to do so at all in the future. The Arab world has experienced a population bubble that cannot be sustained. The bubble started to rupture in 2011, although the actual bursting of the bubble will come in the near future.

The Arabian population growth took on its monstrous dimensions due to two single factors: oil and natural gas. Both of them are non-renewable and exhaustible. Thanks to crude oil, the population of Libya has increased six-fold during the last two generations, in Saudi Arabia the population has increased eight-fold, in Kuwait nineteen-fold, Bahrain thirty-three-fold, and the population of the United Arab Emirates has increased by an astounding sixty-three-fold. Obviously some of this growth is due to immigrant labor and servants from southern Asia, but a great part of it is due to excessive domestic birth rates during this period.

The enormous population growth came at a great price. The MENA world today is full of poor young men and women without the slightest prospects of improving their social standing. Obviously, part of the problem is widespread corruption and the staggering incompetence of the Arab rulers, but even with competent and honest rulers—if such enlightened elites exist—the prospects of improving the social conditions for the poor remains very bleak. Of Egypt's population of 80 million, 33% are children under 14 years of age. 40% are reportedly suffering from hunger and 30% are illiterate. The median age of Yemen's population of 24 million, is under 18 years, with 40% of Yemenis living on less than two dollars a day, and 44% face chronic hunger. These numbers doubled between 2009 and 2012.²⁸

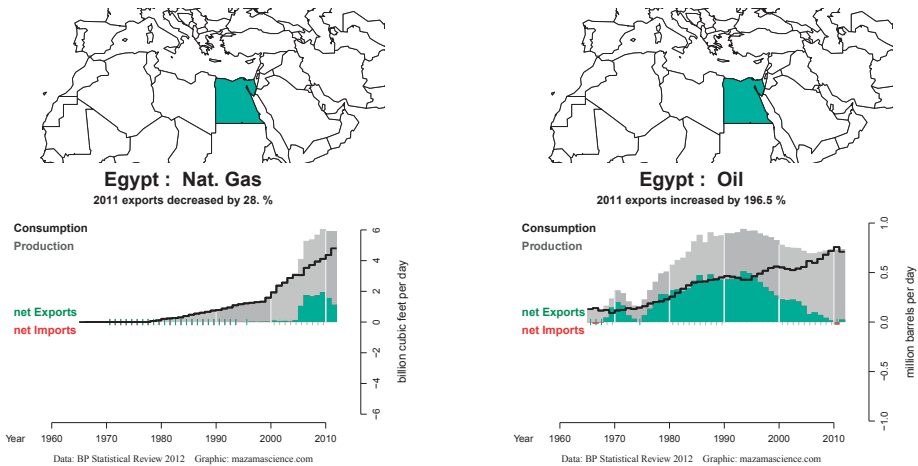
And in Iraq, with its shaky democracy brought directly from the United States on the wings of bombers and the treads of the tanks a state of emergency was declared in early March 2011 in order to prevent mass protests. Even there, in a formal democracy, demonstrators were protesting week after week against unemployment, poor basic services, corruption and a lack of freedom. These were not peaceful protests—13 people were killed on the 25th February alone. Indeed, this does not appear to be a lot, especially not in comparison to the thousands killed in Libya and the tens of thousands in Syria during 2011 and 2012.

The problem of North Africa and the Arab world however is not the bloody events of 2011 and 2012: the real problem is their future. With 20 years of experience building a democracy in Central and Eastern Europe and with the region's democratically elected governments frequently run by demagogues and grand-scale thieves, we can be quite confident that even if all the "Jasmine Revolutions" succeed in establishing formal democracies, this will by no means guarantee improvements in the living condition of the poor. Especially in view of the fact that certain absolutely key preconditions for bettering social and economic conditions are missing.

28 Yemen on the brink of food crisis, say aid groups, BBC, 2012-05-02. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-18169322>.

The population explosion in the Arab world over the last 60 years was made possible by huge oil and gas revenues. Oil, however, is a non-renewable resource. Its once vast reserves are being quickly exhausted by mankind’s insatiable appetite for cheap energy. What happens to a country once it runs out of oil resources? A graph of Egyptian crude oil production, consumption and exports makes this crystal clear.

As in virtually all oil producing countries, Mubarak’s regime gained the support of Egyptians through low fuel prices. In addition to explosive population growth, cheap fuel led to rapidly growing domestic oil consumption. Together with Egypt’s steadily declining oil production due to the exhaustion of its oil fields, this policy led to an ever-decreasing flow of oil revenues into government funds. Finally, in 2010, state revenues from oil exports completely dried up. But it was oil and gas revenues which enabled Egypt to buy wheat to feed its fast growing population on the world market.



The two graphs above²⁹ show the production of oil and natural gas in Egypt (gray color), their domestic consumption (black curve) and their export (green color) and import (red color). As we can see, up to the 1960s, Egypt was an oil importer. Then the production started to grow and at the time of maximum production, Egypt was able to export around half a million barrels of oil per day. However, in the middle of 1990s Egyptian oil export started to decline because, together with the rapid population growth, domestic oil consumption was also growing, while oil production started to decline. In 2010 Egypt was forced to import oil again. Egypt’s income from oil exports was replaced by extra expenditures to finance its import. Natural gas production in 2010 decreased too, but its domestic consumption continued to increase; the inevitable result was a drop in natural gas exports by 19%, creating a scene ready for a revolution.

29 The graphs come from <http://mazamascience.com/OilExport/>. This website provides annually updated graphic data about developments in extraction, consumption and export of oil, natural gas, coal and other mineral resources from all around the world.

Let us now look at an essential in everyday life, which people cannot live without for longer than two weeks: food. In 2005—when Egypt still had at least some revenues from oil exports—the country imported 40% of the grain it needed and Algeria imported even more, over 50%. Since then, Egypt has gained 7 million more hungry mouths to feed, so by 2010 its food imports had increased to 55% of the total food caloric intake.

And then the 2010 Russian heat wave came, destroying 40% of Russia's wheat harvest. This single climatic event removed what had been the world's second-largest wheat exporter in 2009 from the list of exporters entirely. From the summer of 2010 onwards, grain prices began to rise, pulling the prices of many other foods along with them. As food prices reached historical levels in early 2011, first in Tunisia, and later throughout the region, desperate people began to set themselves on fire and the Jasmine Revolution erupted. A graph from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) shows global food prices over the past 22 years.



Global Food Price Index. Food and Agriculture Organization, May 2012³⁰

Egypt is by no means the only Arab country to reach its peak in oil production. The moment countries fail to increase their oil production—and later even to maintain it—has now come and gone for many, as oil production has declined in almost all Arab countries over the last decade. In populous and fast-growing Yemen, where almost half the population is starving according to some sources, is yet another illustration of the same trend. This gap is widening even in the crown jewel of the Arabian oil fields—Saudi Arabia. Today, 27 million inhabitants of Saudi Arabia consume the same amount of oil as Germany with its 80 million citizens and hyper-productive economy.

The options available to Arab countries to avoid the brutal consequences of the rapidly declining oil revenues and accelerated population growth would be extremely limited even if these countries were corruption-free and run by professional and competent governments investing seriously into the diversification of their economies. Some MENA countries, such as Algeria, have been relatively successful at increasing their income from exports of

³⁰ FAO Food Price Index is updated on a monthly basis; fresh data can be find at <http://www.fao.org/world-foodsituation/wfs-home/foodpricesindex/en/>.

another energy commodity—natural gas. In the case of Egypt, which tried the same move, since the fall of the previous regime, has witnessed repeated sabotages of the pipelines leading to Jordan, Syria and Israel by Islamists. This does not bode well for the Egyptian economy. Egypt and Tunisia have also become major tourist destinations for millions of Europeans. The economic crisis which both Europe and the United States were tottering in 2011 and 2012, together with the impact of peak oil on the cost of air travel, constitutes an even bigger and more permanent threat for tourism than all the disturbances of the Arab spring³¹ or the ideas of the Islamists to ban bikinis³² and alcoholic drinks in sea resorts. Sustaining incomes and employment in the tourism industry depends heavily on where global oil and food prices go and how quickly. Increasingly expensive oil and food will lead to a steady decline in tourist numbers. First Czechs, Poles, and Russians, but over time also Germans, French and many others from rich European countries will no longer be able to afford increasingly expensive air travel to remote destinations.

Regardless of what kind of governments emerge from the Jasmine maelstrom—formal democracies, military regimes or religious dictatorships—there is yet another difficulty lurking on the horizon for MENA countries in addition to depleted oil fields and rising food costs. Arab countries are at great risk of becoming permanently destabilized by extreme numbers of young people in the population. A high proportion of young men without jobs or prospects will become a particularly serious problem for the entire MENA region even without any other challenges, and will threaten its long-term stability.

Masses of young, poor, unemployed men are being left without the chance to get married and start a family. Such young men are more or less condemned to wander around aimlessly in youth gangs. A prudish society suppressing informal contact with women fully guarantees a build-up of sexual frustration and aggression and prevents a “calming influence” on the personalities of young men. Even today, without the possibility of fulfillment at work or family, too many young men are left looking for other ways of achieving a place and recognition in their society. Without responsibility for their families and children, adolescent men are free to behave in a rash and risky manner. Such a generational psyche is fertile ground for those able to offer young men an alternative sense of importance and self-esteem. When you are twenty-something with no commitments or prospects, dying is an option. For many, “death in action” may be the only way to gain recognition. If one has only one’s chains to lose, the choice appears to be very easy.

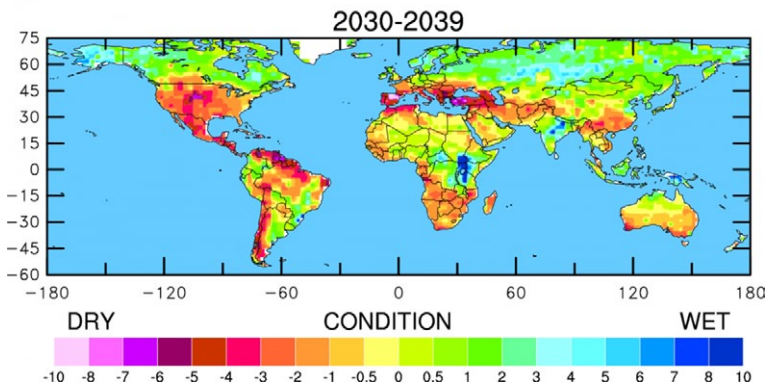
A multitude of restless young men will maintain a potentially high risk of violence in MENA countries limiting the chances for peaceful development in the region. The decisive blows for the MENA region, however, will come from the inability of the desert ecosystems

31 The number of tourists in Tunisia dropped by 45% and in Egypt by at least 30% as an unintended result of the “Arab spring”. It happened even before the worsening of the financial crisis in Europe. See for instance “Arab nations aim to win back tourists”, BBC, 2011-01-10 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-15651730>.

32 Obviously, the Islamists’ plan is not to begin a nationwide push for nudist beaches...

of North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula to feed 200 million people and the region's enormous dependence on imported food.

The graphic below illustrates how droughts will intensify globally with the warming of the climate in the medium term. In this projection of the Palmer Drought Severity Index, minus 2 points represents slightly drier conditions compared with today's minus 3—severe drought, and minus 4—extreme drought. The colors on the map speak for themselves. Within the lifetime of the current generation, severe droughts of minus 4 to minus 8 points will engulf populated regions from Morocco through Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Jordan to Iraq and Iran. Translated into plain language, if today the MENA countries are able to grow around one half of their food and thus secure at least some nourishment for their poor, their food production capacity will decrease rapidly in the coming years and decades. Inevitably, their dependence on food imports will soar.



Palmer Drought Severity Index, prognosis for 2030–2039 decade ³³

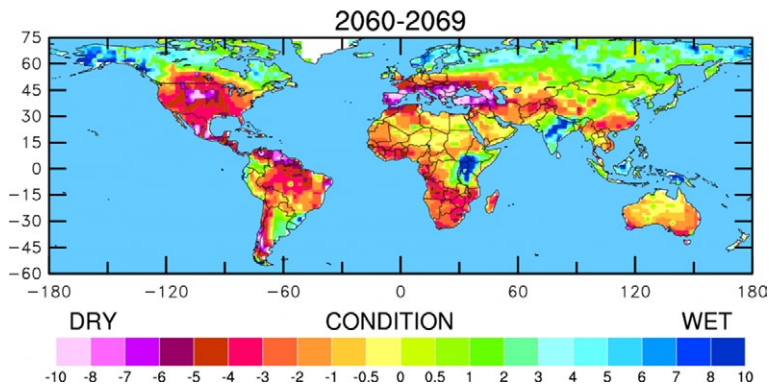
Those MENA countries will still be able to export large quantities of oil and gas 10 to 20 years from now and remain, at least partially, to offset their declining food production by increasing imports. For the rest—including populous Egypt with more than 80 million people—the troubles have already begun and are set to worsen. Other poor countries of the world, including sub-Saharan Africa, will start to feel the pain once the MENA region begins to eat away at the shrinking pie of development and food aid. Due to its remaining oil and gas production, the West will consider the region to be more important than other parts of the world and in order to keep at least some level of stability in the Arab world, food and other assistance to MENA countries will take precedence over development and humanitarian aid to sub-Saharan Africa. Actually, the largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid

³³ The map is from University Corporation for Atmospheric Research based in Boulder, Colorado, USA <https://www2.ucar.edu/atmosnews/news/2904/climate-change-drought-may-threaten-much-globe-within-decades>

after Israel has been for some time Egypt (although more U.S. money has been flowing to Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan in recent years).

The real tragedy will occur when droughts begin to reduce productivity in the major agricultural regions of the world. The most important food exporting areas of the world are central and northern United States, southern Canada, parts of Australia and Argentina, southern Russia and, of course, large parts of Europe, especially France and Germany. The map above confronts us with a suggestive question: how long will the United States, Canada, Australia, Russia or Europe be able and willing to export food? How many more years, how many tons and at what price? American analyst Lester Brown recently calculated that if a heat wave similar to the 2010 Russian summer heat wave hit the American prairies, the American grain harvest would fall by 140 million tons. To put this in perspective, the entire annual world trade in wheat is in the range of 100 million tons, of which some 30% usually comes from the United States.³⁴

When such a drought—or perhaps a series of consecutive droughts—hits the central United States or Europe, international trade in cereals will fall considerably. In the worst case scenario, trade could cease completely as a result of export restrictions introduced quite legitimately by producer countries to protect their own populations. Russia, for instance, as a response to the heat wave, drought and wildfires introduced a ban on wheat exports by presidential decree in August 2010. When this happens—and it inevitably will, we do not know exactly when—not even those MENA countries still able to export oil will be able to buy enough food for their swollen populations. It is difficult to imagine how famines could be prevented in such a scenario. The population bubble built on desert sand and oil will then burst.



Palmer Drought Severity Index, prognosis for 2060—2069 decade. Intensive droughts will affect the most important agricultural regions of the world—central and northern United States, southern Canada, large part of European Union, Ukraine, southern Russia, south-east Asia and other—as soon as during the lifetime of today's young generation. Source: <https://www2.ucar.edu/atmosnews/news/2904/climate-change-drought-may-threaten-much-globe-within-decades>

³⁴ Lester R. Brown, "World on the Edge" <http://www.populationpress.org/publication/2011-1-brown.html>.

Europe itself will not be spared severe droughts and desertification either. It is very likely that within the lifetime of today's young generation, the mighty Sahara will jump over the Mediterranean and begin to engulf Spain, Italy and the Balkans. The face of Europe will indeed change dramatically and certain parts will become reminiscent of Arab lands. Migration from the south to the north of the continent will indeed become a huge issue for Europeans. However, this will not be the "Eurabia" predicted by Colonel Gaddafi or American religious fanatics.

Before this happens, Islamic immigration will cease to exist as a perceived or real threat to Europe. What was supposed to fuel it and was supposed to be a source of Arab power and advantage, its rapid population growth, will be one of its undertakers. People still living along the northern shores of Africa, in the oases and on the banks of the Nile, the Euphrates and the Tigris will be working hard to secure their very survival with no potential to pose any meaningful threat to countries farther north over the next 50 years. It is difficult to imagine that 100 million, maybe even 150 million MENA citizens, will in the not so remote future be but a distant memory of a short period in history when oil bubbled under the sand and rain fell at least occasionally on the Arab lands—a memory blowing in the desert wind. It will not happen tomorrow, or in one year, but many of the people alive today will witness this transformation of the world.

Important from the perspective of Sub-Saharan Africa is that even before developments in North Africa become completely apparent, their consequences will be fully felt in the countries that are already dependent on development and humanitarian aid today. The worsening economic situation in Europe and the USA already intensifies political pressure to cut down on development aid: can you imagine how bankrupt or almost bankrupt countries such as Greece, Portugal or Italy and other countries affected by the crisis will continue their aid programs? "Donor fatigue" has been on the scene for a long time and will only get worse. The "cake" of development and humanitarian aid will shrink and the share of Sub-Saharan Africa, a region politically less significant for donor countries, will fall even faster, in proportion to the demand for aid in starving overpopulated MENA countries heading towards collapse. For development aid provided to Sub-Saharan Africa by the European Union and other donors, understanding these realities leads to very important consequences; for example, in the selection of priority areas where assistance should go. We shall touch upon them later.

The Third Bounce from the Tropics: China, Africa and The Pakistan Memento

Chinese expansion in Africa. A little bit of history. Pakistan floods of 2010 and 2011: donors fatigue. Chinese aid is different. Hunger for raw materials and soil. Millions of Chinese in Africa: not all are welcome. Limits to the Chinese economic growth: construction bubble, debts and European and American demand for Chinese products.

In the spring of 2011 Polish Humanitarian Action (PAH) in partnership with other organizations convened a conference on “Global Development and the EU New Member States—time for a new start?” in Warsaw. In the panel titled “Beyond development”, I had the opportunity to polemicize with Mr. Øyvind Eggen from the Norwegian Institute for Development Affairs (NUPI). Mr. Eggen argued that China’s accession to the aid scene fundamentally changes the whole “game” of development aid, which until now was orchestrated by the EU and USA. He expressed the opinion that the new development aid scene will lead to a situation where developing countries are not forced to meet conditions set by Western donors. In his view, in the future, developing countries will be able to “shop” between the plentitude of donors and choose those who meet their interests the best—and “the interest” of their political elites.

Those readers who did not skip the previous chapter on the prospects of the Arab world, will not be surprised that I polemicize with Mr. Eggen’s position, arguing that the phenomenon of China as a new development aid player will be short lived and soon the resources for development and humanitarian aid to sub-Saharan Africa will radically diminish. Politicians from poor countries will be left with very little room for speculation, if any at all. The main dilemma will be reduced to one question: Do we want resources which also include donor conditions, or shall we watch as the donor provides them to someone else?

Those African governments which still believe that things will evolve differently should be prepared for a hard landing. The resources that Americans and Europeans are willing and able to set aside for development assistance will not only stagnate, but are set to start

declining rapidly under the pressure of the looming long-term economic crisis. While the demand for assistance will rapidly grow—also in part due to the crisis in the Arab world—the availability of Western resources available for development aid will decrease.

How can I state this with such certainty? It was through no divining of a crystal ball in the first half of 2012—one simply had to pay attention to certain events in several critical parts of the planet. One of these bottlenecks is Pakistan—the sixth most populous country in the world whose population was quickly approaching 180 million in 2012. Just for the sake of context—in 1950 there were 34 million Pakistanis, in 1990 already 108 million. And to mention yet another important context, Pakistan is a country possessing nuclear weapons and has been in a long-term armed conflict with other regional powers possessing nuclear weapons (e.g. India). Inevitably, its stability is somewhere close to the top of the world community agenda. Certainly it is much higher than the fate of any country in Sub-Saharan Africa.

During the summer of 2010, just as Russia was sizzling in the record heat wave, Pakistan was hit by extreme monsoon rains that caused devastating flooding across the country. The floods directly affected the lives of 20 million people, flooded fields, destroyed or damaged 1.2 million homes as well as many bridges, roads and other infrastructure.³⁵ The World Bank estimated the total economic loss of 25 to 40 billion U.S. dollars—a huge sum for the rich countries of the West, let alone for a developing country such as Pakistan. The development agencies initially responded to the flood through an extensive food program, medical and other emergency assistance, which in 2010 succeeded to mobilize up to U.S. \$1 billion.

A blow like this would suffice for any country once in a century, but in the case of Pakistan another record monsoon hit in August 2011. Although this time only the Sindh province in the south of the country was hit, the floods caused serious damage: 1.5 million homes were damaged or destroyed and 70% of crops were destroyed in more than half of the province (the province has an area equal to almost half of Italy). In November 2011, three months after the start of the flood, development agencies described the situation in these words: *“The agencies warn that diseases are on the rise, food stocks are running low and the lives of at least two million adults and three million children are at risk... We had expected the situation to stabilise by now but conditions are going from bad to worse. Each day that passes puts more children at risk of contracting diseases, said Save the Children Pakistan country director David Wright.”*

How did the rich world respond to these millions of lives at risk? This is exactly the harsh warning for the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa: The Save Children program received only 35% of the resources that they intended to mobilize. The NGO Care has mobilized only 9%. The programs of the UN agencies requested US \$ 357 million in donations from the member countries, but received only 96.5 million dollars. *“The 2011 flood flash appeal remain*

35 Pakistan floods: Damage and Challenges, BBC, August 26, 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-11104310>

distressingly under-funded, with a 73% shortfall, and if more funding is not received relief supplies will run out within weeks” the BBC quoted UN spokeswoman Stacey Winston.³⁶

So much for the “threat” of surpluses in the volume of development aid after China’s entry into the “development aid market” in Africa. Or more precisely, anywhere in the world—for Pakistan is not only the sixth most populous country in the world and a nuclear power, but also China’s neighbor located in a strategically hot region.

Despite my belief that the importance and the perspectives of China as a major player in the development of Africa is overestimated, I think it is not a waste of time to devote a few pages to Chinese activities on the black continent. It is quite interesting to note that the Chinese came into contact with equatorial Africa almost a century before Europeans. Compared with fragmented Europe devastated by religious conflicts, China was a real technological and economic superpower in the early 15th century. Its technological superiority manifests itself for instance, in the construction of ships and fleets that were not technologically challenged until the 19th century. Nine mast *Treasure ships* of the Ming dynasty fleet were as long as 120 meters and 50 meters wide and were protected against sinking by watertight compartments inside the ship’s hull. Almost 90 years later, the famous Santa Maria of Christopher Columbus was 30 metres long and 10 wide. Huge research expeditions led by admiral Zheng had as many as 27,000 sailors and soldiers sailing on more than 300 ships of different designs.³⁷ Columbus’s first expedition consisted of just over 100 Europeans sailing on three small barges.

From 1405 to 1433—during the same period when in religiously excited Europe Master Jan Hus and Joan of Arc were burned at stake, when the Poles and Lithuanians defeated the Teutonic Knights crusaders at Grunwald and the Hussites repulsed one crusade after another—the Chinese organized seven major naval expeditions to the west. The Chinese fleets sailed across the Indian Ocean to the shores of the Red Sea and to ports in recent Somalia and Kenya. Judging by the findings of Chinese pottery and porcelain in archeological locations, it is possible that the Chinese ships reached even further south to the shores of Tanzania and Mozambique. However, unlike the Europeans, after this spectacular demonstration of technological superiority and power the Chinese did not attempt to set up colonies in Africa or in Southern Asia. They were satisfied by bringing back court gifts and unseen animals such as giraffes, zebras, ostriches, lions, leopards to the empire. It is one of the great mysteries of history why the Chinese did not even attempt to establish bases and ports on the coasts of India and Africa. An explanation should be sought in domestic policy intrigues of the imperial court; in supposed arrogance the Chinese believed that there was no world outside of China worthy of deeper interest. Pragmatic reasons included the growing threat to China from hordes of invaders from the steppes of the Asian interior.

36 Agencies warn of acute Pakistan floods relief shortfall. BBC, 2011-11-09. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-15643468>.

37 Those interested to learn more about this part of the history of the world and technology will enjoy the book “1421. The Year China Discovered The World” by Gavin Mendez, Bantam Press, 2002

Whatever the reasons were for the termination of the grandiose maritime expeditions, and even for the destruction of the fleet, it remains that until quite recently, the Chinese have never returned to Africa in large numbers. Africa had to wait for six centuries for their return in style and quantity. The number of Chinese living and working in Africa is estimated to have only recently reached about one million. Today a traveler encounters them at almost every major airport in almost every African country. Sometimes they are humble and obliging owners of small Chinese restaurants and lodgings, sometimes African construction workers and engineers building roads, airports, ports and mines, and sometimes Chinese diplomats and businessmen with newly acquired self-confidence arising from the rapid economic growth of China in the last two decades.

Chinese trade with Africa reached 120 billion U.S. dollars in 2011³⁸ and during the first decade of the 21st century increased by more than 10-fold. A new visible symbol of the Chinese presence in Africa has become a complex built for the African Union, which was opened in January 2012 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. A hundred metre tall skyscraper towering over the other glass-concrete buildings worth U.S. \$ 200 million, it is a gift from China to the African Union. The complex was built by 1,200 Chinese and Ethiopian workers over a three years period. At the opening ceremony a Chinese said: “The towering complex speaks volumes about our friendship to the African people, and testifies to our strong resolve to support African development.”³⁹

For many African countries China has certainly become an important partner, but to talk about development aid is still quite difficult. Yes, the Chinese finance construction of roads, railways, pipelines and airports, but with a clear and very narrow focus on their own interests. They do not build roads to rural Africa to improve access to local markets for African villagers. They build roads connecting mines and oil fields to ports where raw materials can be loaded on ships and transported to China. Or, they build roads important from a Chinese PR perspective. One example of such primarily public relations project is the Chinese-funded expansion of the road between Nairobi and the town Tika in Kenya. Expansion of the Tika Road from 4 to 8 lanes is supposed to cost U.S. \$330 million. The investment is going into a 50-kilometer stretch of road in the country with an area of 580,000 km², which is missing asphalt roads to connect most of the towns and villages and even those that do exist are very often in poor condition. Of course, the 50 km “superhighway” in Nairobi—like a skyscraper in Addis Ababa—is a far more prestigious affair than say 5,000 km of roads somewhere far away from the politicians and from the spotlights and cameras of the capital city. The Chinese do not mind. In contrast, the World Bank would have serious problems to provide a loan for this project—bank officials would be asking difficult and frustrating questions such as: how would this road help poor rural people? What are the

38 To get an idea about the scale, according to the CIA's World Factbook total foreign export of the Czech Republic in 2011 was 147 billion dollars, and in Slovakia 75 billion.

39 The African Union opens Chinese-funded HQ in Ethiopia, BBC, 2012-01-28 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16770932>

possible environmental consequences? They would oversee a fair competition in the allocation of contractors. In short, the World Bank would make it many times more difficult for the Kenyan government. No wonder that since 2006, Chinese banks — not asking annoying questions — provide more loans to Africa than the World Bank.

Another problematic aspect of Chinese investment projects in Africa is that they often do not bring only money, but also workers. Reasons for doing it are understandable. But the fact is that by doing so they do not create temporary jobs for local workers and do not help to mobilize the domestic capacity of African countries to develop without foreign workers. Importing Chinese construction workers has led to negative reactions among masses of unemployed Africans. In other African countries, domestic disturbances among local traders protesting against the Chinese and accusing them of having “undermined the markets” have occurred. The Presidential candidate in Zambia even included anti-Chinese voter emotions in his election campaign. Of course, as soon as he was elected, this rhetoric diminished. Africans accuse the Chinese of promoting corruption; increasingly many are angry with the number of Chinese workers in the mines, constructing roads, at the oil fields or at bank branches.

Another uneasy aspect of the Chinese — but not only Chinese — presence in Sub-Saharan Africa is a long-term lease or purchase of agricultural land. It is estimated that over the past decade foreign companies and governments bought or rented long-term up to 60 million hectares of land — about the size of Germany and the United Kingdom combined. In 2009, investors from Saudi Arabia spent some \$100 million growing rice, wheat and barley on land leased to them by the government of starving Ethiopia. After paying the minimum tax, the government allowed them to export the entire harvest.⁴⁰ Ethiopia is a country which, between 2007 to 2011, needed more than 200,000 tons of international food aid in order to feed 4 to 5 million of its hungry and malnourished people. Other African countries suffering from lack of water and food rented their land to Kuwait, India, South Korea and China as well as Egypt and Libya. How long will it take before the Chinese in Africa will be accused of neo-colonial practices? It is quite likely that such time will come.

There are a million Chinese in Africa and a mixed feeling about their involvement is present among the domestic population, leading some analysts to think about the prospects of China’s military disengagement in the remote world. When the riots broke out in Tunisia and Egypt in the spring of 2011 and later the war in Libya, China sent a warship to the Mediterranean to evacuate 15,000 Chinese from Egypt and another 36,000 from Libya. Even so, the Chinese had to rely on the good will of the Government of Malta and Greece — and the evacuation ships they provided.

Chinese warships are already present in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden and participate in operations against Somali pirates. The threat to Chinese interests in Sudanese oil production may eventually force China to send troops to Sudan. In January 2012, insurgents

40 Andreas Spath: Another Scramble for Africa. Accessed on 2011-12-21 <http://www.africabusinesscommunities.com/component/content/article/1-latest-news/1393-another-scramble-for-africa>.

kidnapped about 70 builders, mostly Chinese, in Southern Kordofan State, a conflict ridden part of Sudan. The Sudanese army succeeded to liberate most of them rather quickly, but the signal to the Chinese workers working in this dangerous, but oil-rich region was clear. Unlike the situation in Tunisia and Egypt, Chinese laborers working in Sudan would certainly not be saved by any Western troops. Important in this context is, that China is a major trading partner of Sudan, which in turn is one of the biggest suppliers of oil to China. Bilateral trade between the two countries increased by 35% in 2009 and 2010 alone.⁴¹ Chris Alden of the London School of Economics summarizes the situation through these words: *“People say China is changing Africa. But in fact it is the other way—Africa is changing China. The Chinese have sworn that they will never interfere in the domestic affairs of Africa, so they can concentrate on their main task—to secure access to raw materials, without the taking the burden of colonialism.”*⁴² But China is already there and must deal with the complex realities of Africa.

Although China’s hunger for raw materials will continue, a question mark hangs above China’s capacity to significantly invest in Africa in the long term. This question mark may be even bigger than one hanging over the West’s capacity to continue to support development projects in the continent. Although China has experienced a period of very rapid economic growth in the first decade of the 21st century, the quality of this growth and its future prospects raise many doubts.

First of all, this growth was driven mainly by cheap Chinese exports to the rich regions of the world, primarily to Europe and the USA. There is not even a theoretical possibility that the economic crisis of the West would not send shock waves to the Chinese economy, a decline in the imports to the U.S. or Europe will inevitably mean dramatic decline in the demand for Chinese products and thus decrease the growth if not free fall of the Chinese economy. The Chinese domestic market is too poor to sustain local production capacities: in the massive flood of data about double-digit economic growth in China, one can easily forget, that even with high-tech rail, skyscrapers in big cities and the space program, China is still a developing country in which hundreds of millions of rural people live in conditions of poverty beyond the imagination of most Europeans. And even the purchasing power of the happy individuals who have migrated from China’s interior to the cities in the eastern half of the country over the past decade is rather modest if compared to purchasing power of the average European or American. The prosperity of China’s economy is inherently dependent on the prosperity of Europe and the USA. If the European and American economy stagnates or declines, China will also suffer and its capacity—including the capacity to engage more strongly in Africa—will fall. Possibly at an even faster rate.

On top of the dependency on exporting to Europe and North America, China has multiple problems of its own. Much of China’s impressive economic growth is the result

41 Sudan: Rebels kidnap 70 workers, including Chinese nationals, CNN, 2012-01-30. http://edition.cnn.com/2012/01/29/world/africa/sudan-missing-workers/index.html?hpt=hp_t2.

42 Beijing’s army will follow traders to Africa, say analysts, The Times, 2011-10-17

of massive construction in Chinese cities. Less known—at least at the time of this writing—is the fact that millions of apartments and a plentitude of massive shopping centers and office buildings in China remain empty. The country is in fact dotted by entire “ghost towns”⁴³. Some have been empty for several years. Such speculative bubbles, although statistically reported as “economic growth”, are in fact nothing, but an economic, social and environmental burden. They stand as mute witnesses of the precious energy and natural resources that have been wasted at the threshold of the 21st century. Harry Lang, professor of finance at University of Hong Kong, in November 2011 assessed the situation of the Chinese economy very laconically: “*In China, every province is a Greece.*”⁴⁴

Professor Lang’s analysis is in fact abstract from other trends that may have even more far reaching consequences than the eventual economic collapse of China. One of them is the problem of rapidly declining groundwater levels and the drying up of thousands of lakes in agricultural regions of China: two thirds of China’s 660 major cities are already facing water shortages. It is not question of “if”, but “when” will China’s water stress translate into a decrease in food production.⁴⁵

Those African politicians who have acquired a feeling, in recent years, that they do not need to seek cooperation with Western development agencies because of China may surprisingly soon have rude awakenings. For instance, problems like Pakistan and its people were facing after the floods in 2010 and 2011.

43 Business Insider brought a series of around thirty satellite pictures of Chinese “ghost towns” in 2011, readers can see them on <http://www.businessinsider.com/chinese-ghost-cities-2011-5#>.

44 <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/china-news/chinese-tv-host-says-regime-nearly-bankrupt-141214.html>

45 China faces up to a groundwater crisis. Nature, accessed 2012-01-09 <http://www.nature.com/news/2010/100713/full/466308a.html>.

Nigeria: A disaster waiting to happen

Black racism or just everyday rudeness? A country that does not welcome tourists. Are you stupid? Use your credit card! Over-employment in the civil service. Oil blessing as a curse. Corruption. MPs earning three times more than the U.S. president in a country, where 84 % of the population lives on less than two dollars a day. From independence to war and famine in Biafra, 33 years of military dictatorships and today's precarious democracy. North against South—specifically, Muslims against Christians and vice versa. How Nigerian muftis helped to prevent global eradication of polio. Western education is forbidden! Petrol revolt and prospects of “Nigerian Spring”.

There are many jokes circulating in Kenya. One of them goes like this:

A father of four children says to a father of six children: “We do not plan to have another one.”

“Why is that?”

“Well, my wife has heard somewhere that every fifth African is a Nigerian.”

The current status of Nigeria is very shaky with humorous descriptions describing it as being a giant on clay feet. The status of this country and its 170 million people (CIA estimate in July 2012)⁴⁶ who live in an area of 924,000 km² is nothing but a joke. In this book, Nigeria will serve as an illustration of how things can go in a country which was endowed with enormous natural wealth. Probably nothing characterizes Africa's most populous country more accurately than the expression “a disaster waiting to happen”.

Most Central Europeans have an understanding of Nigeria based on sporadically emerging reports about Nigerian criminals. Including reports about Nigerians arrested at airports with cocaine packages hidden in their rectum, or from the flood of spam e-mails with stories about how somebody has inherited millions of dollars from a Nigerian general and would like to share it with you. A few years ago such emails flooded email inboxes just as

46 The World Factbook, CIA, accessed 2012-12-12 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html>

Turkish soap operas have more recently been flooding television screens in Central Europe. All you needed to do was enter your bank details and pay a modest \$100 fee, and then to wait for your millions to come. Or maybe not, as the case may be.

The Czech traveller and writer Iva Pekárková provided a very affectionate description of her experiences in Nigeria in her book “Naijda, the stars in my heart”. Pekárková married a younger Nigerian in Prague and chose to visit Nigeria with her husband his family. Staying with her new husband’s family allowed her to peek under the hood of what a common visitor can experience. In addition to everyday life and some humorous situations, the book also captures many more serious aspects of Nigerian life. Among them are experiences with corrupt policemen extracting fees from car drivers for passing through “their sentry point” or youth criminality and the eternal fear of mothers that their son does not get into the hands of the dreaded mobile police, sadly infamous for its brutality and impunity. The term “youth” in Nigeria—as in most of Africa—applies to all young men who still did not marry and establish their own family. Therefore much more related to the social status of the young people, than to chronological age. Some “youngsters” may be 40 years old—and their mothers still worry about them.

Working as a specialist for the World Bank, I did not come into such intimate contact with the Nigerian reality as Ms. Pekárková did, nevertheless my work on development projects in the Niger Delta has given me plenty of negative experience, and my view of Nigeria is inevitably quite critical. I for sure do not know any other country in Africa, where I have travelled with such dislike as I did in Nigeria—and I know I am not the only one with the same experience. A negative perception of Nigeria among so many foreigners stems from many things and one of them seems to be Nigeria’s widespread incivility towards other people. It is unknown to me where this originates from, but I found that some Europeans perceived this rude behavior to be a sign of racism against white people. I daren’t judge whether such racism is widespread among Nigerians or whether it exists at all, but I can imagine that in some cases discourtesy and rudeness, which many Nigerians appear to commonly show towards their black co-citizens, can be perceived by unprepared European visitors as racist behavior.

Of course, as individuals, Nigerians are nice people. I came to know a lot of nice and wonderful people in this country. The problem is how the society acts as a whole. You realize this immediately upon your arrival into the country as you get off the plane and start waiting in a long queue, which is barely moving. While in this queue many uniformed people are walking around, starting conversations and asking a multitude of questions—some totally unrelated to your visit. They are not necessarily annoying, but it is totally obvious that these people have nothing else to do. Over-employment in public offices in African countries is sometimes breathtaking. You can also acquire a sense—often correct—that between the lines (and sometimes openly) a small bribe would shorten your waiting time and prevent customs officials from digging through your luggage so much.

When leaving the country the situation may be even worse.

Some customs officers and border police literally squeeze bribes from passengers. Some behind the counters may openly ask: “Do you have something for the officers?” After this question you can choose whether you show a blank expression (by which you prolong your wait—because if you do not understand what the border official expects of you, why should the border official understand that you expect the exit stamp in your passport?) or you can clearly answer “no”, which opens up the possibility of further delays and bullying during the further checks because news about your ingratitude will almost certainly spread quickly. Many people who frequently travel to Nigeria on business know the game and with an understanding smile put a banknote on the counter. After such a gesture of goodwill things move smoothly.

Other uniformed officials can stop you anywhere in the airport and ask to see your passport scrutinizing it for a long period of time. A serious expression on the face of the official and the asking of another colleague to also check your passport indicates that an accusation of something illegal is imminent and your plane may well fly home without you. With a blue UN passport this nerve-wracking game is easier. It is extremely unlikely that the customs officers would try to drag someone from an international institution, who may personally know ministers and high ranking officials. To be able to wear a border police or custom official uniform, enabling you to extract bribes from visitors to the country is lucrative and certainly not a cheaply obtained position. Therefore, to risk stopping a person with UN passport does not make much sense. However, for those travelling on a passport from Central Europe it is a little harder, although the European Union sign helps a lot.

Returning from my last trip from Port Harcourt, the Nigerian oil capital in the south of the country, I was chosen for personal check after politely but clearly refusing to bribe border police for an exit stamp in my passport, another border policeman touched a small bunch of banknotes in my pocket.

“What is it?” asked the policeman.

“Money.”

“Can I see them?”

“You can see them, but not have them.”

“What do you need Nigerian money for?”

“I will need them when I come to Nigeria next time.”

Of course, after this financially unprofitable conversation I was again asked for my passport, despite the fact that my passport control was already done. He studied it for a while and then carried it away to a room full of other uniformed officers. While my passport was once again thoroughly studied, my hold luggage thoroughly inspected, and another 15 minutes wasted, finally a senior officer emerged with my passport in his hand and handed it to me with an explanation: “You have a stamp from Thailand in your passport and the drugs are being smuggled from there, so we had to examine you carefully...”

I have never given a bribe to any Nigerian airport or other official, claiming that as World Bank staff member I am not allowed to pay bribes. I however find it quite unfortunate that many foreigners, who travel to Nigeria, do not have the will or stomach for this game of

nerves with the Nigerian airport officials and give them bribes. This of course keeps the whole corrupt system going. I do not find it surprising, however, and do not blame foreign travellers: as part of the World Bank staff I always had an influential institution behind me and the business cards of very senior Nigerian officials with their phone numbers in my pocket. With such backing one has a vastly different position compared to the position of a small business traveller, tourist, or a development worker from an NGO.

Nowhere else in Africa (or in the rest of the world that I have had the privilege to visit), have I met with a similar openness towards the blackmailing of foreign travellers. There is one simple reason why Nigerian border and customs officers—and especially their bosses at the respective ministries—can afford to behave like this and completely ignore the opinion of foreigners coming to their country. While the Kenyans, Tanzanians, Namibians and many others need and want foreign tourists to visit their countries and come again, there are almost no tourists travelling to Nigeria.

If only a few tourists travelling to Nairobi or Arusha experienced similar treatment at the airport as is common in Lagos, Abuja or Port Harcourt, Kenya's or Tanzania's image as a tourist destination would be devastated within weeks and the country would quickly feel economic pains. But even if the BBC, ARD, TF1 or CNN provide extensive coverage about the practices that go on at Nigerian airports, Nigeria's leaders can afford to ignore it.

One can use credit and debit cards while in Nigeria, however you do so at your own risk that your bank details will be stolen and fees surreptitiously deducted from your account. Essentially the only way to pay is by cash. Well, of course, you can pay using your card. I did so on my first trip to Nigeria and paid a hefty bill for an expensive hotel in Abuja (most decent hotels are incredibly expensive in Nigeria). A month after my return to Washington obscure credit card payment from Lagos started to appear on my account. What followed was the urgent blocking of my card and all the administrative trouble one has with stolen card information. I could easily have avoided this had I believed my experienced colleagues when they told me that using a card is taboo in Nigeria. I was hesitant to carry thousands of dollars on me—so I learned the hard way; there is no other way to travel and work in Nigeria.

The fact that people travelling to and from Nigeria can be bullied at the airports by police and custom officers, or that the staff at the reception of a top international hotel chain makes a copy of your credit card and sells it to someone who uses it to steal money from your account has roots in the lack of government interest in tax revenues from tourism in Nigeria. This stems from a reality that over 80 percent of the Nigerian federal budget comes from a single resource. This resource is valued by the world higher than decency—oil.

Nigeria is the biggest oil producer in Africa and the 8th to 10th biggest oil exporter in the world. Before the discovery of oil the Nigerian economy was diverse and the country had quite an advanced farming sector, but oil changed sound perspectives of agriculture. Nigeria fell into what experts call the “oil curse”, or “mineral wealth curse”. This term refers to the condition when a country becomes dependent on a single export commodity, the inflow of foreign currency distorts the local economy (for instance it destroys the

competitiveness of local agricultural production, because it is cheaper to import food) and all attention on the country's elites focuses on the opportunities of enriching themselves by a fabulous income from exporting their mineral wealth. The oil wealth in Nigeria fueled by huge corruption and spasmodic effort of politicians and political groups to keep control over oil revenues has led to many conflicts.

Thanks to oil resources, Nigeria is Africa's second largest economy after South Africa. However, the impression you get when visiting Nigeria, is vastly different from the impression of South Africa. South Africa's visual image is that of Mediterranean Europe or California on the African continent. On the contrary, large and expensive buildings paid for by oil billions in Abuja or Lagos are drowning in filth, poverty and chaos, characteristics familiar with much poorer countries of Africa—those without oil.

I daren't guess whether oil has led to the notorious Nigerian corruption, or whether corruption flourished among Nigeria's 250 different ethnic groups before the oil. Perhaps the world is not quite fair, when Nigeria seen is as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. According to the Corruption Perceptions Index published annually by Transparency International, in 2011 Nigeria was "only" 143rd among the 182 countries—so more than 30 countries, including Uganda and Kenya, as well as Russia and Ukraine, fared worse.⁴⁷ Oil, however, certainly contributed to the fact that Nigerian corruption has become so "famous" and is so brazenly manifest everywhere, be it among police officers, airport workers, senior politicians, or among people dealing with the oil companies.

Inspiration in the art of the appropriation of public property by police officers, officials and other citizens of Nigeria is provided by the democratically elected political leaders, at the top of society. Nigerian senators shamelessly voted for average annual salaries of U.S. \$1.4 million—or more than 100,000 dollars a month, for themselves. This is eight times more than salary of a U.S. senator and three times more than the U.S. President.⁴⁸ At the same time, according to the IMF, the average gross domestic product in Nigeria was U.S. \$1,500 per capita in 2011—while in the U.S. it was 48,000 dollars.⁴⁹ At the time when Nigeria's senators were taking home more than U.S. \$100,000 a month, 64% of Nigerians were living in deep poverty on less than \$1.25 a day and 84% of them on less than \$2 a day.⁵⁰ More than one quarter of Nigerian children under five are malnourished.

I did witness a charming demonstration of the lack of scruples with the theft of public money in Nigeria when I had opportunity to participate in a meeting of the committee

47 More details can be find at <http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2011/results/#CountryResults>

48 See <http://www.nigerianelitesforum.com/ng/presidency-judiciary-legislative-and-policies/2748-a-nigerian-senator-earns-more-in-salary-than-barack-obama-and-david-cameron.html>.

49 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_\(nominal\)_per_capita](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(nominal)_per_capita)

50 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_percentage_of_population_living_in_poverty. According to the governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, the situation is even worse and 90% of population live on less than \$2 daily. See for instance http://edition.cnn.com/2012/01/10/opinion/seun-kuti-opinion/index.html?hpt=hp_t1.

distributing grants of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). NDDC is a governmental institution operating in the Niger Delta tasked with using money contributed by Shell, Total, Chevron, Exxon Mobil and other oil companies for the development of the region. One of the projects submitted for NDDC funding by a private company set itself an ambitious task to allow the governor of the Rivers State to communicate with the chiefs of each of the 23 districts in the State via internet and enable computer conferencing. For this noble intention the promoter asked for about 250,000 U.S. dollars. Maybe they would have received this money had myself and another colleague from the World Bank, present at the meeting, not asked the question, why the governor and heads of the districts do not download free software such as skype from the internet and use it for free communication and conference calls. As the submitter was not able to answer this simple question, the grant was not approved; at least not then.

Apart from the fact that the tunnelling of public money on overpriced and unnecessary computer software and hardware is not an unknown phenomenon, in the new EU member states, the situation in Nigeria is spiced up by seriously unreliable electricity supply. Less than 40% of the population has access to electricity, while in rural areas the number is only about 10%.⁵¹ Businesses, hotels, and rich households secure a continuous supply of electricity by keeping expensive diesel generators, switching them on in response to each outage in the network. In most of Nigeria this can be many times a day. For its notorious unreliability National Electricity Power Authority (NEPA) became among Nigerians target of bitter irony—with NEPA, also being called, “Never Expect Power Always”. In response to this, the governments changed NEPA’s name, unfortunately the well intentioned change did not lead to a change in the quality of the electricity supply. For the luxury of electricity Nigerians have to pay for expensive back-up generators and diesel. For the sake of fairness it must be added that the instability of the power supply and frequent outages are by far not limited to Nigeria. One enjoys them abundantly all over the continent including in Kenya, Tanzania or Uganda.

Let us get back to oil—a blessing for the private pockets of a small group of chosen Nigerians. Oil is currently the source of 80% of the country’s budget, so no wonder he who controls the oil, controls Nigeria. But it was not always so. Around 1960, the wealth of Nigeria—an artificial country consisting of 250 to 300 different ethnic groups, which gained independence from the British—came from agricultural production and minerals mined in the north of the country. In the early years of independence, the calls for separation were loud in the north with a desire for independence from the Christian south. At around 1965, however the Northern elite recognized the importance of oil. Calling for the secession from the South was quickly silenced and was replaced by the strong desire to keep Nigeria, a country artificially created by the British, as one country. In the South, however, fears emerged that the large and ethnically diverse country divided into a Christian south and Muslim north, with the particularly dominant Hausa-Fulani ethnic group in the North, want to benefit from the oil wealth of the South.

51 More specific information can be found on <http://www.mbandi.com/indy/powr/af/ng/p0005.htm>.

In January 1966, just five years after independence, the first military coup broke out, followed by many others. These coups were led by officers of different ethnic and religious origins. For the sake of brevity we shall skip the complex history of Nigerian military rulers, but it is useful to know that from the very beginning Nigerian military coups have had ethnic and religious backgrounds. Among the acts of violence in 1966 were pogroms on Igbo tribe, whose home base is just above the oil deposits of southeastern Nigeria. It was estimated that around 30,000 people fell victims to these pogroms. The Igbo tribe (sometimes referred to as Ibo) represents around 18% of the Nigerian population, making it the third most numerous ethnic group in the country. When the trains loaded with the headless bodies of massacred Igbo—many Igbo previously lived scattered among the Hausa and other Muslims in the north—started to arrive in railway stations in the South, and a mood supporting secession erupted in the Southeast of the country. The southeast region of Nigeria, which today covers a territory of about 10 of the 36 federal states and is inhabited by mostly Igbo, declared its independence on the 30th May 1967 under the name the *Republic of Biafra*.

What followed was a two and a half year-long civil war known by history as the Biafra war. In this war the Igbo eventually succumbed to superior numbers of the rest of Nigeria, which was supported by its colonial “mother” Great Britain, by the Islamic Arab countries of North Africa, the Egyptian air force equipped by Soviet airplanes and even by the Soviet Union itself. The war and famine that broke out in besieged Biafra resulted in one to three million deaths: as in the case of many other African wars and tragedies, the exact numbers of victims will never be known. In the former Soviet Union the approach to human life was expressed in the saying “Such a big country, so many people!” (“Strana bolshaya, lyudej mnogo” in Russian)—unfortunately, this approach is common in many African countries to this day.

Foreign doctors, among them Bernard Kouchner who later became the French Health Minister and Foreign Minister, provided numerous testimonies about the extent of civilian massacres and other atrocities in the war in Biafra. They contributed to the fact that during the war France supported the Republic of Biafra. It was his Biafran experience what inspired Kouchner and other foreign doctors to establish one of the most famous voluntary medical humanitarian organization Médecins sans Frontières—Doctors Without Borders shortly after the war ended in 1971. 1968 and 1969 were the years of bloody attacks and counter-attacks in Nigeria in which war frequently shifted sides, but at the end Biafra succumbed to the much bigger forces of the North. In the memory of the “flower power” generation these tragic events were eventually overshadowed by the events in Europe, including the tragedy of the Soviet invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia in August 1968.

In January 1970 the Biafra War was over. The war-damaged infrastructure was quickly restored thanks to the inflow of oil money, which followed after the Arab oil embargo fired black gold prices to unprecedented heights. The infrastructure was repaired, but ethnic and religious tensions and the country’s absolute dependence on oil became a permanent and decisive feature of future political developments in Nigeria.

For 33 years, until 1999, the country was ruled by generals as a military dictatorship: a return to formal democracy was not the result of a democratic revolution, but as a result of international pressure after the Cold War ended. After the mysterious death of the last Nigerian military ruler general Sani Abacha in the company of six exotic Indian prostitutes at his villa in Abuja⁵² a window of opportunity for free elections and the transition to democracy opened up in 1998. Ironically, the winner of the first free election in 1999 after decades of military regimes was one of the previous military dictators of Nigeria, general Obasanjo, who earned his stars as a military commander of one of the last attacks against independent Biafra.

Unfortunately formal democracy did not bring the desired peace and prosperity to Nigeria and has not led to a reduction in the ubiquitous and widespread corruption or stopped religious and ethnic conflicts. Although it may seem that the military regime was able to suppress at least some of these problems and keep them under wraps, many bloody unrests took place in the Niger Delta—the economic center of the country—during the first decade of the 21st century. From there oil billions flow to the national capital and from there part of the money continues to flow to all states of Nigeria. Many groups of militant young men emerged in the Niger Delta, whose only—risky but lucrative—work was to ignite and blow up oil pipelines and other oil installations and to abduct oil workers for ransom.⁵³ International oil companies operating in the region responded to these attacks by policing and fortifying their facilities and entire towns⁵⁴ where foreign and domestic managers and technical experts live, and also by bribing chiefs and members of local communities

52 It is estimated that Sani Abacha has stolen about five billion dollars directly from the Central Bank of Nigeria, transferred them to his many foreign accounts and the money were after his death inherited by his family. The Nigerian government was later able to recover only a portion of these funds, the rest of them enjoy Abacha descendants and relatives. More on http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sani_Abacha#Recovery_of_stolen_funds

53 Chronology of recorded attacks on the oil facilities and kidnappings of workers in the Niger Delta in the years 2006–2008 can be found at <http://www.africamasterweb.com/AdSense/NigerianMilitants07Chronology.html>.

54 Security in the Niger Delta has become such a serious problem that the project on which I worked there, started with about a two-year delay. For about two years after the initial working visit, which resulted in the decision by the local partners in the State Rivers to try to build a community foundation in the area, the World Bank security authorities did not authorize any WB employee to travel to the area. When we finally got the green light to go again to Port Harcourt, American colleagues were transported on armored cars, managed by their own security staff. The rest of the team—that is non-American—had to stay in a well guarded hotel and were allowed to leave only when accompanied by policemen armed with machine guns and at least one police car. To be white in Port Harcourt is as calling „come and kidnap me!“ but wave of kidnappings for ransom became a serious threat also for wealthy Nigerians. One of our local partners, distinguished professor of medicine, experienced assault and kidnapping right in his house. Another local partner, employee of one of the oil companies, invited me to visit the local famous “Shell compound”, thus I was able to see on my own eyes the small world of managers and technicians, of course only after getting through checks at several lines of security fences with barbed wire and concrete gateways. Welcome to the world of oil and social gaps!

and villages owning the land with pipelines and facilities. Motivation of these groups—the most famous among them being the MEND (Movement for Emancipation of Niger Delta)—is a volatile cocktail of grievances and greed mixed in barely understood ratio.

MEND leaders rightly point to the poverty and backwardness of the region, which produces almost all Nigeria's national budget and is paying for oil drilling through terrible environmental devastation and by the damage to the health of local people, but it is getting back very little in return. Local children play and swim in the murky, stinky water covered by floating oil spills, they drink the polluted water, eat fish caught from the same water (where there is any surviving fish) and also water their gardens with it. More than 50 years of oil production with close to no environmental legislation, moreover in a country where you can get authorization for any type of pollution with a proper bribe has made the Niger Delta the most polluted river in the world. In August 2011 a long-awaited study prepared for the UN assessing the degree of contamination of only a small part of the Niger Delta known as Ogoniland became publically available. The report states that the water used by the local people for drinking has up to excessive concentrations of some carcinogens by up to 900 times. It also states that putting just this small area to acceptable conditions would require one billion U.S. dollars and take 25 to 30 years—as well as many other shocking facts...⁵⁵

This report is significant not only in its content, but also because it gives a certain moral satisfaction to the Ogoni tribal leaders, who were persecuted, tortured and many executed for their struggle against the pollution of their territory by Shell. The tragic part of this “David against Goliath” struggle was the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People. Nine leaders of the Movement were falsely accused by the military junta and after a series of false statements provided by bribed witnesses were sentenced to death in an orchestrated process. They were hanged on the 10th November 1995. The last one executed witnessed the death of his eight brave fellows was the well known Nigerian writer Ken Saro-Wiwa, an activist and a great symbol of the fight for the environment and human rights, not only in Africa. His resume⁵⁶ claims that several false witnesses testifying against him and his colleagues were bribed by the oil giant Shell—the same Shell at whose gas stations many Europeans fuel their cars.⁵⁷

Complaints by MEND and other similar groups are certainly not irrelevant. A different thing, of course, is the method MEND has chosen to remedy the problem. And then there is the question about the extent to which the eligible motives hide less noble motive of greed.

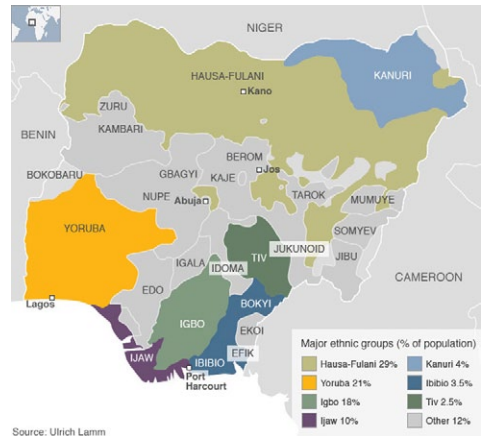
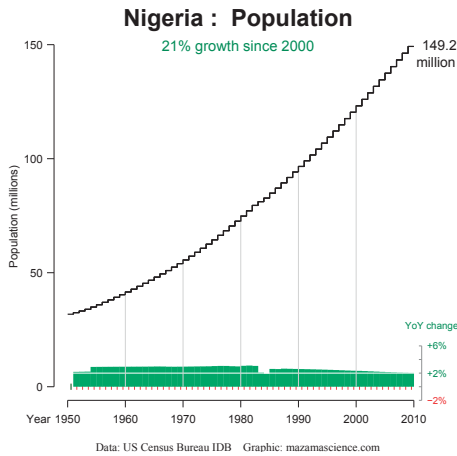
55 Nigeria Ogoniland oil clean up “could take 30 years”, BBC, 2011-08-04, accessed 2012-01-12.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14398659>

56 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ken_Saro-Wiwa

57 In June 2009 Shell had to pay a court settlement of U.S. \$15.5 million for their participation in abuse of Ogoni human rights in the 80-ies and 90-ies of the 20th century. See “Seeds of NGO activism: Shell surrenders when Saro-Wiwa” on http://www.globalgovernancewatch.org/ngo_watch/seeds-of-ngo-activism-shell-capitulates-in-sarowiwa-case.

To get recruited by the paramilitary gangs, gain the respect and social standing by waving around Kalashnikovs and chasing around in fast boats is for a constantly growing number of young men without jobs and without any meaningful life perspective an alternative worth a try. The risk of death is relatively large, but it is quite easy to find a replacement for the youngsters killed in an environment charged with youth and testosterone.

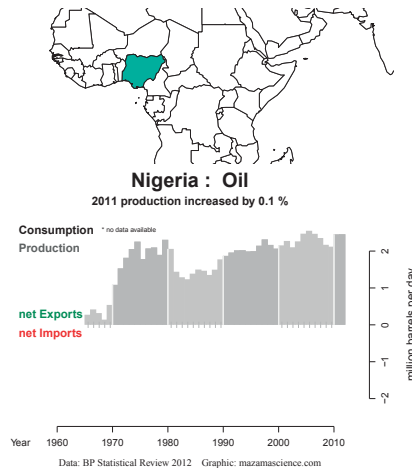
With the continuing explosive growth of population, more than 20% of Nigerians are younger than 10 (see chart below) and half of them are boys. Militant groups in Nigeria certainly do not need to worry about their cadets. And there is no lack of money for weapons—for the money acquired by extortion or theft of oil (even entire oil tankers at times) militants can buy a lot of weapons. According to American security circles even before the fall of Libya, large volumes of weapons were smuggled across the Sahara. Not only Kalashnikovs, even modern weapons that could be used to take down combat helicopters of the Nigerian army if the army tried to use them. After the fall of Gaddafi the flow of advanced weapons and ammunition into Nigeria only swelled.



Graph and map: Explosive population growth in Nigeria continues: Militant groups in Nigeria do not need to worry about the manpower. Source: <http://mazamascience.com/> Ethnic and religious diversity with presence of sufficiently large ethnic groups creates ideal preconditions for further growth in violence. Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12893448>

As can be seen in the next graph illustrating the development of oil production in Nigeria, MEND and other similar groups succeeded in reducing oil production in Nigeria by hundreds of thousands of barrels per day, or about ten percent of production. For a country completely dependent on revenues from oil sales it is a very dangerous situation. The government is therefore trying to find a peaceful solution to the conflict and—as it looks so far—for the time being has succeeded.

One of the reasons why MEND reduced its destructive activity probably comes from the fact that the crucial post of the President of Nigeria was won by Goodluck Jonathan, the “man of the South”, the former governor of the oil state Bayelsa, who from 2007 to 2010 served as the Vice President of Nigeria. When the previous president Yar’Adua was seriously ill, Jonathan served as the executive president of Nigeria in 2010. After the untimely death of his predecessor, he won elections in early 2011 to become the president. The accession of Jonathan to the presidency raised huge expectations in the south. He comes from Nigeria’s fifth largest ethnic group, with about 15-million people—the Ijaw, a tribe which is close to the Igbo and inhabits the Niger Delta region. The people of the Niger Delta and adjacent regions expected that the former governor of Bayelsa State, who is knowledgeable about the problems of the oil-rich but otherwise the poor south, to push forward the interests of the South when he became President. MEND and similar groups apparently choose to give the new president time to meet their expectations.



Despite the high oil prices in recent years, oil production in Nigeria has stagnated. MEND attacks on the oil-facilities and workers was able to significantly reduce it, This had for Nigeria, entirely dependent on oil exports, very serious economic consequences. Source: <http://mazamascience.com/OilExport/>

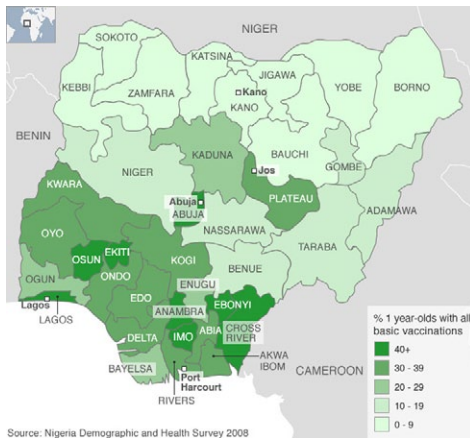
Electing a Christian from the South however activated a new wave of dissatisfaction and increased suspicion in the Islamic north. The relative peace in the South was in 2011 replaced by an increase in religiously motivated violence in the North. The embodiment of a new wave of violence in Nigeria has become an Islamic sect *Boko Haram*, fighting for the introduction of Sharia law in northern Nigeria. Translated into English, *Boko Haram* means something along the lines of “Western education is forbidden”. This speaks for itself about the nature of this movement. Anti-Western attitudes in northern Nigeria have deep roots and they are not as irrelevant to the rest of the world, as it may seem from Europe or North

America. Humanity “owes” the Islamic leaders in northern Nigeria, that after successfully eradicating smallpox⁵⁸, humankind failed—at least for now—to eradicate another devastating infectious disease—the polio.

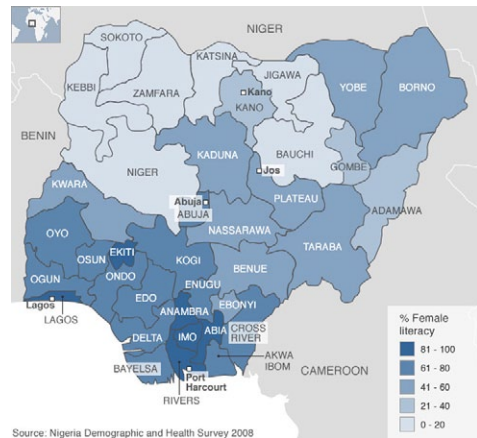
Actually northern Nigeria has remained the largest focal point for the virus that causes this devastating illness—the one which, for example, strapped U.S. President F. D. Roosevelt to a wheelchair. Roosevelt certainly did not have the opportunity which we all have today—to protect himself against this infection by being vaccinated—because the polio vaccine was only developed after the Second World War. (Just to note, Czechoslovak epidemiologists and physicians were the pioneers in eliminating polio at home as well as abroad. In 1960, Czechoslovakia became the first polio free country in the world.⁵⁹) Unlike President Roosevelt, decades ago, children in northern Nigeria have no access to this vaccination not because the vaccine is unavailable, but because some religious leaders in northern Nigeria began to spread a false rumors about the polio vaccine, including the notion that the real goal of the vaccination is to reduce the fertility of Muslim women. The result is that as late as just few years ago only 20% of children in some parts of northern Nigeria were vaccinated. This leaves plenty of unprotected children to transmit the virus from one to the other and occasionally also to export it to neighboring countries. Around the year 2000—20 years after the eradication of smallpox—mankind was already very close to reaching the eradication of yet another infectious disease which has killed millions and millions of children throughout history. The achievement of this second historical breakthrough was made impossible by a group of religious fanatics and a mass of their ignorant followers.

58 Smallpox is the only one fatal human infectious disease, which humanity succeeded to eradicate on the planetary scale. Global efforts to eraze this mortal diseases, which during the 20th century killed 300 to 500 million people was successfully completed in 1980. Among many Czechoslovak epidemiologists who took part in this epochal achievement of united humaniking were professor Karel Raška, who developed the concept of diseas surveillance and led smallpox eradication efforts in 1960-ies, my own esteemed teacher of epidemiology professor Stephen Straka (working on smallpox eradication in India, Somalia), dr. Ivan Ferencei (Bangladesh), dr. Juraj Červenka (India), dr. Bedrich Bagar (India), dr. Ivan Masar (India, Somalia), dr. Viktor Prikazský (Zaire, India) and others. Their participation in the smallpox eradication program led by the World Health Organization is one of the forgotten pages of our own history, for which Czech and Slovak citizens should be justly proud. Smallpox eradication is also the case of perhaps the most meaningful and the most enduring aid to developing countries.

59 In Spring 1960, a massive vaccination program in Czechoslovakia administered more than 4 million doses of polio vaccine within 10 short days. Huge success of this vaccination campaign contributed to decision to licence Sabine polio vaccine in the USA at the end of 1960. Slovak speaking readers can find more details in profesor Červenka’s notes on polio eradication at <http://www.sea.host.sk/profesor/aven0600.htm>.



Source: Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2008



Source: Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2008

Ignorance and fighting against vaccination are two native and inextricably linked sisters. Maps depict vaccination rates of children under 1 year, and the percentage of female literacy in the states of Nigeria. The correlation between the level of women education and rate of children vaccinations does not need more comments. Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12893448>

At about the same time when Muslim leaders in the Nigerian north successfully torpedoed the global effort to eradicate polio, a sect *Boko Haram* emerged in the region. It builds on a long tradition of people in northern Nigeria to resist western education and modern society. This “tradition”, as already indicated above, is perfectly embodied in the name of *Boko Haram*—“Western education is forbidden”. *Boko Haram* was founded by one of the local clergy in 2002, in Maiduguri, a city of over one million people located in the northeastern corner of Nigeria about 100 km from the disappearing Lake Chad. In addition to providing an alternative to Western education in the form of Islamic madrassas, *Boko Haram* also has its political objective—to create an Islamic state in northern Nigeria that would obey Sharia Law. This sect has considered Nigeria to be a “godless country” even when it had a Muslim president in 2007 to 2010. Since a Christian has become President, Nigeria’s godlessness must be quite unbearable...

As a tool to establish the right state *Boko Haram* choose violence. In 2009, its members undertook a series of attacks on police stations in Maiduguri, which claimed hundreds of lives. A year later, *Boko Haram* members attacked Maiduguri prison and freed hundreds of prisoners in August 2011, they succeeded in achieving the “gold standard” of fanatics and terrorists—using a suicide bomber they blew up the United Nations office in Abuja, the federal capital of Nigeria. The attack claimed 25 lives⁶⁰ and certainly helped to increase

60 U.S. Staff Dies of Injuries From UN Abuja Building Suicide Attack. Nigeria Masterweb Daily News, 2012-01-01 <http://nigeriamasterweb.com/blog/index.php/2012/01/01/un-staff-dies-of-injuries-from-un-abuja-build-ing-suicide-attack>.

self-confidence within the sect. After all, what can be a clearer sign of Allah's favor than success of such a demanding event? Encouraged by this favor, *Boko Haram* attacked Christian churches in several Nigerian cities during Christmas 2011: it is hard to find a better time for igniting a religious war, than a religious holidays.⁶¹ Dozens of people died in the churches and *Boko Haram* succeeded in another step necessary to achieve their political goal. Before long, the Christians in the south attacked several mosques, burning them to the ground and killed a number of Muslims. Representatives of the Christian church in the North publicly declared that if the government was not able to protect them they would protect themselves. Many Christians in the north started to pack their suitcases so they could start a long journey home in January 2012. In the early 2012 it seemed that the wheels of religious and ethnic war in Nigeria were well lubricated when suddenly the country was rocked by an event, which for a time pushed *Boko Haram* out of the spotlight.

As in almost all oil producing countries the ruling class is buying the favor of the controlled masses by providing them with cheap petrol and diesel. This policy however leads to serious economic consequences. Among them is very high consumption of fuels and fuel inefficiency as artificially low prices do not encourage energy saving. We have already seen this in Saudi Arabia. A country with about 27 million people, exporting nothing else but oil, it has the same oil consumption as Germany which has 80 million inhabitants, which along with China is the world's largest exporter. On the 1st January 1st President Goodluck Jonathan decided to try his "good luck" and abolished subsidies on petrol and diesel. He announced that the money saved—about \$8 billion a year—would be invested in the necessary infrastructure. Fuel prices at gas stations doubled overnight from about 40 to nearly 80 U.S. cents per liter⁶²—and even more so on the black market. To such a rise in fuel prices the society responded by massive protests that surprised not only the government but also Nigerians themselves. The truth is that doubling the price of petrol and diesel in the country, where 80 to 90% of the population lives from one day to another for less than two dollars a day, pushed tens of millions of people towards hunger. Mass protests therefore were not unpredictable. In early January, the country literally stopped. The streets of Lagos, Kano, Abuja and other cities which are normally incredibly crowded by a chaotic rush of cars and people were empty. That is, with the exception of the streets where people held rallies and protest marches. Christians and Muslims stop attacking each other and turned against their common enemy—the government. The government which wanted to rob them of the last and the only benefit of living in the top oil producing country in Africa, the benefit of cheap fuel.

61 A full list of all acts of religious and ethnic violence in current Nigeria would be very long and somebody will for sure publish a thick book about *Boko Haram* sometimes in the future. For the time being let us accept the short overview provided at "Who are Nigeria's *Boko Haram* Islamists?", BBC, 2012-01-11 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13809501>

62 Price of the unleaded super 95 fuel in Slovakia was between 1.45 and 1.50 Euro per liter.

The fact that the Nigerian government eventually backed down and canceled only half of the fuel subsidies—so fuel prices increased by “only” 50% and not 100%—was celebrated in January 2012 by some Nigerians as a great victory, the triumph of “people power.” Nigerians tend to celebrate and enjoy themselves, but these celebrations may be premature as they may be unjustified. First, the increase in fuel prices by 50% in a country where most people live in poverty or very close to it will in itself bring terrible social consequences. The misery of a huge mass of people in Nigeria will deepen and it will not increase political stability or security in the country. The second doubt follows from the question to what extent the protests were actually a success, and to what extent the result was calculated by the government. It is totally clear, the government could choose to phase out subsidies gradually by 20% or 30% year by year—just as it would happen in democratic countries—and not cancel a 100% subsidy in a single brutal step. It appears that the government’s calculation was exactly as the situation finally developed, firstly the complete abolition of the subsidy was announced and then the government retreated half way from that position. Thus the government achieved huge 50% decrease in subsidies in one step and even gave people the illusion of democracy and a self-image of a responsible government accommodating to its citizens.

Finally there is one more question: what actually forced the government to step back? Was it the mass protests in the streets, or the threat of the oil industry trade unions halting oil production? It would be nice to believe that the decision was as a result of the popular protests, but much more likely is that the real reason was the threat of oil production stopping. If this happened, it would not only reduce the revenues for the Nigerian government, the loss of Nigerian production from the global market would fire global oil prices to unknown heights, which would have very serious consequences for the entire global economy; an economy which at the beginning of 2012 was already on the edge of a global economic recession. Knowing how diplomatic intervention works, one can very well imagine that the outcome of the dispute could rather be the result of one phone call from let us say the American or British ambassador, the U.S. president or the British Prime Minister to President Jonathan, than the result of mass protests on the streets.

Several prominent Nigerians, including President Jonathan and the Nobel Prize winner for literature Wole Soyinka, started to compare the situation in Nigeria in early 2012 to the situation on the threshold of the Biafra war in 1967. “*The situation we have in our hands is even worse than the civil war that we fought,*” said President Jonathan, arguing at the same time that members of *Boko Haram* had even penetrated his government.⁶³ Christian leaders announced they would do anything to protect themselves from systematic ethnic and religious killings. It would be probably quite naive to expect Muslim leaders to behave differently in the case of attacks on Muslims.

63 Is Nigeria on the brink after north-south clashes? BBC, 2012-01-13 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16544410>

Nigerians and other Africans are among the most religious people in the world. According to a survey made for the BBC in 2004, 100% of Nigerians believe in the existence of God (98% of them “always believed”), 95% pray regularly, 91% go regularly to mass or prayer, 94% believed that God would stop human suffering, if he wanted to. On top of this, 94% of Nigerians believe that “my God (faith) is the only true God (faith)” and a solid 95% are ready to die for their God and faith.⁶⁴ With such strong and determined religious faith one can expect anything in Nigeria.⁶⁵

We Europeans must resist looking at Nigerians from above because of their issues with religious intolerance and violence. Those tempted to do so need to read of our own history. Doing so one can quickly learn, for instance, that more than half of the population living in the vicinity of Prague, Dresden and many other cities of the Holy Roman Empire died during the Thirty Years’ War (1618 to 1648). Some of them were killed by fire and sword, many others died as a result of famine and epidemics, which always thrive alongside wars. It is good to remind ourselves, that the Thirty Years’ War was “only” an intra- religious massacre between Catholics and Protestants. From the theological perspective these were worshippers of more or less the same God and his messenger. In Nigeria we are dealing with two distinctive Gods, one the son of the God and the other the prophet, much more different from each other. The situation is, of course, even more complicated. Professor Kyari Mohammed quoted by the BBC notes that: “*For an average northerner it is a double jeopardy. He is targeted (in the north) by the Boko Haram that does not believe in his version of Islam, and in the south by the people who feel that the attack by Boko Haram is an attack by Muslims.*”

When the “Arab Spring” broke out in North Africa in 2011, many Nigerians started to wonder: Could this happen to us? The question was apparently meant purely rhetorically, assuming the answer is: “Of course not—we are not able to revolt, we can tolerate everything, even if they plowed with us.” It is in the context of this mentality that the petrol revolt surprised people and the ruling class in Nigeria. The protests were inspired by the Arab revolt and the global “Occupy” movement characterized by the occupation of public spaces in American and European cities in protest against social polarization. Some—perhaps many—began to wonder if this is not the beginning of a “Nigerian Spring”.

By the time this book gets to its readers, at least partial answers should be known. What is already quite obvious less than two years since the outbreak of the „Arab Spring“ is that it

64 You can find answers to many other questions asked in this survey as well as compare them with the answers given by people from several other countries at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/programmes/wtwtgod/pdf/wtwtgod.pdf>.

65 I did experience sincere dismay of my local partners when working in Niger Delta. To a direct question where I go to church I honestly replied that nowhere, because I’m an atheist. What had followed was the usual horror and sincere efforts to convert me and save my soul from eternal suffering in hell, followed by a big disappointment from the lack of my interest to be saved and return to the faith. The truth is that as this major stain on my moral profile became clear, I was not invited to consult there anymore and I have some suspicion that the main reason is in the difficulty which strongly religious people in countries like Nigeria have with the very existence of atheists.

will be followed by an „Arab winter“. If I were a Nigerian, I would be afraid of the “Nigerian Spring” knowing that anything other but a winter can follow it. No revolution, no matter how great is the enthusiasm of the masses in the streets and no matter how high their hopes and expectations in the revolutionary craze are, can change the fundamental economic, environmental, and—in the case of countries such as Nigeria and many others in Africa—the population, religious and educational foundations on which the society stands. No revolution can substitute evolution.

South Sudan “Be Careful about What You Wish For—Gods May Fulfill Your Wishes!”

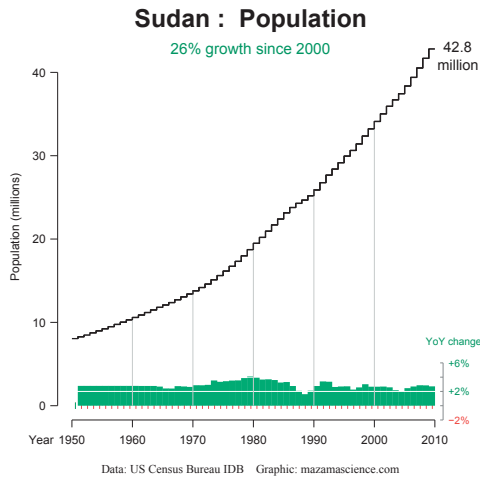
The longest civil war in Africa and the youngest and poorest state. Archaic form of civil war: cattle vendetta tying half of the UN forces in the new country. Split of the oil fields and pipelines: sentenced to mutual dependency. China’s dilemma in both parts of Sudan. Oil war?

If Nigeria, Africa’s most populous country, is at the brink of disintegration, Sudan, until recently the largest country in Africa is already behind it—after half a century of ethnic and religious wars. In July 2011, after a civil war which lasted a generation, Sudan, with an area of 2.5 million km² (for comparison, the entire area of the European Union is 4.3 million km²), divided into two parts. The smaller southern part gave birth to the new independent state of South Sudan, with an area of 620,000 km² and about 8.3 million inhabitants.

Independence in South Sudan fulfilled the dream of many people living in this vast territory. During colonial rule Great Britain administered both north and south Sudan, but because of the large ethnic and religious differences, the British managed them as two essentially separate entities. When Sudan gained independence from Britain, there were considerations about the possible connection of South Sudan—formerly known as Equatoria—to Uganda. It turned out that the concerns that led to those considerations were justified. Once independent, Sudan consisting of both the northern and southern part was established in 1956, the Arabized and more economically developed north introduced domination over the Nilot and mainly Christian tribes in the south leading to a profound dissatisfaction and two long civil wars. The first war lasted from 1955 to 1972 and over the 17 years claimed the lives of about half a million people, of whom about 400,000 were civilians. The second Sudanese war lasted even longer—22 years (1983 to 2005)—and killed up to 2 million people.

Thus, the endless civil war in Sudan claimed about two and a half million lives and five million found themselves as refugees. However, the loss of life due to war and an infant

mortality rate of 10% were unable to stop Sudan's rapid population growth. What is certain is that the endless war prevented the development of even a minimum level of infrastructure, which can be seen in the Kenyan or Tanzanian countryside. Illiteracy rates are high even by African standards: three quarters of the population are unable to read and write as well as about 85% of women.⁶⁶



Not even decades of civil war in the south of the country, nor genocide in Darfur in the west were able to slow down explosive growth of population: more than a quarter of Sudanese are younger than 10 years of age. Source: <http://mazamascience.com/databrowsers.html>

After the endless war it did not come as a surprise that a referendum in relation to the independence of southern Sudan held in January 2011 received a vote of 99% in favor of secession—despite the fact South Sudan is a country inhabited by dozens of ethnic groups reportedly using some 60 different languages. The most numerous ethnic group are the Dinka, accounting for about 15% of the population. The second largest group the Nuer account for about 10% while other tribes are much smaller. The dominance of one or two strong ethnic groups over a large number of smaller tribes combined with poverty and a lack of resources creates a countless number of relationships, tensions and potential conflicts. These were conflicts that soon after the independence of South Sudan captured the attention of the world's media due to a bloody feud between the Murle and Lou Nuer tribes in the Jonglei province. The conflict became known as the “cattle vendetta”.

⁶⁶ Many other regularly updated data about South Sudan (and other countries) can be find in CIA's publication The World Factbook available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/od.html>.

This bloody feud appears to have its roots ingrained somewhere deep in the history of both tribes. In the vicious circle of violence and robberies, raids by pastoral warriors on the territory of other tribes are revenged by the killing of captured men, the rape and abduction of women and children, and of course, the stealing of cattle. Cattle are the key element in “the game” not only because they are a major source of livelihood, but also because owning cattle is an unavoidable precondition for young men in both feuding tribes if they want to marry. A dowry for a bride can consist of a few dozen cows. As the need for brides in this demographically young population is bigger than the ability of cattle to multiply and grow, the one remaining option for brave young men desiring love is to steal cows. The stealing of cattle occurs within tribes, but in order to prevent intra-tribal violence, tribe elders prefer to give their blessing to the theft of cattle from neighbours. Of course, there is also another option—one can steal a woman. Stealing people into slavery has never ceased to be a part of life in Sudan. It typically does not take long for previously attacked and robbed tribe to undertake a retaliatory expedition into unprotected settlements of the former aggressor. In the spirit of the toughest vendetta laws, besides which the Sicilian vendetta is just a diluted civilized decoction, previous raiders pay the price. And the life—of course, of those who survive—goes on. Jonglei State with an area the same as former Czechoslovakia provides enough space for all the necessary maneuvers. The eternal fight can continue.

Already in August 2011 the news about the jubilant declaration of South Sudan’s independence was overshadowed by rumors of the massacre of at least 600 people and the injury of thousands by Nuers raids on the Murle “youth” in the town of Pieri and villages in its vicinity. The town was burned and the victorious Murle rushed back home with 38,000 stolen cows!⁶⁷ What great wedding perspectives! Murle had to wait only a few months for retaliation. In January 2012 around 6,000 armed Lou Nuer youngsters marched into the town of Pibor, the main center of the Murle tribe: killing about 3,000 members of the Murle tribe. Military reinforcements were hastily called to Pibor and the United Nation Mission in South Sudan—(UNMISS) sent 1,000 peacekeepers: this small town and cattle vendetta absorbed half of the UNMISS forces. Despite these forces Pibor was plundered and a portion of the town was burned to ashes including the only clinic in the region led by the organization Doctors Without Borders.⁶⁸ Several days later a group of Muerle youth raided some of the weakened Lou Nuer villages, while the Lou Nuer youth were busy killing and robbing Pibor. They killed 57 women and children, wounded dozens more, kidnapped eight children and took numerous cattle.

The picture of South Sudan is a picture of a collapsing state, though it has only just emerged. The newly created state is unable to ensure even the most basic functions, including an elementary level of security and justice. It completely lacks the capacity for more

67 South Sudan attacks leave 600 dead. BBC, 2011-08-23. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14595368>.

68 South Sudan horror at deadly cattle vendetta. BBC, 2012-01-16. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16575153>.

complex tasks, as was aptly illustrated by the visit of the former Slovak Minister of foreign affairs to Southern Sudan. Together with Kenya, South Sudan is considered to be Slovakia's priority country for development aid, so the minister traveled to Juba to sign an agreement establishing diplomatic relations. Only once he had arrived in Juba did it become evident that the South Sudanese foreign affairs minister was "not at home" despite the fact that this visit had planned for a long time. Eventually, everything was resolved and somebody else was found, in Juba, to sign the document—but this story aptly illustrates the situation in the country.

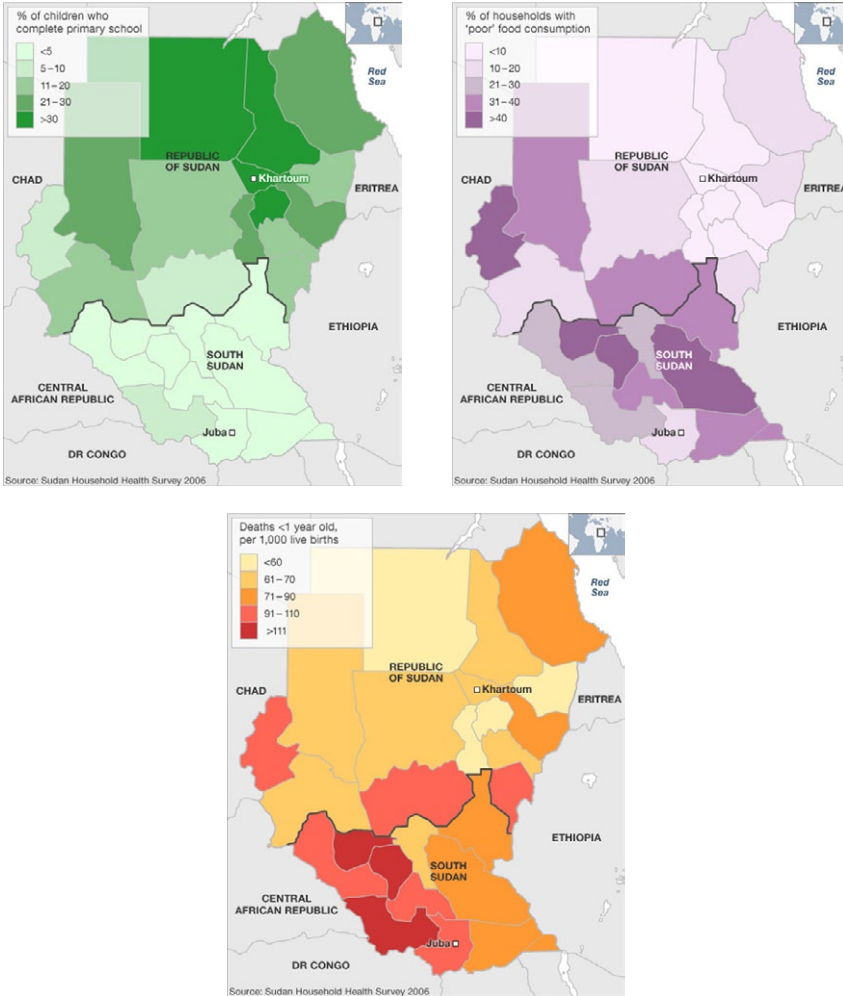
What can be done in the context of development aid in a country like South Sudan? Does it even make sense? As we shall see later, one of the most meaningful forms of intervention in a situation like this may be to send soldiers first and only later medication and money for education. These soldiers would not occupy the country or replace the police, and certainly they would not be sent without an invitation from a legitimate government. But with such an invitation an experienced battle ready military could disarm the militant youth from neighboring tribes. Although the mutual stealing of cattle and women is a deep seated tradition, it has become much bloodier with the availability of Kalashnikovs and other firearms among the tribal youths. As was graphically shown during the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, hundreds of thousands of people can be killed with machetes,⁶⁹ without the need for firearms. However, there is no doubt that firearms increase the efficiency and the likelihood of deaths. Another meaningful form of assistance may be the drilling of wells and watering places for cattle: scarcity of water during droughts leads inevitably to the concentration of cattle herders and their livestock around the few still functioning water points. Such a concentration of feuding people and their cattle sharply increases the risk of conflict and violence. Literacy is certainly needed—but in a country where 95% of the population has not completed primary education (see map below), investing in schools and teachers means it will be a long time coming. In a culture centered on animals it may be wise if providers of development assistance respect the local rule: "cattle above everything".

Just like Nigeria, South Sudan is potentially a rich country. Unlike northern Sudan which is covered mostly by desert, South Sudan is green—and covered by vast savannas, marshes and in some parts forests. This means it is a potentially productive agricultural area—this unfortunately does not correspond with the number of people suffering from hunger. As shown on the map below, more than 40% of people in the aforementioned state of Jonglei suffer from poor nutrition—and Jonglei is not the only region ruled by hunger. The poor nutrition of mothers and children cruelly contributes to the death of one in ten South Sudanese children before their first birthday.

In the chapter on the activities of China in Africa, we touched upon the topic of foreigners buying and long-term leasing agricultural land. Researchers from Oakland Institute in California studied the phenomenon of "land grab" in African countries including

69 Approximately 800,000 people were killed over a 100 days during the Rwanda genocide in the spring 1994, most of them without using firearms.

South Sudan. They warn: “*Competition over land and natural resources was among the root causes of the civil war in South Sudan. The war has now ended, but land issues continue to plague the new nation.*” According to the institute, foreign land deals in South Sudan so far covers 5.15 million hectares, territory almost twice the size of Belgium.



Hunger and malnutrition are widespread in South Sudan. As illustrated at the first map, in some areas of the country more than 40% of the population has poor access to food. In addition to infectious diseases, mostly non-existent health care for mothers and young children and enormous level of illiteracy, particularly among mothers, malnutrition significantly contributes to the extremely high infant mortality. The third map shows extremely low percentage of children completing primary school. Source: Sudan: One country or two? BBC. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12115013>.

*“As South Sudan opens for business, foreign companies are flocking to invest in the new country and buy up land. For a school, a health centre, some vague promises of employment opportunities, or a couple of thousand dollars in annual lease payments, companies are given long-term leasehold rights of up to 99-years, often without the knowledge of the local populations living on the land”*⁷⁰. The authors also point out the large role of corruption in obtaining land lease contracts. The director of the Oakland Institute claims: *“The research exposed investors who said it is easy to make a deal—that they could usually get what they wanted in exchange for giving a poor tribal chief a bottle of Johnnie Walker.”*

Unfortunately, South Sudan is not alone in this situation. *“No-one should believe that these investors are there to feed starving Africans...These deals only lead to dollars in the pockets of corrupt leaders and foreign investors”*⁷¹, said an activist of Solidarity Movement for New Ethiopia.

Yet another potentially large source of natural wealth, which could better the lives of the South Sudanese is—surprise, surprise—oil! As we already know from Nigeria, oil can be both a blessing for a country and its people as well as a curse. In the case of South Sudan for a long time oil has felt more like a curse. Before the split of the country, Sudan produced about 500,000 barrels of oil a day. Much of this production was directed by pipelines to the port of Port Sudan on the shores of the Red Sea—and from there to China. It can be assumed that this flow of oil is what is behind China’s unwavering support for Sudan’s president Omar al-Bashir, a man accused by the West of genocide in Darfur against whom the International Criminal Court has issued two arrest warrants.⁷²

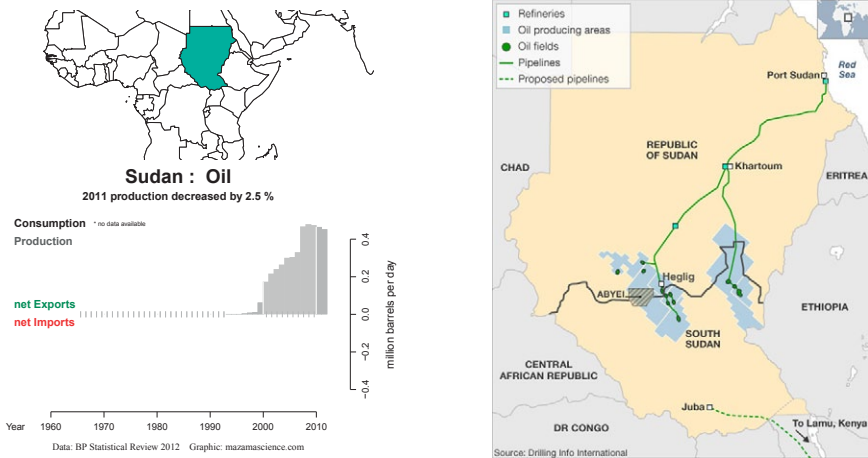
Although the division of Sudan into two states in 2011 played out relatively smoothly—that is without excessive violence—the two successor states failed to agree on how to split the oil wealth. The majority—75%—of the oil fields are in South Sudan, but, as illustrated on the map below, all refineries and pipelines allowing the transportation of oil to the markets run through northern Sudan. Northern Sudan accused South Sudan of not paying fees for oil transportation, and decided to retain the revenues from the oil sales. In January 2012 Sudan appropriated around 350 million U.S. dollars and as a response the government

70 South Sudan Set to Showcase its Foreign Investment Potential. <http://media.oaklandinstitute.org/south-sudan-set-showcase-its-foreign-investment-potential>.

71 Hedge funds “grabbing land” in Africa. BBC, 2011-06-08 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13688683>

72 In 2008, the International Criminal Court accused al-Bashir of crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide in Darfur, and an international arrest warrant for al-Bashir was issued in 2009. The second arrest warrant followed in the summer of 2010. Al-Bashir thus became the third head of state in history accused by the ICC. The court’s decision is opposed by the African Union, the Arab League, the Non-Aligned Movement as well as by the governments of China and Russia. According to the information exposed by WikiLeaks, over more than 20 years in power, al-Bashir has embezzled 9 billion U.S. dollars from public funds. ICC investigator says that there exists evidence proving this corruption. It is also worth noting that Saudi Arabian terrorist Osama bin Laden lived in Khartoum under the protection of al-Bashir’s regime in the years 1992–1996.

of South Sudan announced they had closed the oil valves. In the verbal shootout that followed this move, a spokesman from northern Sudan declared South Sudan free to do what it wanted, but the halt in oil export was more damaging to the South than its northern neighbor. The Sudanese know what they are talking about: 98% of South Sudan’s budget comes from oil. But in the case of northern Sudan it too is as much as 90%! Despite this economic reality the situation continued to escalate.



Map of Sudan’s oil infrastructure shows existing oil fields, pipelines and refineries located in two neighboring countries. Intended pipeline from Juba to the Kenyan port of Lam is marked in the lower part of the picture. Would it really happen, such pipeline could free South Sudan of dependence on transit routes through northern Sudan. Chart on the right illustrates Sudan’s oil production in Sudan including its stagnation in recent years. Sources: Sudan: One country or two? BBC. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12115013> , <http://www.mazamascience.com/OilExport/>.

In the spring of 2012 South Sudan further escalated a psychological war by signing the intergovernmental agreement with Kenya to build a pipeline from Juba to the port of Lamu on the shores of the Indian Ocean. In a burst of optimism unspoiled by reality, the leaders of South Sudan announced that the pipeline would be built within a year, thus inducing sympathetic smiles on many faces.⁷³ Even very optimistic oil industry analysts say that the construction of such pipeline would usually take three years and construction costs are estimated at U.S. \$4 billion. This is a large amount of money, even for a rich country in good times, but even more so in times of economic crisis and in one of the poorest countries of the world. At the time the contract was signed the Kenyan Prime Minister Odinga said

73 Slovak citizens should definitely tame their irony: they just need to remember the long list of failed promises from their politicians concerning the most expensive motorway across the country. It should have been completed back in 1995, then in 2000, in 2005, in 2010... and towards the end of 2012 they talk about 2020.

that the pipeline would go through Kenya territory but was going to be built and owned by South Sudan.

The question is what can a country full of poor and illiterate people really build and finance? Do they rely on the Chinese? But it is not in China's interest to damage friendly relationships with al-Bashir's Sudan—and the plan goes precisely against Al-Bashir. Around 66% of former Sudan's oil went to China⁷⁴ and the China National Oil Corporation operates a 1,600-kilometer long Greater Nile Oil Pipeline. It also controls a 40% share of the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company, which built the pipeline. The financing and construction of the Juma—Lamu pipeline would therefore present China with a major diplomatic and economic problem. On the other hand, to find resources for such a project in the West would also not be easy. In addition to the money and technical expertise needed for such a demanding project, properly addressing the environmental consequences of the pipeline would be another challenge. The Lamu region belongs to one of the most attractive parts of the East African coast. Western investors and the Kenyan government should not be indifferent to its disruption.

Although the majority of South Sudan's population lives on subsistence farming and for some period of time the new state relied on development aid from the West, Southern Sudan does need oil money. If for nothing else it needs them to be able to pay its disproportionately large army, composed of many armed groups that fought in the civil war. Their fighters either receive monthly salaries, or...

The northern neighbor, of course, is also just bluffing when it declares that stopping oil production in the south is indifferent: the secession of the fertile and oil-rich South Sudan has left a big hole in Sudan's budget and in country's food security. Inflation, rising food prices and the inspiration from neighboring Egypt have begun to push masses of unemployed youth onto the streets of Khartoum. Not even the warlord al-Bashir can be absolutely sure he will not face the same fate as his colleague Hosni Mubarak ousted by youth revolts. Most of Sudan's population is Sudanese Arabs, so the inspiration from the Arab world penetrates among them very easily. The risk of hunger in the country continues to grow and in Spring 2012 around half a million people in Sudan were living on the brink of famine. The truth is that so far only two states—the Blue Nile and South Kordofan, both located on the southern border ridden by conflicts—were at risk of famine. Unfortunately the conflicts made it practically impossible for the World Food Programme and UNICEF to deliver emergency aid to these areas.

The American ambassador to Sudan, Princeton Lyman, warned the world in January 2012 by stating that: "*There is a looming humanitarian disaster in Sudan*". He asked South Africa who was chairing the U.S. Security Council "*to play a role in preventing a colossal disaster*".⁷⁵ The Sudanese ambassador to South Africa responded to this statement by warning that

74 Can China stop conflict in the Sudans?, CNN, 2012-04-06, http://edition.cnn.com/2012/04/05/world/africa/sudan-china-diplomacy/index.html?hpt=iaf_c2

75 Sudan faces potential famine, U.S. envoy warns, CNN, 2012-01-18, http://edition.cnn.com/2012/01/18/world/africa/sudan-famine-warning/index.html?hpt=hp_t2

the situation in Sudan may be worse than in Somalia and foreign intervention could cause more harm than good: *“The world has looked at Somalia, not knowing what to do... But if you push everyone, you could have a situation worse than Somalia.”*

Only time will tell where the oil dispute between northern and southern Sudan will lead. In April 2012, it seemed like the worst possible scenario had started and the two states were heading towards open violence. A Sudanese newspaper called this scenario the “war for oil”. For 6 months after the split of Sudan the fighting continued around the imprecisely demarcated borders and both sides accused each other of harboring rebels from the other side. In January 2012 satellite images obtained by the Satellite Sentinel Project⁷⁶ recorded a growing concentration of a Sudanese army in South Kordofan. In March the army of South Sudan penetrated the oil fields in the north and the North immediately responded by bombing southern Sudan. The world responded by extensive diplomatic intervention seeking to stop this open violence. But how great is the chance of maintaining peace in two increasingly poor countries oversaturated with disputes over vital raw materials, oil and food?⁷⁷

If we include a religious component on top of the Sudanese ethnic conflicts and escalating struggle for livestock, water, oil and other natural resources, as was shown in the chapter about Nigeria, Sudan may become an even more explosive time-bomb. Both countries have their own nation building mythologies and preconditions that could encourage them to move in that direction. Just read the lyrics of their anthems. At the threshold of the 21st century, the national anthem of northern Sudan declares something strikingly similar to what the Hussite hymn “Who Are God’s Warriors” declared in the early 15th century. While the anthem of South Sudan counters the northern one equally devoutly.

North:

*We are the army of God and our land,
We shall never fail when called to sacrifice.
Whether braving death, hardship or pain,
We give our lives as the price of glory.
May this Our Land, Sudan, live long,
Showing all nations the way.
Sons of the Sudan, summoned now to serve,
Shoulder the task of preserving our country.*

76 Satellite Sentinel Project—<http://www.satsentinel.org/>—was established by actor George Clooney and his partners. The purpose of the project is to contribute to early warning and prevention of violence and genocide in Sudan using satellite monitoring and other modern technologies. The project was prompted by the failure of the Western governments to prevent genocide in Rwanda, Darfur and Congo. Images provided by Satellite Sentinel are being provided to world media, politicians and broad public and are able to capture important features such as concentration and movement of troops and military equipment, burned villages or mass graves.

77 MPs in Khartoum brand South Sudan „enemy“ state, BBC, 2012-04-16, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17727624>

South:

*Oh God,
We praise and glorify you
For your grace on South Sudan,*

*Land of great abundance.
Uphold us united in peace and harmony.*

*Oh motherland,
Arise! Raise your flag with the guiding star
And sing songs of freedom with joy
For justice, liberty and prosperity
Shall forever more reign.*

*Oh great patriots,
Let us stand up in silence and respect
Saluting our martyrs
Whose blood cemented our national foundation.
We vow to protect our nation.
Oh Lord, bless South Sudan.*

Whatever happens in the short and long-term future of South Sudan, one thing appears to be quite clear: to provide meaningful development assistance with lasting results to this country is virtually impossible with the resources that the new EU member states are capable or willing to allocate for development aid.

What does this imply?

We will seek the answer in the following chapter.

Damocles' Sword of Food Crisis: Climate, Oil, Water, Phosphorus and Africa's Prospects

After the famine in East Africa (2011), the famine in the Sahel (2012). Low productivity of small farmers. Climate change and consequences in Africa and in the main agricultural regions of the world. Peak oil and food. Water crisis and the “food bubble” in Asia. Phosphates and phosphate fertilizers.

Let us close the first part of this book by attempting to provide a short synthesis of some of the key global trends and their likely consequences in sub-Saharan Africa. We start this synthesis with a short story produced by CNN in Niger, where—as in the whole Sahel region—another famine started to develop in spring of 2012. As if there were not enough difficulties, security and the political situation in this desert and semi-desert zone started to rapidly destabilize as a consequence of the Western-assisted fall of Muammar Gaddafi's dictatorship in Libya.

Face of a famine: Sahel, Spring 2012⁷⁸

The knock on the door is a sign of bad things to come.

“Do you have any work?” they ask.

They have fled their villages and come into the city out of desperation. Their bellies ache from hunger.

“For those of us in the city, we are seeing the first signs of food crisis spreading across our country. We have seen it before. It has already started, and it is coming fast.”

78 This story is one of many brought by the Western media in an effort to warn the public in rich countries on the human tragedy hidden behind the numbers of cold statistics. Story by Moni Basu with contribution from Joseph Netto was published under title “Hunger in Niger threatens millions” on the CNN's website in February 2012. http://edition.cnn.com/2012/02/18/world/africa/niger-hunger/index.html?hpt=hp_t2

That's what Haoua Lankoande, a manager with the humanitarian agency CARE wrote in a recent blog post from the Niger capital, Niamey.

The first phase of hunger drives villagers into the city; the second phase brings knocks on the door, Lankoande wrote.

"Do you have any food?" they ask. "I haven't eaten in three days."

Eventually in phase three, Lankoande said, people don't ask anymore.

"You wake up and go outside in the morning, and there is a family sleeping on your doorstep. They don't ask for anything, they just look up at you, hoping"

CARE and other aid agencies fear Niger is already in the first stage of crisis. It doesn't take long, they say, for the situation to deteriorate from phase one to three.

"What we are seeing is a tip of the iceberg," said Cassandra Nelson, spokeswoman for Mercy Corps. Nearly half of Niger does not have enough to eat. The 5.4 million people struggling to stay alive are part of a wider crisis affecting at least 10 million people across the swath across Africa that borders the Sahara, known as the Sahel.

This is the third time in the last decade the people of the Sahel have faced severe food shortages.

The problem, caused by drought and high food prices, is exacerbated by an ongoing conflict in Mali between the military and Tuareg rebels that has forced people to flee into neighboring nations.

Niger, Mali, Chad, Burkina Faso and Mauritania are all facing hunger. All five governments have declared states of emergency.

In Niger, people depend on crops and livestock for survival. They are used to living life on the edge. Every year, life is a gamble.

In the dry months, they prepare for what is known as the "lean season." They eat once a day or maybe even once every 36 hours.

Typically, said Nelson of Mercy Corps, the lean season begins in May. This year, it has already arrived. Premature and deadly.

This week, a United Nations delegation arrived in Niger to size up the horrific situation.

"We know what is coming, and we know what to do to save lives," said Valerie Amos, the U.N. emergency relief coordinator. "While we cannot stop this crisis from taking place, we are taking steps to avert a catastrophe."

Amos said international aid agencies have called for about \$725 million to respond to the crisis. Donors so far have provided \$135 million.

"But we need more resources now to prevent a large-scale crisis," she said.

In the hard-hit Filengue region, the images are stark. A woman with skin as black as her dress is white surrounded by shades of parched earth. Around her, rows of millet and sorghum that no amount of water could save now. The rains came late and locusts and crickets damaged crops. The next harvest isn't until October. People grow more desperate by the day, Nelson said.

A bridge stands over a river of crevices. People dig up the river bed, hunting for the last few drops of water. They rely now on God and authorities, one man told the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

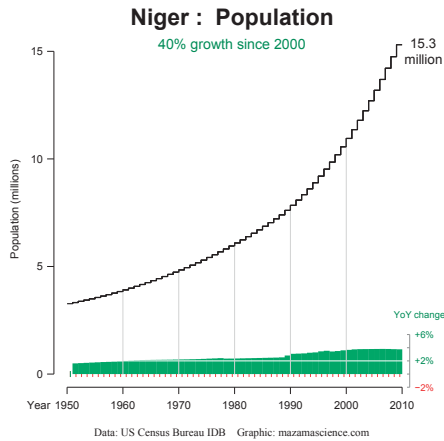
The agency said it has enough emergency food in the area to feed 2 million people in the Sahel for a month. It hopes to reach 8 million people in the coming months.

Dije Ousmana told CARE she tries not to think of the three babies she has lost in previous years when food was hard to come by. But she is seeing all the wretched symptoms of hunger again in 2-month-old Abdulhadi, wailing to be fed.

She put her baby to her breast but there is no milk, she told CARE. "I haven't eaten yet today."

The first thing I do after reading stories like this one—they are currently almost a daily occurrence—is to open population a databrowser at the mazamascience website (www.mazamascience.com/Population/IDB) and find data for the given country.

This is graph illustrates development in Niger:



So during the first decade of the 21st century the population of Niger has risen by 40%. Can this end any other way but tragically? Can this end up with something other than pictures of starving children with eyes full of flies and vultures waiting patiently nearby until they die?

The food security situation in many African countries is strained to bursting point. What is worse, the chances of improving it are very small. Despite many optimistically tuned reports pointing to the potential of unused land in Africa or groundwater supplies beneath the Sahara, not only sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab world to the north, but all of mankind is entering an era in which food will become scarce and expensive. There are many reasons for this gloomy prognosis and readers with a deeper interest in this issue should look, for

instance, through the book “The Incoming Famine—The Global Food Crisis and What We Can Do to Avoid It” by Julian Cribb.⁷⁹

Most Africans have no formal job and survive through subsistence living, living on what they can grow themselves—the same method which was also common in Europe and elsewhere in the world just a few centuries ago. Any excess is sold on the market and the money generated serves to meet their other needs. This kind of agriculture is outdated, inefficient and requires a lot of hard physical work. The poverty of most African farmers prevents them from increasing profitability or even their own food security: without machinery they cannot cultivate more soil, without fertilizers they can only reach low yields, without the capacity to capture rain and to irrigate their crops they are at the mercy of frequent droughts. Without education and knowledge they often grow unsuitable crops, or only a limited selection, increasing their vulnerability. The results are frequent hunger, malnutrition, and millions of Africans dependent on food aid—or dying.

Climate Change

All the factors mentioned in the title of this chapter will not only worsen the ability of Africans to grow enough food for themselves, but unfortunately also the ability of Americans and Europeans to save lives by providing food assistance to hungry people in the case of famine. Agricultural productivity in both developing and developed countries will be severely hit by rapid climate change in the coming years and decades. Data from climatologists are merciless: the earth’s climate is warming at an unprecedented pace and “the train” is already moving with such force and speed that it cannot be stopped nor we can jump off. Since the beginning of the systematic measurements of temperature, the average temperature of the planet’s surface has risen by 0.8 degrees Celsius—the major part of this increase occurred in the last 40 years. The past decade was the warmest decade since the measurements began.

If you think an increase of 0.8 °C in average global temperature is insignificant,⁸⁰ you may start to perceive things differently if you consider that the difference in average global temperature between the ice ages and interglacial periods (in the latter our civilization evolved) was on average only 6 °C. In other words, when the Earth was on average 6 °C cooler than today, Poland, northern Germany, Scandinavia, United Kingdom, but also northern Russia, Canada and northern United States were covered by hundreds to thousands of meters of ice. The freezing tundra and steppe winds battered much of Central and Western Europe

79 Julian Cribb, *The Coming Famine—The Global Food Crisis and What We Can Do to Avoid it*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2010

80 A well known “joker” in this respect was former Czech president Václav Klaus, who became famous through his naive statements pointing to the fact that the temperature differences between day and night are usually much greater than 0.8 °C. To compare circadian rhythm of weather with global climate change is, of course, “profound misunderstanding” of a man who compensate serious deficit in his science education by blissful ignorance and massive ego.

as well as the United States and herds of reindeer and mammoths grazed over unforgiving freezing lands covered today by fields and forests.

Unlike in the past, mankind today—with only a very small exception of a few surviving groups of hunters and gatherers—depends on agriculture.⁸¹ The three key crops sustaining most of humanity are corn, wheat and rice. Of course, people grow and eat many other plants, but these three are the basic pillars of our civilization. Just as other biological species, all agricultural plants have their physiological optimal temperatures at which they perform the best and produce good yields. This is also applicable for rice, maize and wheat. The current climate in moderate climate zones of the Earth is around the optimum temperature at which they deliver maximum yields. Higher temperatures reduce their fertility. For instance rice yields decrease with each degree of ambient temperature above 32 °C by about 5%. At 40 °C however, the growth and reproduction of crops comes to a complete stop. Just a few days of temperatures of 38–40 °C during the sensitive development phase of corn, wheat or rice and the next harvest may be destroyed.

In the chapter on the “Arab Spring” I wrote about the heat wave during the summer of 2010 and the effect it had on Russia’s wheat harvest. It dropped by almost 40%, leading to a devastating rise in global food prices and severe geopolitical consequences. The World Bank warns that global warming could result in a 50% decrease in Africa’s food production and nearly a one third reduction in Central and Southern Asia during the next 20 years.⁸² This is significant if you recall that India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are among the most populous countries in the world and their combined population exceeds 1.5 billion people.

Global warming will not only bring higher temperatures, but also droughts affecting large areas that are the current granaries of the world. Although more water will evaporate from the oceans due to higher temperatures, there will also be major changes in the nature and distribution of rainfall: a large proportion of clouds saturated with moisture will rain out while still over the seas and oceans. The part which reaches the continents will often rain down in the form of short devastating storms causing floods and mudslides. Part of the water captured by the soils will be quickly lost due to accelerated evaporation. Many recently fertile temperate agricultural ecosystems in the U.S., Canada, Europe and Russia will turn into steppe, the steppe into semi-deserts and semi-deserts into deserts. The above mentioned countries of temperate climate zones together with the large and sparsely populated countries of Australia and Argentina are the main producers of food surpluses. These surpluses are currently exported and feed, for instance, people in the Arab world—or, in the times of famines, are distributed by humanitarian organizations to millions of starving people.

81 For the sake of completeness we have to add “and fish”, since fishing is the main source of protein for hundreds of millions of people. But even their diet does not consist only of the fish and the balance is dependent on agriculture.

82 See book by Juliana Cribbs, page 138.

While for Europeans and Americans the medium-term perspective is expensive food pushing millions of currently middle class families into poverty, for people living in tropical and subtropical areas, the consequences are likely to be disastrous. Once the United States, Canada, Europe and Russia will not be able to produce and export surplus of food, not only the global prices rise sharply, but after each drought and crop failure in Africa millions will go hungry and without food assistance. Not only there: crop failure in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh or a few barren years in China would mean hundreds of millions more hungry people.

Peak oil

If the consequences of global warming itself are not sufficient to be seriously worried about global food security, there are other unavoidable threats still to hit. One of them is peak oil. Although we have already touched upon the topic of peak oil in the chapter on the Arab Spring, if you have not heard about peak oil before reading this book, do not be surprised—especially if you live in Central-East Europe.

Let us recap. For millennia the economy has been driven by the strength of human and animal muscle, by energy coming from burning wood and biomass, and partly by hydro and wind energy powering water and wind mills and boats. Since the advent of the industrial revolution modern civilization is driven by other energy sources. By far the most important are the three types of fossil fuels—oil, coal and natural gas. Today these three provide mankind with 87% of its primary energy consumption. In 2012 about 33% of our energy consumption originated from oil, 30% from coal and about 24% from natural gas. Each of these three types of fuel has one important shortcoming: they or are non-renewable, finite energy resources. Unfortunately a large majority of humanity, including politicians and the media, are living in sweet and soporific believe that the geological reserves of these fuels are enormous. This is partly true: except for the fact that in terms of the economy the amount of these resources still in the ground is not that important—really important is the amount that can get to the consumer and at what price.

These are two fundamentally different things. In 1956, American geologist Marion King Hubbert, analyzed the dynamics of production of individual oil wells and oil fields in the U.S. He predicted that oil production in the U.S. would reach its peak sometime around 1970 and then it would inevitably start to decline. He called the moment of turnover in the production “the peak oil” and the bell-shaped curve which shows the production of oil fields and countries over their lifetime became known as the “Hubbert Curve”. When Hubbert first came up with his forecast, the U.S. was the largest oil producer in the world and the very idea that American oil extraction would start to decline was received with scepticism and even ridicule. Time, however, proved that Hubbert was right: U.S. crude production reached its maximum in 1970. Despite the opening of the Alaskan and Gulf of Mexico oil fields later on, it never recovered to its previous heights. King Hubbert later came up with a forecast for the whole world: according to his calculations, global production “assuming

current trends in consumption” should peak around 1995. As a result of the oil crises in 1973 and 1981 as well as the increase in fuel efficiency of European and Japanese cars and high gasoline taxation in Europe and Japan, the growth of oil consumption slowed down a bit and the time of global peak oil was slightly delayed.

World crude oil production peaked in 2005 and since then it has been fluctuating around the peak plateau of about 74 million barrels per day. The problem is that the production did not increase despite the fact that the price of oil went up dramatically. The price of crude oil on the world market has been between 20 to 30 U.S. dollars during 2000–2005, but after 2005 oil became much more expensive. In 2008, Brent crude oil prices briefly reached U.S. \$145 per barrel and during 2011 and 2012 were at 100 to 120 U.S. dollars. This means about a 4-fold increase in the price of crude oil in less than 10 years! In February 2012 the price of oil in euros broke even the record set in 2008 (oil is traded in U.S. dollars and in 2008 the euro was stronger against the dollar). The normal reaction to the growth of the price in a market economy is to increase production—a matter of supply and demand dynamics. Oil producers, however, failed to respond to the massive 4-fold increase in the price of oil—an extremely strong market signal. Why?

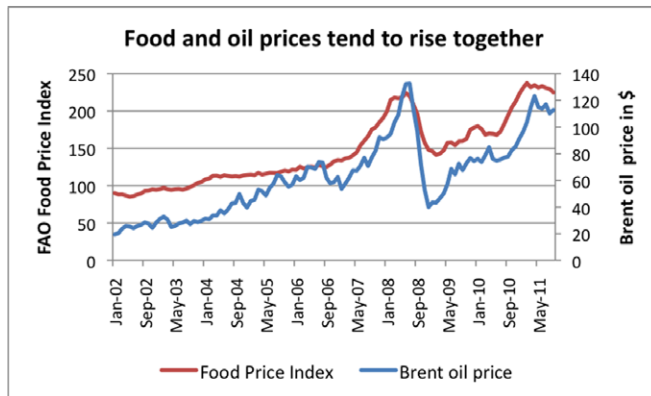
The most likely answer is that “where there is nothing, even devil does not take”. Very high oil prices over the last few years have made even extraction of small, remote or deep sea deposits profitable. The same can be said of poor quality oil and very expensive and environmentally devastating extraction of oil from the oil sands and shale. This type of production is very expensive but it was this expensive mining of so called *unconventional oil* which made it possible to maintain the production plateau. However, the situation in oil production appears to be very tense and it is only a matter of time before oil production starts to decline. Sir Richard Branson, the owner of a large business conglomerate with several airlines and transportation companies whose operation is entirely dependent on oil expressed in 2010 the assumption that the world will be hit by the “oil crunch” by 2015. If you read this book after 2015, you are in position to judge whether his estimate was correct.

The number of new conventional oil fields discovered by geologists has been steadily falling for almost 50 years, despite the fact that geologists are now able to use much more modern and sensitive methods. Oil can only be drilled once it has been found therefore the fast decline in new oil field discoveries gives a very clear prognosis. The question is just how fast will the falling extraction of remaining oil take and how fast and high will the oil price on the global markets go?

Stagnation and a decline in crude oil production is not the only one factor in the game: the other is the growing oil consumption in some countries, which are major oil exporters. In most cases these are not exactly democratic regimes and many of them maintain the loyalty of their people—as we have seen in the chapter on Nigeria—through significantly subsidized fuel prices and, if possible, also subsidizing staple foods. Thus fuel prices in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, Iraq, United Arab Emirates, Nigeria or Venezuela are much lower than on the international market. This encourages fuel and energy inefficiency and, combined

with rapid population growth in these countries, leads to a rapidly growing domestic consumption of oil.

Growth in domestic consumption in the oil producing countries means that the amount of oil available on the international markets will decline even faster than total production—and the price of oil for countries that need to import it will rise even faster. Importantly the price of oil and food strongly correlate, which is given by the high energy-intensity of modern food production. This close relationship is illustrated in the graph below:



Global food and oil prices are closely linked and grow hand-in-hand. Source: http://articles.businessinsider.com/2011-10-21/markets/30305401_1_growth-in-global-oil-oil-reserves-oil-price/2

The rising oil prices will pull up food prices independently of poor harvests caused by droughts and climate change. With the exception of Nigeria, Angola, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Congo, Chad and South Sudan the rest of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa do not produce oil.⁸³ This puts them in a very risky position that many of them will be priced out of the global oil market by the rich countries able to pay future high prices and buy oil in large quantities. Such a development would have a very serious consequence on food security in African countries. While in the past famines were common in Europe,⁸⁴ the expansion

83 Let us add, for the sake of completeness, that offshore drilling of oil in Ghana was in the stage of preparations as of 2012.

84 The last great famine in Europe devastated Ireland in the years 1845 to 1852. This famine was caused by a fungal disease of potatoes, a crop that the masses of the poor Irish depended on. The situation was further worsened by ruthless and genocidal policy of the British government. Famine has gone down in history under the name of Gorta Mór—the Great Famine—and killed about one million Irish people. Another million Irish have left the country to escape from hunger and poverty. Many Irish emigrants ended up in the young United States of America, which in 1850 had 23 million people (of whom more than 3 million were black slaves). As a result of Gorta Mór, within a few short years the population of Ireland declined by 20% to 25%. It never again reached the pre-1845 level and the Irish and their descendants became a major and significant American minority.

of the food trade allowed Europe to overcome the problem of regional crop failures and famines by importing food from remote areas, where the harvest was good. High oil prices and the eventual lack of fuel will increase the cost of long distance food trade and may possibly hamper—or completely stop—the delivery of food aid in the case of famines.

Even if food aid for countries suffering from famine gets into African ports and coastal cities, it is already now very difficult and sometimes impossible to transport it fast enough and in the quantities needed into the deep interior of the vast continent which has mostly poor roads and almost no rail infrastructure. The problem is known to humanitarian aid workers as the “last mile problem”: aid deliveries overcome vast distances from the other side of the world to be eventually stopped the last 10 to 20 kilometers from the people needing help. Today the problem is often overcome by distributing food aid by dropping it from helicopters or airplanes.⁸⁵ However, air travel is not only very expensive, but also 100% dependent on oil. Peak oil, therefore, will not only seriously affect food production and trade, but also our capacity to deliver humanitarian and food aid to remote areas. And it will also reduce the possibilities of staff from humanitarian organizations—or journalists—to travel to remote African areas.

Food and water crisis in Asia

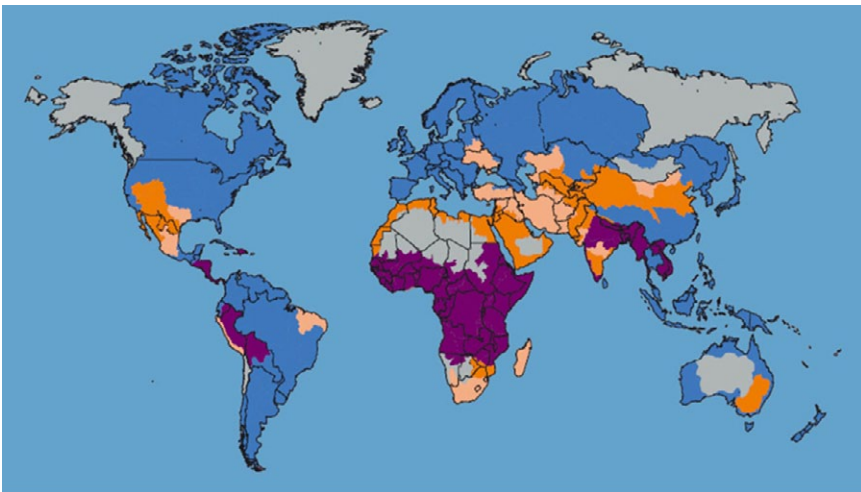
Unfortunately, the threat to mankind’s food security and to the people of Africa, in particular, does not end with climate change or just more expensive oil. One of the main engines of the “green revolution” which helped to significantly increase food production and to saturate the rapidly growing human population with food in the 20th century was irrigation. Europeans receive plenty of rain and enjoy mild temperatures allowing rain-fed agriculture to be a reality. What people in Europe do not necessarily realize is that about 40% to 45% of the world’s food comes from irrigated fields. These irrigated fields use about 70% of the water consumed by the mankind.

Three-quarters of the irrigated fields of the world are in China, India and Pakistan. The combined population of these three countries exceeds 2.7 billion people. In terms of irrigation, these three are followed by other Asian countries, but at least partly also by the USA. Since the time of the pharaohs the irrigation power of Africa is Egypt, while countries south of the Sahara lag behind in this parameter. The future prospects for irrigation in Asia will, due to the lion’s share of the food production dependent on irrigation in populous countries like China, India or Pakistan, influence world food prices. Thus exhaustion of water

85 Dropping food aid from low-flying aircraft without parachutes is captured in the 2005 film “Constant Gardener”—for the role of the main character in this film actress Rachel Weisz won the Oscar. In one of the scenes of this film a UN plane flying from an airport in Kenya is dropping bags of food in famine stricken southern Sudan. The film also shows a sequence showing a raid on a village with raiders taking looted animals and children. The technique of dropping food bags without parachutes was developed by Canadians to supply small settlements and military crews in the far north of Canada without need for landing the planes.

for irrigation in Asia will eventually descend on those African countries, which to their own detriment, themselves do not use irrigation to increase their own food production.

Sub-Saharan Africa is not a stranger to serious water shortages or the consequences and risks coming with long-term irrigation. Not only deserts such as the Sahara, Kalahari or Namib suffer from a lack of water in Africa. As shown on the map below, economic or physical water scarcity affects almost the entire continent. Physical water scarcity means that there not enough water to feed the needs of the ecosystems and people in a given region. As people often manage to maintain their needs at the expense of nature, the result of physical water scarcity is often the degradation of ecosystems and a decrease in groundwater levels; if there was any groundwater in the region. In 2010, 1.2 billion people worldwide were living under the conditions of physical water scarcity. The areas of the world suffering from physical water scarcity include the entire coast of North Africa from Senegal in the west to Sudan and Somalia to the east, and the entire Arabian Peninsula. However, from the global perspective and from the point of view of food security, it is noteworthy that the large areas of the most populated countries in the world—China, India and Pakistan—belong to the physical water scarcity category.



Different forms of water scarcity around the world. The blue color means enough water, lavender risk of physical water scarcity and dark-purple physical water scarcity. Economic water scarcity is in red and gray zones are not evaluated. Source: <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=freshwater-crisis-current-situation>

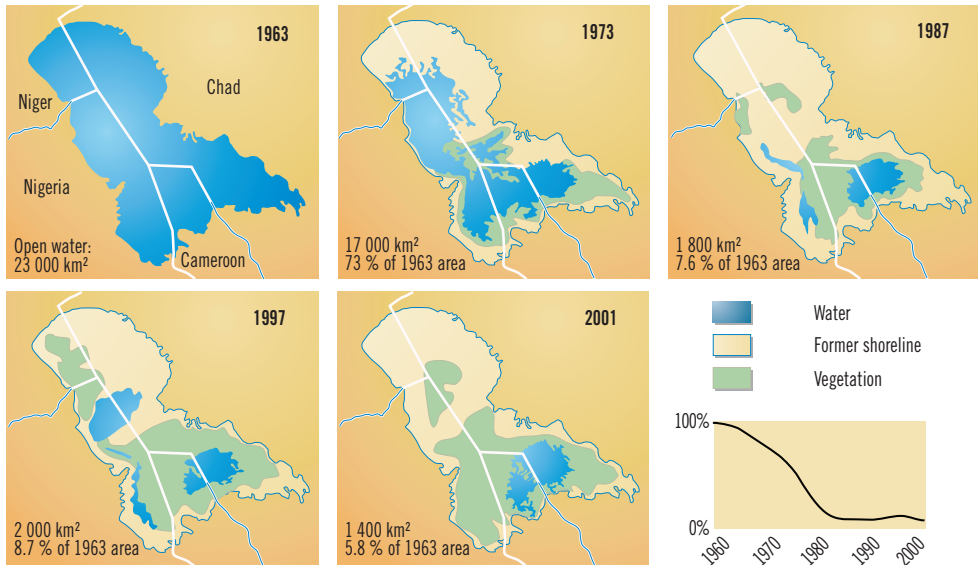
More than 2.7 billion people live in these three countries, and among them hundreds of millions of people live in a “food bubble”—artificially inflated and unsustainable food production, which is very likely to burst within one—two decades. When this happens, a world food crisis and humanitarian disaster of the dimensions that are beyond the medieval apocalyptic imagination will break out.

This is because the food nourishing the hundreds of millions of people is produced through pumping groundwater. However, the levels of ground water are fast dropping in many areas of India and China.⁸⁶ When the million wells (millions in the case is a very real number, not literary exaggeration) hit the bottom, the water will be suddenly gone and with it also the food for tens if not hundreds of millions of people. Due to the excessive pumping of underground water, draining water from rivers into irrigation channels and recurrent droughts, thousands of lakes have already dried up in China, including the largest Chinese lake, the Poyang Lake. By 2012 the area of the lake had shrunk from original 3,500 km² to 200 km². Of course, this looks insignificant if compared to the tragedy of the Aral Sea, which was by 2007 had decreased from its original size of 68,000 km² to four lakes with combined area of about 7,000 km². Unfortunately, these are just two examples among thousands of others across the world.⁸⁷ Due to the same reasons that lakes are disappearing in China, the waters of the mighty Yellow River—the mother of Chinese civilization—have not reached the sea several times over the past decade. The water on its way to the sea was used by people, so the riverbed has just dried up. This fate has befallen many world rivers, including the Colorado and Indus.

Only 50 years ago Lake Chad, situated on the borders of Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon, was one of the largest African lakes. However, a combination of overusing water for irrigation from its two main tributaries and a changing climate has resulted in the lake losing 95% of its area during my own lifetime. A lake that used to cover an area almost as large as Belgium has shrunk to little over 1,000 km² or the size of a district. The lake is the source of water for about 20 million people, livestock and fields in the four mentioned countries.

86 Unfortunately, not only there. Much of the agriculture in one of the breadbaskets of the USA—states of Oklahoma, northern Texas, Kansas and around them, much of productivity depends on water pumped from giant fossil aquifer Ogalala. Despite the vast area and volume of Ogalala aquifer, decades of pumping are leading to rapid decrease in groundwater level and in some areas wells have already dried up. This is the territory which during the years 1930–1940 suffered by severe drought, wind erosion and a gigantic dust storms. The phenomenon has gone down in history under the name “Dust Bowl”. Dust Bowl caused great social crisis, hundreds of thousands of people were economically ruined and multitudes of refugees were forced to leave Oklahoma and other affected areas. The events of the time are brilliantly captured in the novel *The Grapes of Wrath* by American Nobel laureate in literature John Steinbeck.

87 During the drought in 2011, only in the province of Hubei 1300 lakes dried up and were declared dead. Yangtze delta hit by worst drought in decades, 2011-05-27, <http://www.smh.com.au/world/yangtze-delta-hit-by-worst-drought-in-decades-20110526-1f6fq.html>

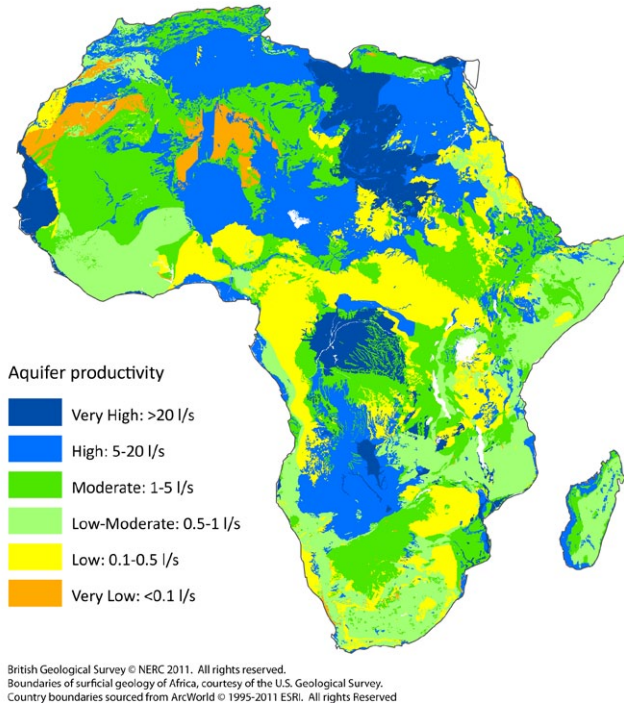


Chronology of change: decline in the area of Lake Chad from 1963 to 2001.

Source: <http://basementgeographer.blogspot.sk/2010/10/lake-chad-where-did-it-go.html>

In addition to physical water scarcity residents across sub-Saharan Africa live in conditions of economic scarcity. This kind of water shortage occurs due to the low investment in water infrastructure and results in the inability of people to secure water in sufficient quantities and quality. Economic water scarcity is visibly manifested by the lack of infrastructure as well as by frequent scenes of people taking water for cooking and drinking from muddy puddles, ponds or heavily polluted rivers, and from images of women standing in lines around the wells and carrying heavy buckets of water on their heads, often walking kilometers to their homes.

Under vast parts of the Sahara and other regions of Africa lie huge reservoirs of underground water. The news about these water reservoirs sometimes causes waves of euphoria with the chance of Africans to overcome the problem of their water shortage. The size of these aquifers is depicted on the map below. Many of these stocks have been known to geologists for at least half a century, yet the only country which has succeeded in tapping them and bringing significant amounts of water to large cities was Libya. In order to build the very costly underground aquifers the “Great Man-made River”, Muammar Gaddafi used his country’s vast revenues from oil. However, even this achievement did not save him from dissatisfaction and the mortal anger of his own people.



Aquifers in Africa and their productivity.

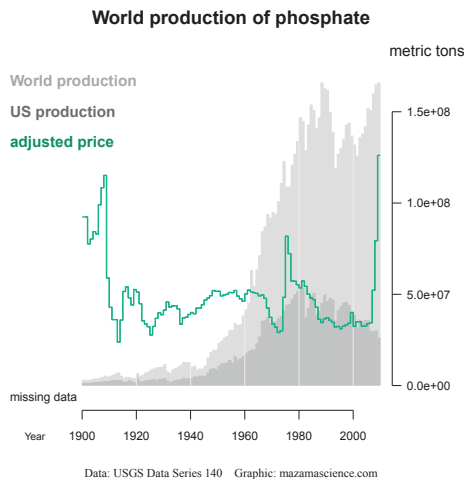
Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-17775211>

Although many African countries often suffering from drought and consequent food shortages have aquifers under the surface, they do not have financial resources comparable to Libya's. A combination of poverty and poor knowledge and technical skills, however, in the majority of African countries prevents even simpler and cheaper measures that would increase their food security. For instance, even in arid areas of Botswana—in a country where even the local currency is called “pula”, meaning rain—or in Tanzania and Kenya it is not common to see gutters on the roofs. This means local people during the rainy season fail to capture rainwater from the roof and are not able to use it during the dry season or to irrigate their gardens and fields. During the rainy seasons they face the risk of local floods—and during recurrent droughts thirst and hunger.

Phosphates and phosphorous fertilizers

Let me conclude this short list of acute threats to food security by mentioning one more risk. In 2007, the Canadian physicist Patrick Déry applied an analytical approach of “peak oil” to the phosphate deposits which are the source of phosphate fertilizers. To his surprise he

found that global production of phosphates had already peaked in 1989. Maybe historians will remember “annus mirabilis 1989” for entirely different reason than the one it is memorable for in Central and Eastern Europe. The graph below shows that since 2000, producers have again managed to increase their production and in 2010 phosphate production reached levels comparable to 1989. The continued decline of mining in the United States however suggests that the logic of “peak” applies to phosphate production as it does to oil. Given the significant growth of the population in the world, it is clear that current production of phosphates per person is significantly lower than it was during the first peak in 1989.



Development of the global (light gray) and U.S. (dark gray) phosphate production from 1900 to 2010 and the development of prices (green curve). The graph shows that the producers were able to respond to four-fold growth in prices by increasing production. Source: <http://mazamascience.com/Minerals/USGS/>

Why are phosphates so important? Phosphorus is an essential biogenic element. It is, for instance, an essential part of the structure of DNA and RNA, in which genetic information is stored in all organisms or part of adenosine triphosphate, a key component of cell energy metabolism. All plants, animals and humans need it to build their bodies. Plants acquire phosphorus from soil minerals. There is however a limited amount of phosphorus in the soil, so farmers must keep adding it to the soil — along with nitrogen and potassium — in the form of fertilizers. Alongside the expansion of irrigation, a massive — ten-fold — increase in the global use of mineral fertilizers was another key factor in the green revolution. Phosphates are a basic raw material for the production of phosphate fertilizers. While nitrogen is richly represented in the atmosphere and some plants species can extract it from the air and store it in the soil, with phosphorus there is no other option but to add it through fertilizers.

This merciless equation therefore applies: no phosphate = no food. Less phosphorus = less food.

Phosphate deposits throughout the world are even distributed less evenly than oil reserves. About two-thirds of phosphate is mined in only three countries: China, the U.S. and Morocco (including Western Sahara occupied by Morocco). The table below provides detailed information. They show that while some countries of the MENA region are among the major producers of phosphate (which gives it another globally important commodity in addition to crude oil and natural gas), significant phosphate mining in sub-Saharan Africa is limited to South Africa, Togo and Senegal.

Country	Production in thousand of ton annually
China	65,000
USA	26,100
Morocco and Western Sahara	26,000
Russia	10,000
Tunisia	7,600
Jordan	6,000
Brazil	5,500
Egypt	5,000
Israel	3,000
Australia	2,800
Syria	2,800
South Africa	2,300
Algeria	2,000
Togo	800
Canada	700
Senegal	650
Rest of the world	9,500

Source: <http://www.mapsofworld.com/minerals/world-rock-phosphate-producers.html>

Global warming and climate change, peak oil, the aquifers in India, China and the U.S. which are drying up, and the global water crisis, rising prices and escalating food shortages, a peak in phosphate production are some of the key global trends that will fundamentally affect the lives of people in the 21st century. Not only in Africa, but the lives of all humanity, including economies, society, democracy and the standard of living in the rich countries of moderate climate zones. The problems Africa is facing today will however deepen even more and therefore the need to search for immediate solutions becomes even more urgent.

If the famous sword of Damocles is hanging over whole of mankind, there are several such swords simultaneously hanging over Africa.



SECTION TWO:
**From Diagnosing
the Problems
to Remediation**



The White Man's Burden: Europeans on the Road to Development Aid

I wouldn't be surprised in the least if the previous chapters have evoked the feeling that it's futile to try and help Africans and Africa at all. However, this was not my intention and I think that conclusion is incorrect. If the situation in Africa was simple and the opportunities to effectively help the people there more mature, it is highly likely that a majority of the issues would be resolved, or, at the very least, they would not be such major issues. Unfortunately, Africa's problems are complex and there is no simple solution. If simple solutions did exist, we almost surely would have found them and we would no longer bear witness to the failures of so many of its countries.

Many such African problems are pre-destined by the very nature of the continent, as has been discussed in the first sections of this book. Another factor is that people themselves are often ultimately left with no other options by the unrelenting circumstances of their own lives and are unaware of the consequences of their actions. Occasionally problems occur due to the incorrect application of development aid and policy from the relatively wealthy West. This leads to occasional sentiments along the lines of: "Stop the development aid, it's destroying us!" No one who follows developments at home should be surprised; in Slovakia and in other countries in Central Europe the same sentiments are expressed when someone says that it would be better if Brussels stopped sending aid, as European funds feed corruption among politicians and government officials, leading to embezzlement by already-rich criminals, scammers and speculators while supporting projects that devastate the environment.

What we term development aid in this day and age has a much longer history than one would assume at a first glance. Some of the oldest roots for this term are derived from the arrogance exhibited by the white race, which progressively came to dominate the entire world starting in the 16th century, resulting in a drive to reshape the world using fire and

steel in its own image and as a reflection of its convictions, which it considered as the only correct belief. The British, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch and countless officials, soldiers, traders, priests and colonizers came to North and South America, India, Australia, the Far East and, of course, to Africa, in a way that was no different than the ancient Romans had done centuries earlier. They didn't have even the slightest doubt that they were the bearers of the highest level of civilization. Everyone else, in the best case scenario, was considered to be uncivilized barbarians. In the worst case, they were considered primitives that could be exterminated at will. Even into the second half of the 19th century this approach has been frequently and richly documented against many Native American tribes, Australian aboriginals and nations in Africa.

This arrogant approach by a supposedly superior white race, and even more superior British race, to those races with darker skin, was gradually humanized and the feeling of superiority was gradually joined by a feeling of common responsibility for the fate of those under control, i.e. those childish and backwards nations from the perspective of the Europeans. This sentiment is captured in the poem *The White Man's Burden* written in 1899 by Rudyard Kipling. This is the very same Kipling who so many of us know from childhood thanks to his beautiful stories about the Indian boy Mowgli and the wolf Akel, the bear Baloo, the panther Bagheer, the tiger Shere Khan and the python Kaa, and other heroes in his books, *The Jungle Book* and *Toomai of the Elephants*. Kipling used his own words to describe the expansion of white people around the world:

***Take up the White Man's burden—
In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple,
An hundred times made plain
To seek another's profit,
And work another's gain.***

***Take up the White Man's burden—
The savage wars of peace—
Fill full the mouth of Famine
And bid the sickness cease;*⁸⁸**

It is no surprise that the name of this poem was used by the long-time World Bank collaborator and economics professor William Easterly as the title for his book, which includes the sub-title *Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*.

88 The Czech translation used in the original text was made by Otakar Fischer from 1947 and was taken from the Czech edition of William Easterly's book *The White Man's Burden*. Prague: Academia, 2010.

We'll return back to his book in due time. The poem itself makes it clear that the British and other Europeans at the end of the 19th century saw themselves as heroes with the mission of civilizing Africa (as well as India), seeing it as their duty to lift up these backwards parts of the world. Despite all of the justified criticism levied against the European approach in Africa and towards Africans at the end of the 19th century, and therefore at the time when the term we currently know as development and humanitarian aid became to take shape, there can be no doubt that this was a significant step forward. However, everything that preceded this can only be regarded as one of the darkest periods in the history of Europe.

Vanitas Vanitatum?

Enthusiasm and perspective gained after independence. Kenya and South Korea—a comparison after 40 years. GDP—economic parameters of African countries. Human Development Index (HDI). Comparison of Africa and countries in the Visegrád Four.

Josef Vágner was a famous hunter of African big game, a zoologist and the founder of the Safari Project at the Dvůr Králové Zoo, where he was the long-serving director and which had the honour of housing one of the largest collections of African fauna in Europe. He wrote a number of excellent books about the animals and people of Africa, capturing a range of experiences from his eight expeditions to the “Dark Continent”. The image of Africa painted by Josef Vágner captures Africa 50 years after Albert Schweitzer wrote the book referenced in the introduction and only a few years after a majority of African countries achieved independence between 1960 and 1964.⁸⁹ In his acclaimed book *Safari pod Kilimandžárom (Safari under Kilimanjaro)*⁹⁰ he describes his first encounter with East Africa at the start of the 1970s with the following words: “*Today’s young African states are striving to bring strong rule of law, order and a modern state system to every corner of the country. Across Uganda, Kenya and Cameroon, modern asphalt roads stretch out across the countryside, used by vehicles of all makes, sizes and weights. In a single hour you can buy a Mercedes or Toyota, film camera or gold Omega watches in Nairobi... more and more places appear no different from the most modern parts of Europe and America. Technology, the modern lifestyle, global civilization is advancing with unstoppable speed...*”

The sobering cooling off of this enthusiasm in the first years of independence in these African countries shortly after gaining independence was witnessed by Josef Vágner and Josef Vavroušek, who laconically described the graph hanging above a desk in an office of one of his Kenyan acquaintances in Nairobi. This poster said that the nominal gross

89 Wikipedia provides a chronological view of the decolonization of Africa at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decolonization_of_Africa.

90 Vágner, Josef, Schneiderová, Naďa: *Safari pod Kilimandžárom*. Bratislava: Mladé letá, 1985.

domestic product (GDP) in South Korea in 1962 was \$104 per capita and a bit higher in Kenya. In 2010, data provided by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) showed that South Korea's GDP when recalculated for parity purchasing power was \$29,800 per capita (25th in the world) while Kenya's remained at \$1,660, 154th in the global rankings. Kenya is not even the worst off in Africa, Tanzania's GDP per capita when recalculated for parity purchasing power in 2010 was U.S. \$1,410 while Uganda's was U.S. \$1,240. The IMF's list has another 17 African countries that are even poorer than Uganda, including more populous countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) with 70 million inhabitants, with GDP per capita of \$328 and the 170th poorest country in the world, 90-million strong Ethiopia, where per capita GDP is \$1,010. With reference to Ethiopia, it's important to note that it and Liberia are the only African countries that have never been a European colony. Liberia, once a beacon of independence, is the second poorest country in the world after the Congo.

In order to put these figures into context, let's compare them to data from Central Europe: Czech gross domestic product recalculated for PPP in 2010 reached \$24,869 per capita (36th place), Slovakia's was \$22,129 (42nd), Poland's was \$18,936 (44th) and Hungary's was \$18,738 per capita (45th). Austria's per capita GDP of \$39,634 puts it at 11th place in the world. The per capita gross domestic product in the Visegrád Four is therefore around 15-times higher than the per capita GDP in Tanzania.

Gross domestic product is, as the name implies, a very broad tool for measuring the level of an economy, progress, welfare and the standard of living. However a better, more specific corresponding value that allows for such comparisons are often impossible to find. This is also a reason why economists continue to use it. People more concerned with human aspects also consider additional parameters that give a more accurate picture of life in the country and that can be compared relatively easily. One of these, as an example, is the Human Development Index, or HDI,⁹¹ which is a complex indicator that includes parameters such as literacy, education, average lifespan and standard of living. The highest HDI in 2010 was achieved by Norway (0.938), South Korea was 12th (HDI of 0.877), Kenya with an HDI of 0.470 was 131st, Uganda (0.422) took 146th place and Tanzania (0.398) was 151st. Another 20 African countries were ranked lower and were joined at the bottom by Afghanistan. Among these were those two countries never colonized by Europeans, Ethiopia and Liberia.

Only four countries in sub-Saharan Africa reached the mean level of HDI: oil-rich Gabon at 95th, diamond-rich Botswana at 101st, diamond and uranium rich Namibia at 108th and sub-tropical South Africa at 113th. Once again, for comparison purposes, the HDI in the Czech Republic was 0.841 in 2010, corresponding to 28th place with Slovakia at 0.818 (31st place), Hungary at 0.806 (36th) and Poland at 0.795 (41st place).

Dull and dry numbers such as the Human Development Index and GDP in the case of Africa after half a century since achieving political independence mask the tragic parameters

91 The current rankings of countries by HDI can be found at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_Human_Development_Index.

of child mortality, short life expectancy, disease, hunger and the misery endured by a vast majority of the inhabitants of the continent. How Africa has gotten to where it currently finds itself and ways to change its current situation will be the subject of a subsequent chapter.

The Dark History of Europe in Africa: Slavery and Slaves

Slavery—a universal phenomenon. Abolition of slavery in Europe, the USA, Brazil and elsewhere. Mauritania 1981. Human trafficking and slavery today. Price of slaves in 2011: population growth devaluing the price of people. Transatlantic slave trade and its balance. Arab slavery. Slavery as the catalyst for inter-tribal conflicts and historical injustice.

We'll return to criticisms of development aid later, but now let's turn our focus to historical antecedents. Relations between Africa and Europeans and Americans as well as Arabs in northern and eastern Africa were manifested in their most inhumane form in the phenomenon of slavery. In this system, human beings were considered property rid of all rights and subject to market prices, items that could be traded, forced to work, sexually exploited or that could be killed without consequence.

Slavery was and is not restricted to Africa; nor is it a racial matter. This social phenomenon has been known to every civilization throughout history, from the Sumerians and Egyptians on to the ancient Greeks and Romans, barbarian Germanic, Gallic and Slavic tribes, Chinese, Japanese and Korean dynasties in ancient times and the Middle Ages, among Muslim Arabs, Indians, Mongolians, Aztecs and Incas as well as Americans and Europeans in the 19th century. Tens to perhaps a hundred million people on every continent have suffered the fate of slavery throughout human history. It is only in recent history that slavery has slipped into the depths of moral reprehension and has become illegal.

However, attempts to ban or at least limit slavery are nearly as old as the history of slavery itself. These efforts have taken thousands of years. Despite such efforts, slavery remained a relatively common practice until the 19th century and was a reality across nearly the entire world. The first European country to ban the slave trade was Denmark-Norway. This ban was enacted in 1792 and took effect in 1803. The first real power to ban slavery was revolutionary France in 1794, despite the fact that Napoleon overturned the

ban, effectively reinstating slavery, at a later time. It was definitively cancelled following his fall from power in 1814. Great Britain banned the slave trade in 1807. Starting in 1808 this ban was enforced through the use of force by the West African fleet of the Royal Navy: by 1860 the fleet had stopped 1,600 slave boats headed to western Africa and the USA, Caribbean and South America, freeing some 150,000 slaves. This trade was so lucrative and full of risk that slave traders transported around three million slaves across the Atlantic in the 19th century. While Britain banned the slave trade in 1807, the Slavery Abolition Act which effectively cancelled slavery in the entire British Empire was finally adopted in 1833. It is hard to believe that Sweden only banned slavery in 1847 and that Denmark followed in 1848! Slavery was finally abolished in the United States of America by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863. The price was the American Civil War, the bloodiest conflict that has every taken place on American soil. Brazil, the American country with the largest number of slaves, abolished slavery progressively: from 1871 all children of slaves were born into freedom and collections were organized by abolitionists to purchase slaves in order to give them their freedom. In 1885 all slaves over the age of 60 (i.e. those that could no longer be economically exploited) were freed and complete abolition followed in 1888 with no compensation for the former owners. Slavery wasn't abolished until the second half of the 20th century in a number of African and Middle Eastern countries: Nigeria in 1960, Saudi Arabia and Yemen in 1962, the United Arab Emirates in 1963 and Oman in 1970. The last country to formally abolish slavery was Mauritania in 1981!⁹²

Despite the long history of efforts to abolish slavery and slaves, this phenomenon lives on to the present day, either in the form of traditional social systems in various developing countries or in the form of criminal activities, for example the kidnapping and forced slavery of women (*trafficking in women*) or slavery in the form of enforced debt repayment (*bond labour*). During the creation of this book, the problem of modern slavery was the focus of a new project, the *Freedom Project: Ending modern day slavery*, which was devoted systematic focus by the CNN news network.⁹³ The ILO (International Labour Organization) has forecasted that there are 12 to 30 million slaves currently across the globe. More than half of this figure are in Asia with an additional 10% in Latin America and the Middle East and another 5% or so in sub-Saharan Africa. The tragic paradox of the modern age is that the prices for slaves are at their lowest in history and in some countries it was possible to purchase a slave in 2011 for \$90 U.S. (yes, ninety), or €60 to €65 at today's exchange rates! 200 years ago the price for a slave, recalculated to today's currency, was around \$40,000. The reason? Enormous population growth resulted in an excess of people who could be sold off into slavery and their prices were driven to a record minimum.⁹⁴ While there were

92 A detailed chronology of the abolition of slavery from the Persian Empire to 1891 is provided by Wikipedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abolition_of_slavery_timeline.

93 The website for this project is <http://thecnnfreedomproject.blogs.cnn.com/>.

94 More detailed information can be found in: *Cost of slaves falls to historic low* at <http://business.blogs.cnn.com/2011/03/07/cost-of-slaves-falls-to-historic-low/>.

only 1 billion people on Earth in 1800, there are now 7 billion. These numbers in and of themselves also have a range of consequences. Among them are the devaluation of the price for human freedoms and life itself.

Let's return to Africa and the slavery associated with this continent. The proximity of Europe, European military and technological dominance and the discovery and colonization of the Americas by Europe all made major contributions to the tragic phenomenon of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Forecasts as to the number of slaves that were transported across the Atlantic during nearly four centuries of slave trading range from 12 million, according to the latest estimates, to 20 million African slaves according to older data. The number of Africans torn from their homes in Western and Central Africa was much, much higher as slaves died in the many wars fought over interests in slaves and the slave trade, which according to forecasts led to the deaths of as many people in Africa as a consequence of slavery as were transported across the ocean to the Americas.⁹⁵

The Europeans were not the first to hunt and capture Africans for the purposes of slavery: an Arab market for slaves existed in the northern and eastern parts of the continent since at least the 9th century. There is no exact number to determine how many Africans were taken into slavery by Arab and European slave owners, but it is possible the numbers are at least comparable. The European trans-Atlantic slave trade was abbreviated into a much shorter period of time, but it was much more devastating with respect to demographic, social and cultural consequences for the inhabitants of Africa. Portuguese, British, French, Dutch and American slave merchants and owners and their local suppliers share the greatest responsibility for this tragedy. Of course, it would be morally reprehensible to decrease the share of the blame belonging to white slave merchants and owners; likewise it would be irresponsible to overlook the historically accurate fact that the primary suppliers of slaves to the slave ports on the coast of Africa were the local kings and rulers. They sold European slave merchants their own prisoners, prisoners of war and, later, also people captured in wars with neighbouring tribes that broke out simply in order to obtain more people to sell into slavery.

The Atlantic slave trade was initially dominated by the Portuguese. They were among the pioneers in the European shipping trade along the coast of Africa, which expanded into present day Brazil after the discovery of America. At the beginning, black slaves were transported to Europe and then later to the Americas. The first African slaves were transported to the island of Hispaniola, today's Haiti and the Dominican Republic, in 1502, not even 10 years after Columbus first set foot on American soil. The first documented references to

95 A suggestive image of the hunt for slaves, the conditions that had to be endured on slave boats and brutal murder of slaves all mark the opening sequence to Steven Spielberg's historical drama *Amistad* from 1997. The film and its star-studded cast (Anthony Hopkins, Morgan Freeman and Matthew McConaughey) tells the true story of an uprising on the slave boat *La Amistad* and the trial that followed after the imprisonment of the rebellious slaves in the United States of America. The story is a suggestive probing back to a time when Western civilization was only beginning to conceive and accept the concept of equality among all humans and the inalienable right of all people to a free life.

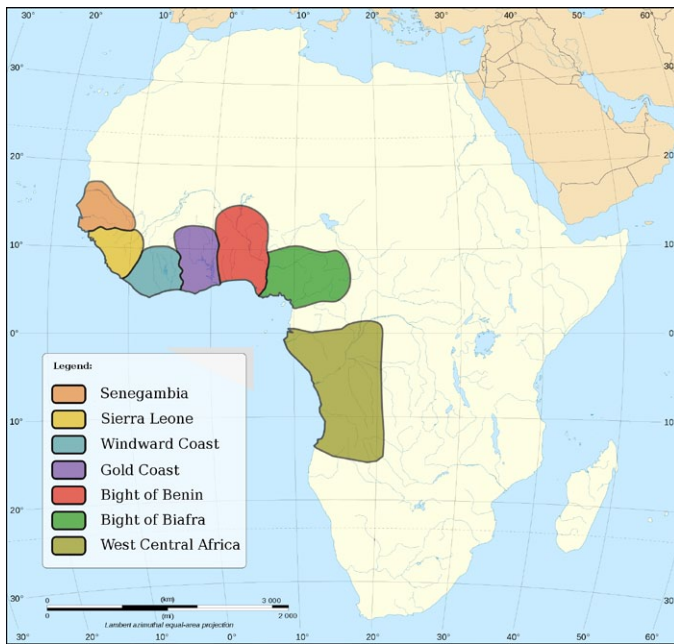
African slaves in Cuba date to 1513. It is estimated that from 1450 to 1600, i.e. the period in which the Portuguese dominated the slave trade, only 3% of the total number of slaves involved in the history of the slave trade were taken from Africa.

In 1588 the British Queen Elizabeth and the British Empire defeated the Spanish armada thanks to a stroke of luck and with some help from the weather, making it the dominant naval force in the world. This position also made it the leader in the Atlantic slave trade. Increasing demand for slaves in Brazil and American and Caribbean colonies expanded this trade tremendously in the 17th century. Around 16% of all slaves were removed from Africa during this century. This share would increase in the next century to 50% of the total balance and 90% of these slaves were sold to British, Portuguese and French slave owners. Despite the fact that the British fleet began active efforts to prevent the slave trade in 1808, the 19th century saw around 30% of the total historical balance of slaves leave Africa. It is estimated that 10% of the slaves loaded onto slave boats never reached America, perishing in the inhumane conditions during transit with their bodies dumped into the ocean. Legend has it that slave boats were sometimes accompanied by schools of sharks that fed of the bodies of the dead. The demographic losses were much higher for Africa than would be indicated by the data on the number of slaves that embarked: many men, women and children died in wars and long, exhausting marches from inland areas to the slave ports on the coast.

In Central Europe, we are generally aware of slavery in the United States of America in part due to the Civil War waged between the North and the South. However, the largest number of slaves, around 40% of the total transported across the Atlantic over four centuries, headed for Brazil. Brazil was the last Atlantic country to adopt a law abolishing the slave trade in 1853. This also explains the long-term major share of Portuguese slave merchants and owners in this tragedy as well as the fact that more than 43% of the 190 million inhabitants of Brazil are currently of mixed white and black heritage with an additional 7.5 % of purely black heritage. Comparatively, African Americans account for around 12.5% of the inhabitants of the United States of America and those with mixed race heritage are at a minimum. Around 25% of all slaves ended up in British colonies with more than 17% in Spanish colonies and 14% in French colonies, a majority in Caribbean islands. In Mexico, the third most-populous country in the Americas, African slaves have left nearly no trace of genetic heritage, which is evident to the present day as blacks remain a nearly non-existent minority and geneticists have shown the presence of African genes is at a level of 2% to 5% among people of mixed heritage. Conversely more than 95% of the 10 million residents of francophone Haiti are black as are a majority of the 3 million residents of nearby Jamaica.

From the perspective of Africa, an important question remains from which part of the continent did most of the slaves originate. The Atlantic slave trade involved at least 173 African kingdoms and city states. Around 40% of all Africans were taken from the modern day area of Congo, 20% from today's Togo, Benin and Nigeria west of the Niger River's estuary, 15% from the coast of eastern Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea, 10% from Ghana and the Ivory Coast and the rest from other parts of western Africa. It is

interesting to note that 5% of the slaves transported to America were from the eastern parts of Africa that are currently Mozambique and even Madagascar. Another note of interest is that no statistics show the transport of any slaves from the current territory of South Africa, despite the fact that the country has nearly 3,000 km of coastline. This is partially the result of the very sparse nature of settlements along the coastline of modern-day Namibia and the western coast of today's South Africa but is undoubtedly also the result of the creation of the Cape Colony in 1652 by the Dutch which prevented any slaves from being taken from this area; just the opposite, the Dutch began colonizing the area around Cape Town and began importing slaves from Indonesia, India and nearby Madagascar to expand the colony.



Map of the Main Sources of Slaves for the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade from the 15th to the 19th Centuries: Olive: Origin of around 40% of all slaves, Red: 20%, Green: 15% and Purple: 10%. Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Africa_slave_Regions.svg

Centuries of continuous blood-letting and draining of the human resources of Africa caused the loss of millions of slaves and further more millions were killed in wars and during the hunt and capture of slaves, all of which left lingering scars on the continent. In a previously referenced book about Africa and Africans, Professor Iliffe documents the low population growth that many African cultures experienced led to the rise of the cult of fertility and children, which today continues to help fuel a population explosion on the continent. The inhabitants of sub-Saharan Africa were decimated by tropical disease until

the arrival of modern medicine, hygiene and agriculture from Europe. Child mortality was exceptionally high and the inability to preserve food in the damp tropical conditions, where food rapidly spoils, caused periods of abundance to rapidly deteriorate into periods of shortage and famine. Slavery simply dealt another hammer blow, especially when combined with the natural conditions, thereby forming another severe barrier to population growth.

The slave trade contributed to Africa's inability to create sufficiently populous and strong state units in the 18th and 19th Centuries that would be able to successfully resist the later colonial domination of Europeans. Slavery was also the catalyst for a never-ending cycle of wars, attacks, retaliatory violence and mistrust, which significantly contributed to destabilization and disputes between African tribes and nations. This would later make them much more susceptible to pressure from Europeans. It is difficult to map just how much distrust, hatred and prejudice against neighbours was fostered during the slave wars and invasions and just how much this remains in the collective memory of the ancestors of African slaves and ethnicities. Perhaps one way to get such an idea, however, is to consider just how politicians in modern Slovakia and Hungary are able to manipulate the interpretation of a much more peaceful common history between two neighbouring nations in the 19th century and the start of the 20th. If politicians are able to convince educated Slovaks and no-less educated Hungarians of "a thousand years of repression" and other historical injustices, we should not automatically assume that the bloody history of slavery has not been involved in the conflicts in modern day Africa. It is not accidental that ethnic conflicts in the coastal countries of western Africa from Senegal to the Congo and Angola are among the longest and bloodiest conflicts in Africa.

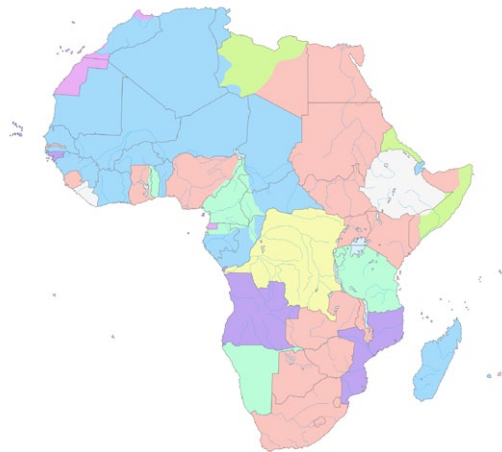
From Colonization to the Millennium Development Goals

Partitioning of Africa and the Berlin conference: Europe occupies the entire continent save Ethiopia and Liberia. The abolition movement: colonial PR or maturing humanity? David Livingstone's crusade against slavery. Building cities, ports, railroads and schools. Post-colonial stereotypes: Europe is rich because it ravaged the colonies. Marshall plan for rebuilding post-war Europe and the World Bank's first loans.

The era of the trans-Atlantic slave trade began to wane towards the middle of the 19th century. At the same time and across the ocean, the white man had armed himself with rifles and crossed the Mississippi River. This triggered the massive colonization of the American West, which in a matter of decades wiped out many tribes of Native Americans, with those that managed to survive left decimated and cornered into tiny reservations. Africa came to represent for European powers the same that the Wild West did for the United States: a huge unoccupied and undeveloped part of the world with vast natural resources and with unclear limits of influence. The beginning of the end to this period of ambiguity began in 1878 when the ambitious Belgian King Leopold II decided to establish a colony in the Congo. The French quickly responded to this initiative in 1881 by establishing the city of Brazzaville on the banks of the Congo River. Shortly thereafter, Portugal, the long-ago colonizing force on the coast of Congo and Angola, took the initiative in the region and suddenly European activity in sub-Saharan Africa began to take on an unseen level of intensity and geographic scope. The French quickly and vehemently joined in the game of carving up western Africa, with the British joining along the Nile River and in the south of the continent. British and French expansion spurred the Germans into action over fears that the new resources and riches flowing from Africa could tip the balance of power that had been so fragile to maintain in Europe. In 1884 matters had proceeded to such an extent that many of the powers had reached the conclusion that Europeans needed an agreement on how to divvy up their interests in Africa. German Chancellor Otto van Bismarck called

a conference of the European powers, which would eventually become known as the Berlin Conference.

The Berlin Conference was successful in that it enabled the partitioning of nearly all of Africa between the European powers without there being any conflicts of interest. Ten years after the conference ended, more than 90% of Africa had been carved up between the nations of Europe: the entire Nile basin went to the British, nearly all of western Africa went to the French and the Germans obtained four African colonies: Tanzania, Namibia, Cameroon and Togo. Only antiquated Ethiopia, West African Liberia and the white Boer⁹⁶ enclaves controlled by the Free Orange State and the Republic of Transvaal retained their independence. History shows that the Boer Republic was eventually annexed by the British Empire following a long and bloody war, which itself proved to be such a war of attrition that it knocked Britain from its perch among the world's superpowers.



European Colonies in Africa before World War I: Belgium Germany Spain France
Great Britain Italy Portugal Independent Ethiopia and Liberia
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Colonial_Africa_1913_map.svg

In the face of political pragmatism and the race for resources and riches, even the most idealistic Europeans began to act in a more humane manner towards Africans, even if they

⁹⁶ The country of Liberia is the result of efforts undertaken by North American abolitionists who used the American Colonization Company to help repatriate freed American slaves and other slaves liberated from slave boats to return back to this West African country. These blacks established the Republic of Liberia in 1847 and the capital to the present day carries the name Monrovia, after American President James Monroe, who was a prominent supporter of the idea of repatriating black slaves to Africa. The name of the country itself is based on the English word liberty. Today Liberia is among the most under-developed countries in the world and 85% of Liberians live under the internationally recognized poverty line.

continued to treat them as inferior. All of the signatories of the Berlin Conference committed themselves to fight against the slave trade and to suppress slavery among the local black and Arab inhabitants of their colonies. Cynics would say that this was primarily driven by colonial PR, but, in reality, if we ignored this fact we would indeed be doing a disservice as the humanizing consequences of this pressure are hard to dispute.

This resulted in a marriage of imperialism and philanthropy. The British, for example, before the Berlin Conference, forced the Sultan of Zanzibar to close the largest slave market in eastern Africa, which effectively ended the slave trade in this part of Africa. This was no small feat as around 50,000 were sold every year at the market in Zanzibar at the time of its closure. Scottish explorer, doctor and missionary David Livingstone (1813–1873) provided an eyewitness testimony about this inhuman business and he estimated that around 80,000 people a year died as a result of slavery in eastern Africa during the second half of the 19th century. His notes, letters and articles made a huge contribution to increasing pressure from the British public, which eventually resulted in the British intervening in Zanzibar. Livingstone's life's work⁹⁷ after his death, paradoxically, contributed to the rapid colonization of eastern Africa by Europeans. On the other hand, the schools that Livingstone and his missionary brethren established helped to educate a generation of Kenyans, Tanzanians, Ugandans and other Africans who would later fight against colonial domination, ultimately winning freedom for their countries.

The decisive participation of the British in suppressing slavery is one of the humanitarian missions that East Africans never forgot about; the former colonial masters and Doctor Livingstone became a part of the local mythology. When David Livingstone died in modern-day Zambia in 1873, his African porters and friends Chuma and Susi carried his mummified body more than a thousand miles through African wilderness to the Tanzanian port of Bagamoyo, where they turned it over to British officials. For many Africans this epic journey across half the continent with the body of their white friend is a powerful example of human loyalty and friendship between races. David Livingstone's heart was buried in Zambia while his body was interred at Westminster Abbey among the likes of Charles Darwin, Isaac Newton and so many other important and less-important Britons and long-forgotten kings and aristocrats.

The colonial powers in Africa aspired to economically exploit the continent and to lift the colonies up out of poverty through economic development and education, in addition to the elimination of slavery. The British, French, Germans, Portuguese and others did not show much regard for the local cultures and their methods were often violent and even brutal as their objectives were primarily driven by self-interest; however their positive effects cannot be denied either. Even the capital of Kenya, Nairobi, was established by the British as a rail depot during the construction of a railroad from Mombasa to Lake Victoria

97 The figure that David Livingstone cut in the last years of his life and his crusade against the Arab slave trade were captured in the American film *Forbidden Territory: Stanley's Search for Livingstone* in 1997. The main roles in the film were portrayed by Aidan Quinn, Nigel Hawthorne and Kabir Bedi.

and Uganda.⁹⁸ Nairobi is not alone; Kisumu, the third largest city in Kenya, and other important cities across eastern Africa were established in much the same manner. Around the same time the Germans were building a railroad in Tanzania from the port of Tanga under Kilimanjaro and from Dar es Salaam deep into the interior of the continent on the banks of Lake Tanganyika.

The importance of the construction of these railways cannot be underappreciated; it may seem trivial in the context of the 21st century, but on the continent where virtually no roads existed and the only form of long-distance transport was slave caravans and ivory traders, they were indeed a revolutionary modernization. Construction did encounter armed resistance among the local tribes as had been experienced in North America a few short years before. Once the British had finished the railroad to Lake Victoria they used it to transport disassembled ships to the lake, these ships were reassembled and used to connect the settlements and cities on the shores of the largest lake in Africa.⁹⁹ The Germans likewise transported ships to Lake Tanganyika.

Colonization also laid the foundations for modern education in Africa. Germans in Tanzania introduced a modern, European-style education system including primary, secondary and training schools that no one else in tropical Africa could boast; even today the word for school in Swahili is pronounced “*shule*”, which is almost identical to the German word for school. Could you imagine any more of an expressive or permanent legacy for the Germans in eastern Africa? The other legacies colonizers left behind, unfortunately, have been less permanent as anyone who has seen the decrepit state of railroads in eastern Africa and ship transport on Lake Victoria today can attest.

In contemporary times it is much more common to hear a different interpretation, most often from the local politicians, that the current levels of poverty in these African countries are as a result of colonization. This opinion is not limited to politicians as it is often used by others to cover up their own failures and corruption. It is also an opinion shared by a large number of academics. The well-known philosopher and activist of Indian heritage Vandana Shiva, as an example, in her criticism of *The End of Poverty* by economist Jeffrey Sachs wrote: “*The poor are not those who have been ‘left behind’; they are the ones who have been robbed. The wealth accumulated by Europe and North America is largely based on riches taken from Asia, Africa and Latin America. Without the destruction of India’s rich textile industry, without the takeover of the spice trade, without the genocide of the Native American tribes, without*

98 The British imported thousands of workers from India for the construction of these railroads. Many of their offspring today are among the commercial and industrial elite of Kenya. An episode of interest during the construction of the railroad from Mombasa to the interior of Kenya involved man-eating lions near Tsavo in 1898 and was captured in the Oscar-nominated adventure film *The Ghost and the Darkness* from 1996 starring Michael Douglas and Val Kilmer.

99 Lake Victoria covers an area of 69,000 km² and is the second largest lake in the world; however, its average depth is only 40 m (reaching a maximum of 84 meters), making it extremely ecologically vulnerable. The lake provides sustenance for millions of people and provides fish for export to Europe and America. Even in the 21st century, however, its transportation potential remains largely untapped.

African slavery, the Industrial Revolution would not have resulted in new riches for Europe or North America. It was this violent takeover of Third World resources and markets that created wealth in the North and the poverty of the South."¹⁰⁰ Ultimately, this interpretation is very hard to defend. As this book has repeatedly pointed out, much more important causes of modern poverty in Africa and India are based on local conditions, including natural, social and cultural conditions.

Ethiopia and Liberia, as have been mentioned many times, were never colonies and despite this they remain stuck at the tail end of most rankings of development, even just within Africa itself. South Africa was colonized for a period spanning far longer than most other African countries but today the Republic of South Africa is a relative island of success and prosperity among other African countries. Former colonies around the world including Hong Kong, Singapore and Canada, Australia, New Zealand and, last but not least, the United States are among the most developed countries in the world. Yes, one caveat is that sometimes the cost was the repression and sometimes killing of the local inhabitants, but it is clear that any attempt to equate any relationship between today's backwardness and former colony status is simply impossible to defend.

This comes more clearly into focus when considering Europe as a whole; this puts a serious dent into the idea that its wealth was primarily derived from colonies. Such a perspective may be a problem for those from the countries of the British Commonwealth as Great Britain is analogous to Europe for many of them. Austria-Hungary, which our country was once a part of, practically had no colonies, and the same can be said for many of the countries in Scandinavia. Another fact to bear in mind is that Finland was occupied by Russia and Norway's status throughout many parts of history was far from that of an independent country. Germany itself only had colonies for a very short period of time, 30 years at the most, between 1885 and 1915. In spite of this, Central Europe and Scandinavia are now economically prosperous and Germany can only be considered a modern economic superpower. The argument that some of the wealth stripped from Africa, India and Latin America by the British, French and Spanish did make its way to Central Europe is perhaps feasible but really only amounts to speculation stretched to the very limits. This simple image of stolen wealth is also complicated by the fact that Europe has a number of former colonial superpowers, specifically Spain and Portugal, which cannot be considered models of economic success and wealth, in particular in comparison with Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Scandinavia.

After decolonization, responsibility for subsequent development was taken over by the governments of the newly-created independent countries. Time quickly proved that they

100 Cited from the essay: Two myths that keep the world poor. <http://odewire.com/60038/two-myths-that-keep-the-world-poor.html>

were going to need aid from more developed countries in order to lift their countries out of poverty and backwardness. Surprisingly, Europe itself was the primary inspiration for modern development aid programs and in particular the Marshall Plan. This was used to rebuild a devastated Western Europe after World War II. Shortly after the war, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development was established, but most people are familiar with its more common name, the World Bank. The first loan that the World Bank provided did not go to Africa, Asia or to South America. The loan agreement for the World Bank's very first loan was signed in a symbolic ceremony on 9th May 1947 and was provided to... France! It is also worth noting that the first loan remains the largest loan ever provided by the World Bank, with the \$250 million provided at the time equivalent to \$2.6 billion today. The French used the loan to buy (primarily from the United States, meaning most of the money never even left America) machinery, equipment and aircraft. The educated and skilled French were able to use these purchases to rebuild their devastated country in a number of years. Loans for the Netherlands, Denmark and Luxembourg followed after the initial loan to France.

Compared to the Marshall European Recovery Program, the results of aid provided to Africa have been, to say the least, pitiful. The Marshall Plan only lasted for four short years and by the time it ended in 1952, the economies in every one of the participating countries had already exceeded post-war levels. By 1951 their levels of productivity were on average at least 35% higher than they had been in 1938. In a matter of years the restored countries of Europe became the donors of development aid and important contributors to the funds used by the World Bank, the UN and other organizations.

There are a lot of reasons why what happened in Europe (and elsewhere later, in particular in Southeast Asia and in Latin America) happened and why it hasn't happened yet in Africa. These reasons are the subject of a much more in-depth examination. In addition to the continuing and explosive population growth and the burdens of endemic and hard to eradicate tropical diseases such as malaria, schistosomiasis and many others, the Oxford professor Paul Collier also speaks of development traps that sub-Saharan Africa has fallen into. Before dealing with these traps, let's first examine the goals for development aid that the international community first agreed upon to reverse this situation in a very short half century.

Millennium Development Goals

Millennium goals and targets. Will Africans be able to meet the MDGs? Difficulties with reliable data and statistics: precise processing of imprecise data. Slow data collection fails in rapidly changing situations, i.e. the social consequences of the financial crisis. Problems in presentation: the number of people going hungry is growing by the tens of millions but percentages show we're successfully fighting hunger. Misleading numbers: \$1.25 a day and rising food and oil prices. Questions about the quality and relevance of education for real life situations. Have the MDGs been selected professionally or where the result of political compromises? Are the MDGs like a bull in a china shop—Ethiopia with 188 million inhabitants in 2035.

The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration in September of the year 2000.¹⁰¹ More than 20 international organizations and 189 signatories to the declaration, from the richest to the most impoverished, all agreed to achieve major progress in global development by 2015. The relatively vague goals articulated in the Millennium Declaration were used to define more precise development goals, which were then named the Millennium Development Goals or MDGs. Of course it's not as if the Millennium Declaration or the MDGs simply appeared out of nowhere in 2000; rather they were the result of endless discussions among development players including the UNDP, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and others during the entire decade of the 1990s. The MDGs have been formulated so as to be formally binding for donors and recipients of development aid; their practical application, however, will be a completely separate matter, as a Slovak saying so eloquently puts it: "reči sa hovoria, ale chlieb sa je" (literally: words are spoken but bread is eaten). Or not eaten; in those less fortunate countries and families.

101 The complete and official text of the Millennium Declaration can be found at: <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.pdf>.

The world community agreed on the following eight MDGs at the UN:

1. Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieving universal primary education
3. Promoting gender equality and empowering women
4. Reducing child mortality rates
5. Improving maternal health
6. Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
7. Ensuring environmental sustainability
8. Developing a global partnership for development

Each of these goals has a number of targets and each one of these has a number of indicators that allow for progress to be measured in comparison with reference conditions.¹⁰² The first development goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, for example, is worked out into the following details:

Target 1A: Halve the proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day.

Indicators:

- Proportion of population below \$1 per day (PPP values)
- Poverty gap ratio (incidence times the depth of poverty)
- Share of poorest quintile in national consumption

Target 1B: Achieve decent employment for women, men and young people

Indicators:

- GDP growth per employed person
- Employment rate
- Proportion of employed population below \$1 per day (PPP values)
- Proportion of family-based workers in employed population

Target 1C: Halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

Indicators:

- Prevalence of underweight children under five years of age
- Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption

The second goal is the simplest in terms of structure and indicators: by 2015 all children can complete a full course of primary schooling, meaning both boys and girls. The progress indicators are the number of children enrolled in primary education, the completion of primary education and the literacy of young men and women between 15 and 24 years of age.

¹⁰² An overview of MDGs and their indicators in Slovak can be found at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic website: [http://www.mzv.sk/App/wcm/media.nsf/vw_ByID/ID_CB994940132FED-7DC125766500389E84_SK/\\$File/mileniove_rozvojove_ciele.pdf](http://www.mzv.sk/App/wcm/media.nsf/vw_ByID/ID_CB994940132FED-7DC125766500389E84_SK/$File/mileniove_rozvojove_ciele.pdf).

We could go over all of the goals and name their targets and indicators but that would indeed make for a boring read. Rather, let's pose two fundamental questions: Has the world come close to meeting the MDGs? Have the MDGs been properly selected and defined?

There is no easy answer to either of these questions. In 2011 the UN issued the Millennium Development Goals Report 2011, which provided a myriad of data illustrating development over the first decade of the 21st century.¹⁰³ Despite this, it remains pertinent to raise at least two basic objections against this report. The first is the potential (and indeed highly likely in many cases) inaccuracies in the data. The second is the fact that much of the solid data available in the first half of 2011 when the report was completed did not capture the true impact of the economic crisis affecting the world in 2008 and the dramatic increase in food prices in the second half of 2010.¹⁰⁴

In general, a rule applies that the least reliable data is from countries that are the poorest and where such data to assess any progress is needed the most. The ability to gather solid epidemiological data on the incidence of diseases or the causes of death among children and mothers from such areas where there isn't a single doctor within tens of kilometres is nearly impossible. The numbers used for these countries in the report are more or less qualified forecasts or estimates that may indeed be significantly different from reality. In other words, while the statistics would seem to indicate the fulfilment of Millennium Development Goals 4, 5 and 6, or the health and mortality rates among mothers and children and the epidemiological situation, in many cases such accomplishment is based on the precise processing of a number based on very imprecise source data.

Another problem associated with reports on the fulfilment of the MDGs is the up-to-date nature of such data as many trends are captured with significant lag: one example is the 2011 report does not fully capture or consider the manifold consequences of the global economic crisis that struck in 2008. There is another problem in the presentation of the data itself. The 2011 report, as an example, makes note that the percentage of people living on less than \$1.25 a day¹⁰⁵ dropped and the percentage of those suffering from malnutrition stagnated at a level of 16% at the beginning of the decade and had not continued to decline. The absolute number of people living with hunger is much more important and data that has been used helps to mask the fact that this trend is, in fact, on the rise, which is much more serious than stagnation. From 1995–1997 there were 770 million malnourished people on the planet (18% of the population), which increased to 818 million from 2000–2002 (“only” 16%) and finally to 837 million from 2005–2007 (again “only” 16%).

103 The full text of this 70-some-odd page report is available from the UN's website: http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/11_MDG%20Report_EN.pdf. The report includes a large number of graphs, which helps to make its contents understandable for readers who may not be proficient in English.

104 One example is in India, where official statistics state that 37% of its 1.2 billion inhabitants lives under the poverty line, while one forecast says that it may be as high as 77%. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-17441347>

105 The reference sum was also changed from \$1.00 to \$1.25 in order to reflect the progressive decline of the dollar.

While it is possible to talk of stagnation in terms of the percentage of people suffering from malnutrition and long-term hunger, this trick of presentation hides the tragic fact that the number of people going hungry increased by 67 million by the pre-crisis year of 2007, representing nearly a ten per cent increase since the period of 1995–1997.

The situation went from bad to worse during 2007. First off, global food prices rose throughout 2007 reaching a level nearly double that of previous years, a trend which was finally broken and followed by a short, yet steep, drop in prices during 2008, which allowed these prices to begin to rise again in 2009. Then, in the summer of 2010, an unprecedented heat wave struck the grain regions in the breadbasket of southern Russia. This combined with other factors, including rising oil prices which have a direct relationship to food prices, drove global food prices to a level even higher than was reached in 2007–2008. This time the record high food and oil prices remained for all of 2011 and remain high as of June 2012, shortly before this book went to print.¹⁰⁶

If the percentage of people subsisting on less than \$1.25 a day at the end of the first decade of the 21st century did actually drop in a number of short periods, the real, and not statistical, scope of poverty in Africa, India and elsewhere undoubtedly rose as food prices increased sharply and food expenditure is easily the highest portion of expenditure in impoverished societies. In the end, poverty rose in Europe and the USA at the same time and not just in developing countries. No definitive and processed statistical data is available regarding the current rising tide of poverty but the President of the World Bank, Robert Zoellick announced, at a conference in Washington in April 2011, that another 44 million people had fallen into poverty from June 2010 to the start of 2011.¹⁰⁷

In North Africa, 2011 kicked off a wave of revolution known as the Arab Spring. These revolutions were driven by a deep social crisis in the Arab world (which imports more than half of its food to satisfy its exploding populations) and were reactions to a worsening situation during 2011 and at least the first half of 2012. Poverty and hunger, which the Arab dictators had managed to keep under control until 2010 suddenly became the most pressing matter of the day in this area with 400 million people. In January 2012, the Asia Times wrote on its website about the quick drying up of foreign exchange reserves in Egypt; these reserves were the money used abroad by Egypt to purchase more than 55% of the food needed to feed 82 million Egyptians. According to the Asia Times, Egypt in December 2011 had sufficient reserves to continue purchasing for another 4 months. The author of the article also said that after this period was over, Egypt could expect “*a disaster of biblical proportions*”.¹⁰⁸ By the summer of 2012 the disaster had not occurred, but the richer countries in the world had exceptional interest in seeing that no such major problems occurred;

106 Oil prices denominated in the Euro and British Pound broke their historical records in February 2012.

107 „Zoellick Kicks Off Meetings with Opening Press Conference“. World Bank, 2011-04-14. <http://blogs.worldbank.org/meetings/zoellick-kicks-off-meetings-with-opening-press-conference>

108 Failed Treasury Auction Portends Egyptian Disaster. 2012-01-24. http://www.atimes.com/atimes/middle_east/na24ak02.html

after all Egypt controls the Suez Canal and was at the precipice of its first democratic presidential elections.¹⁰⁹ A creeping rise in food shortages after the election would appear to be much more likely than a sudden famine (as an aside, less than 5% of Egypt's population were thought to be living in hunger). The referenced article in January 2012 did offer the first reports of shortages in peripheral cities across the country, of empty shelves in stores, closed bakeries that had nothing to bake and the sharp increase in food prices. *"Half of the population is having trouble consuming enough to ensure they don't go hungry."* The ruined Egyptian economy was compared to a banana republic. *"... with the difference being that the bankrupt banana republics in Latin America at least have bananas to export, while half of Egypt's caloric intake is imported."*

Now let's turn away from food and Egypt and back to the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals. In the spring 2012, three years before their planned achievement, it is almost a certainty that most of the countries of the world will not be successful in achieving most of these goals. The documented drop in the number of people subsisting on less than \$1.25 a day was almost exclusively the result of improvements for residents in a single country: Communist China, which experienced a massive export and construction boom in the first decade of the new millennium. This boom is responsible for lifting hundreds of millions of Chinese out of poverty. As we know from the previous chapter, the prospects for another similar economic boom in China are very slim. The second most populous country in the world, India, is a country where more than half of the children are malnourished. The fragile food security of this giant is largely based on a wobbly foundation of production fields that are inundated with water taken from ground water aquifers, the levels of which are dropping rapidly. It is forecasted that the use of ground water will eventually cost around 200 million Indians their food supplies.

One of the few MDGs that can be relatively reliably measured under conditions in even the most impoverished countries, as opposed to say epidemiological data, is the second goal of achieving universal education. Even countries with the bare minimum of capacities are capable of counting children who are enrolled in schools and who have completed mandatory education. Fundamental questions remain as to how this information reflects the quality of such primary education and its contents as well as in what way this indicator provides information relevant to the actual improvement of life in the country. I am one of the last people who would doubt the value and importance of education, and perhaps this is why I feel it necessary to raise such questions. Is 100% literacy really necessary or important in order to ensure prosperity for a country and its population? Would it be sufficient to have 80% to 90% of children in school so long as such education was of high quality? What exactly is the educational content? Are children taught the skills important for their daily lives in the country or is the curriculum simply copied from English or French schools?

109 This was not the case, for example, in Yemen where 10 million people did not have enough money for food in 2012 as was written about by a BBC reporter in an article titled "Aid Groups Warn of Yemen Catastrophe" <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-18896993>

Are these children leaving school with the ability to name the royal houses of the Tudors and the Capetians, but without the faintest idea of how to prevent an unwanted pregnancy or how to cook using only wood and the power of the tropical sun? In order to clarify, I do not know how many children in Kenya or Tanzania learn about the Tudors and Shakespeare, but I know for certain that a majority of students and their teachers have no idea about solar cookers or contraception. Schools that do not prepare their students for real life are the bare truth in Africa. The question should be raised: do children in schools receive quality education for the real world or do they receive an education for a fictitious world in which they do not and never will live?

These are not questions that developing countries facing alone and one does not have to look far for parallels. Think about it, in the backdrop of the crisis, what is the real value of educating hundreds or maybe thousands of Slovak graduates in disciplines such as political science? Do we need a political science graduate in every village pub? Hardly. The difference between Slovakia and Uganda is, truthfully, that our economic and social system¹¹⁰ has so-far proven capable of supporting thousands of young people with educations that have almost exclusively an imaginary value. In Uganda, on the other hand, this matter is much more fundamental for survival and letting a boy or girl loose in such an environment without relevant education or knowledge is a lost opportunity. Even if this may look like a good idea according to UN statistics.

Finally, there is another fundamental question regarding issues concerning the measurability of the goals of the MDGs and the precision and appropriateness of their definitions: do the MDGs cover all of the key areas needed to be achieved in order to improve the prospects for humans living in these countries? Unfortunately, the answer is “no”. There is one large elephant in the room that everyone knows about but that we all choose to ignore it. In fact, we all hope that if we don’t see it, it’ll go away all by itself. Maybe this will be the case, but the likelihood that the elephant is going to leave the room all by itself without wreaking havoc is almost zero. As I am sure you are thinking, that metaphorical elephant is population growth. The failure to include goals related to decreasing fertility rates among the MDGs is, of course, the result of political compromise based on an on-going ideological war that has been waged since the Middle Ages.

The level of population growth in Zimbabwe, Niger and Uganda at the start of 2011 was estimated to be 4% annually. What does this mean? If this same rate of growth was maintained, the size of the population in these countries would double in a little less than 18 years. Uganda would have 70 million people by 2030, half of whom would be children under the age of 18. Can you imagine this not resulting in a disaster?

The level of population growth in Ethiopia, both Congos, Rwanda, Burundi, Senegal, Mali, Zambia and 10 other African countries was estimated at 3% annually. This means that their populations will double every 23 years. Ethiopia, which today has 94 million people, would have to support 188 million by 2035 while the Congo would have to support

110 At least in the middle of 2012 this still held true.

144 million. If we fail to hear the ticking of the time bomb these figures represent then maybe we all need to may a trip to an audiologist. The populations of another 23 African countries should also double, albeit a little bit later, by 2047.

Why Africa Remains Impoverished: Collier's Bottom Billion and the Four Development Traps

Living in a development trap: 14th century reality on the brink of the 21st century. Four traps: conflicts, dependence on imported raw materials, land-locked and bad governance. 70% of the bottom billion live in Africa. Growth is good but sustainable growth is a mathematical abomination. The hopeless spiral of internal conflicts. Costs of civil war and militarization. Psychopathy and child soldiers. Typical rebel: young, uneducated and unattached. Richard Leakey and his wars in wilderness. Dependence on imported raw materials. Dutch disease and white elephant projects. Patronism instead of tax collection. It's better to be neighbours with Germany than Kenya. Corruption and insufficient number of qualified leaders social polarization and the GINI index. Forbes: 40 richest Africans. Who's missing from the Forbes rankings? Who's paid more: the president of the USA, the German chancellor or the British prime minister?

The author, whose ideas we will focus on in the next chapter, sees the primary contribution made by the MDGs is a shift in thinking from outcomes to the results of development intervention: he considers their primary drawback to be a lack of focus on the least developed countries and a strategy for achieving these goals. What was he thinking?

Paul Collier is a professor of economics and the director of the Centre for the Study of African Economies at Oxford University and is the former Director of Research at the World Bank in Washington. In 2007 he published the book *The Bottom Billion—Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done about It*.¹¹¹ The book is one of the most important to be published in the recent past in terms of expanding the discussion about Africa

111 *The Bottom Billion—Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*. Oxford University Press, 2007.

and development. It contains a great deal of new content and data and is undoubtedly worth a more in-depth examination.

Collier begins his analysis with a statement that various countries in Africa, with Malawi provided as an example, were among the poorest in the world in the past and remain so today. Conversely, Sierra Leone and Kenya were once richer than China and India but their development stopped at some point in time. In other cases such development stopped and even regressed, sometimes to the point of complete disintegration of a country and society. Analysis into the development of African countries led Collier to formulate the concept of development traps, or situations countries find themselves in and are unable to get out of no matter how hard they try. While most countries have seen economic growth and a rising standard of living over the past half century (including the one-time developing countries of South Korea, China, Brazil, Thailand and Vietnam), the countries that have fallen into traps have seen their economic growth and social development stop. A total of 58 countries are trapped and live in these development traps that Collier identified and these countries are home to around 1 billion people. They live in the 21st century, but, in Collier's words, their reality is the 14th century, with civil wars, epidemics and darkness. The majority of these people are found in Africa.

All societies were once impoverished and backwards. Our ancestors in Europe were still dying in famines into the 18th century; illiteracy and lack of education were the standard for the day; adults and children died en masse due to infectious diseases and life was simply dirty. The average life expectancy for men and women in Austria-Hungary just before the start of World War I, or around 100 years ago, was just under 40. Today we live on average twice as long and in comparably better conditions. Poverty in and of itself is not a trap; otherwise we would all be impoverished.

The four traps that Collier has determined hold dozens of African countries and hundreds of millions of inhabitants in dire poverty are the conflict trap, the natural resource trap, the trap of being landlocked with bad neighbours and the trap of bad governance in a small country. Around 1 billion people live in the countries that are in the traps identified by Collier in 2006, when the book was published, and around 70% of these people were Africans. The average life expectancy in these countries is 50; child mortality is around 14%, 36% of children suffer from malnutrition, etc. The book provides a vast range of econometric analyses, which the author uses to make comparisons showing that these countries where the bottom billion live have stopped growing economically or are growing very slowly in comparison with developed countries, which are home to 4 billion people. As an economist, Collier argues that these countries need economic growth the most, but are prevented from achieving such growth by the four traps.

Over the past decade we have witnessed unprecedented and rapid economic growth in a number of countries, with China as one of the shining examples. The economies of the countries home to the bottom billion have grown at much slower rates: 0.5% annually in the 1970s, falling at 0.4% annually in the 1980s and again falling at a rate of 0.5% in the golden decade of global growth, the 1990s. At the start of this millennium, many of these

populations were worse off economically than they had been in 1970! Collier emphasizes that his figures are likely under-valued, as, for example, economic statistics are unavailable for countries that have undergone complete upheaval such as Somalia and Afghanistan. The economies of the bottom billion finally began growing at the start of the first decade in of the 21st century at a level of around 1.7% annually, primarily due to increases in global prices for raw materials; however even this rate of growth remains very low compared to the economic growth experienced in places such as China or India. They are moving forward but the train is leaving the station at a much faster speed.

Let's digress for a moment and deal with the issue of coveted and, if at all possible, never-ending growth. People who are educated in natural sciences and environmental matters are very much aware that all growth has limits. If the growth of the human body does not stop at a relatively young age, there are justified suspicions that a serious disease may be the cause. If cells continue to divide continuously the disease involved is known as cancer. Unrestricted growth in a physical system such as Planet Earth is a mathematical abomination¹¹² and periods of economic growth within human societies will all stop at one time or another with uncompromising logic. A host of data documents that this drop will inevitably occur and today's generation is sure to experience it. Cynics have said that only economists and the insane talk about never-ending growth: I would add politicians to the mix as promises of economic growth have become a favoured mantra with achieved growth being considered a measure for success.

With the exception of the unsustainability of long-term economic (and of course population) growth, I'd like to add that I do agree with Paul Collier with respect to his observations on the connection between economic growth and the prosperity of a society. I've reached the conclusion that many aspects of African economies could and should grow. This economic growth in Africa could, and in an ideal world should, be compensated by negative growth (economic decline in simpler terms) in the richer countries of North America, Europe and Asia. In other words their populations and levels of consumption would decline. Our world, however, is not ideal and it is much more probable that the populations in developed countries will continue to elect politicians that will promise the miracles of economic growth on demand and the mathematically impossible within a week and regard any mention of the need to cut back on consumption and economic activity as the work of the devil and lunatics.

Stagnation or a slight decrease in population size, in line with the dominant philosophy of infinitely growing consumption, is the only effective mechanism to ease the pressure Western societies place on natural resources, and has begun to occur in some countries in Europe and in Japan during the first decade of the 21st century. In 2000 and 2010, both

112 Readers are recommended to watch a lecture by American professor Albert Bartlett from the University of Colorado titled *Arithmetic, Population and Energy*, which can be found at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-QA2rkpBSY>. Someone has called it "the most important video you'll ever see." See for yourself if I am mistaken.

Germany and Japan (as well as Poland and Slovakia) showed zero population growth; the populations in the Czech Republic and Hungary dropped by 1% with Russia falling by 5%, the Ukraine by 7% and Bulgaria by 8%. The sudden drop in the populations of these countries were accompanied by desperate cries from politicians¹¹³ about the “death” of the nation along with warnings that future pensioners would have no one to support them and votes in favour of measures to support birth rates. This decrease in fertility in Europe is a much more effective tool in terms of the exhaustion of natural resources on the planet than any decrease in fertility in Africa as the average German, Japanese, Russian, Pole, Czech or Hungarian consumes 10 to 20 times the average raw materials and food as the average African. This does not mean that I doubt the need to lower fertility rates in Africa and India as well: if people don’t do it, nature will. And the methods that it will use to lower these unsustainable population levels will not be pleasant.

Conflict Trap

Let’s return to Paul Collier. His four traps slow the economic growth of a country, which increases the risk that the trap will deepen or that the country will fall in the trap again. The first trap is the conflict trap. 73% of countries in the bottom billion have recently experienced a civil war or a civil war is currently underway. What is civil war? Indeed this could be an exhaustive discussion but Collier took the approach used by the University of Michigan, which defined an internal (civil) conflict as any such conflict with at least 1,000 dead and both sides with at least 5% of the dead. Civil wars are much more likely to break out in impoverished countries than wealthier countries: a drop in income in a country by half doubles the risk of a civil war. Low economic growth or an economic decline brings about poverty, which gives rise to hopelessness. Hopelessness breeds a mentality among young men that life is cheap and there is little opportunity to prosper and grow rich—an example is a successful military coup or a revolt against the group in power, which gives some of them the opportunity to pull themselves out of an impoverished life with no future. Civil wars and military coups are devastating for the society as a whole and cause severe losses, which drive further economic decline making more and more young men willing to take up arms when the opportunity presents itself. Society slips further and further into conflict. *“Rebel leader Laurent Kabila, who controlled the entire country, told journalists that the rebellion in the former Zaire (Congo) was easy: all he needed was €10,000 and a satellite telephone. While clearly this was more than a bit exaggerated, he continued to explain that everyone was so poor in Zaire that \$10,000 was enough to recruit a small army. And a satellite phone? This leads us to the third economic risk factor for civil war: natural resources”,* writes Collier.

113 The term “dying out”, of course, carries with it a much stronger emotional charge than the term “population decrease”. Of course this is just semantics; when around three million people lived in Slovakia in 1950, were we a dying nation?

What did Kabila and his counterparts need a satellite phone for? To make business deals with companies focused on obtaining mineral resources and wealth, of course; in order for Kabila to take the Congo's capital of Kinshasa, he allegedly made deals for upwards of \$500 million. There are known cases where international companies have paid for raw materials in advance to provide financing for a rebellious army. Such funds are generally considered a deposit for extraction licenses in the event of a victory. This is how the rich world (not directly through countries, but through companies that will wade through the dead bodies to earn profits) has become a major factor in the problems and tragedies endured by the poorest parts of the world.

Other foreign sources of income used to support a civil war are funds from diaspora living outside of their home country. Eritrean diaspora living in Europe and America financed an uprising against Ethiopia for 30 years, ultimately resulting in Eritrea's independence in 1992. The results of 30 years of war are not freedom and development; just the opposite, the results have been militarization and one of the most hard-line dictatorships in the world. Young people are leaving their home country in droves as quickly as possible. As an aside, diaspora financing and supplying weapons is not unknown from our own history, including the Czechoslovak Legion in France, Italy and Russia, which also played a part in Czechoslovakia gaining independence (upon its separation from Austria-Hungary) and was largely financed and supported by Czech and Slovak immigrants to the USA, Canada and elsewhere in the world.

Not all civil wars have their roots in ethnic disputes, as was the case in Eritrea; most societies in the world have more than one ethnic group and live in peace, an example of which in Africa is Tanzania. On the other hand, Somalia is a small, ethnically homogenous impoverished country and recently suffered an extended civil war that led to the complete collapse and breakdown of the country. The fact is that a majority of countries in the bottom billion are ethnically diverse, which does not simplify their situations.

One of the major tragedies of civil war is their tendency to drag on for extended periods of time. Collier's estimate for the duration of an international war is around 6 months. Civil wars are more than 10-times longer. The end of the civil war often does not lead to an end to the conflict and when it does end, the risk of another war remains high. The governments of post-conflict countries are well aware of this risk and respond in a typical manner: they maintain their army and military expenses at an abnormally high level. These do not drop by more than 10% even after an official end to a civil war occurs. The world record holder in this specific area is Eritrea, which spends 21% of its gross domestic product on military expenditure.¹¹⁴ Once the long-planned oil pipeline between Chad and Cameroon was completed and oil dollars began to flood into Chad, so too did Chad dramatically increase its military expenditure. This was done regardless of its international agreements with the World Bank and other partners, via which Chad bound itself to use the oil money for educational purposes and to combat poverty. For the rulers of Chad,

¹¹⁴ More details can be found at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_military_expenditures.

however, it was much more important to remain in power than to worry about the literacy of the population. This became even more important once the oil riches were discovered, which made Chad much more attractive to armed groups that could try and take control of the country and its oil.

Civil war is reverse development. As a rule it causes an economic decline of 2.3% a year, which, with an average duration of 7 years, means that an already impoverished country will be 15% poorer after a war than it was at the start. The majority of people who die in such civil wars do not die as a result of violence; rather, most succumb to disease. Civil wars lead to famine and poverty as well as losses caused by huge migrations of refugees who carry with them infectious diseases, infecting others who don't have immunity to such diseases. Sexually transmitted diseases are specific in this regard as they are spread through mass rape and prostitution: civil wars in Africa have made a grim contribution to the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa. The largest military conflict in the world since World War II was the Second Congo War, or the Great War of Africa, causing 5 million casualties from 1998 to 2003,¹¹⁵ a majority of whom died from disease or starvation. A total of eight African countries and 25 other armed groups from Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Angola, and of course Zaire, now known as the Congo, were ultimately involved in the conflict. And Kabila with his satellite phone was at the very genesis of this war.

Poverty and death are not the only consequences of civil war; they also lead to severe degradation of human and political rights. The soldiers themselves often become the first victims of this erosion of rights as they are forced to fight under the threat of death. Revolutionary groups known across nearly all of Africa are infamous for their various and brutal methods of maintaining the loyalty of their troops, frequently kidnapping children from burned out school and devastated villages. Around 3% of any population is composed of psychopaths, according to psychologists, who are capable of acts that would turn the stomachs of the other 97% of people: when these 97% lose control over their psychopaths due to breakdowns of traditional or modern society, finding violent and brutal individuals to form rebel and criminal groups becomes relatively easy. The composition of these armed forces gradually shifts over time as the civil war drags on, from idealists who began the war with noble or at least understandable motives giving way to opportunists and sadists. One well-known example is the Lord's Resistance Army,¹¹⁶ which is active in Uganda and nearby parts of the Congo and Southern Sudan, endeavouring to construct a government

115 Estimates range from 3.5 million to 7.5 million. The range of such estimates begs the question as to the reliability of statistics from various countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

116 In March of 2012, this organization and its leader, the self-proclaimed "holy man" Joseph Kony were thrust into the public eye thanks to a 30-minute documentary *Kony 2012*, which went viral on the Internet. The Invisible Children organization used the film to exhibit the brutal works of this man who considers himself to be God's prophet on Earth and the medium through which the Holy Spirit communicates. The documentary contains a number of inaccuracies but the campaign did manage to attract a great deal of attention. More information about the campaign can be found in the article *Kony 2012: The rise of online campaigning* at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-17306118>.

that would follow God's Ten Commandments. Boys who are kidnapped have the option of joining to spread the gospel of eternal salvation or be shot on the spot in order to achieve such salvation there and then. If the boys decide to live, the first task they receive is to commit a major crime, for example raping an old woman in the family village. After there is no way they can return home. Collier notes that such violent recruitment of soldiers is not some excess of African barbarianism. According to historians, Chinese farmers were recruited into Mao's Communist army during the Long March and Russian and Ukrainian farmers were recruited into the Red and White Armies during the civil war in Russia in much the same manner; despite the threat of being shot for the offense, 4 million men still managed to desert, in particular during the summer when there was work to be done in the fields.

Of course, not all participants in politically-motivated violence are forced into participation, a specific portion are there voluntarily. Collier cites research into rebel groups from the Niger River delta in Nigeria, which identified three primary characteristics among those who partake in armed rebellion: they are young and uneducated and have no dependents. *"Try as you might, any association of these characteristics of recruits with the image of Avant-guard fighters for social justice is difficult"*, states Collier. Again these are not characteristics that strictly apply to rebels and rebellions in sub-Saharan Africa: in 2011 and 2012 a much more typical media image was that of an Arab rebel in Libya, Egypt, Yemen and Syria: young, uneducated and unemployed men, incapable of earning a living and therefore with little prospect of finding a wife or starting a family for whom he could bear such responsibility.

Collier completed economic calculations in order to determine the typical cost of a civil war for the country involved and its neighbours, which are forced to bear the costs of refugees or other losses from limits placed on cross-border trade. He reached an astronomical number of \$64 billion per war. Given that around two civil wars have occurred every year in recent history, their global costs have more than doubled the amount the wealthier world has provided as development aid. Given this information, it's a simple step towards a logical argument that the West's attempts to avoid civil war or intervene in the interests of quickly ending such a conflict could be one of the most effective strategies for supporting development in impoverished countries.

Civil wars also leave behind a sinister legacy that is extremely difficult to eradicate. This is the legacy of organized killing, violence and exploitation, which are very profitable for those who commit them. Masses of boys who simply don't know anything other than shooting and violence and the easy access to ever-present and cheap Kalashnikovs simply doesn't disappear.

Rebellions and civil wars are not the only way to forcibly grab power in the countries of the bottom billion. Another endemic form is military coups. The post-colonial history of Africa is rife with examples, as we have seen in the chapter on Nigeria as one example. Overthrows of the government led by colonels or higher and lower ranked soldiers are so common that many African governments are afraid of their own armies. The famous

Kenyan paleoanthropologist and conservationist Richard Leakey¹¹⁷ touched on this theme in his book *Wildlife Wars*.¹¹⁸ In 1989 Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi appointed him head of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Department in Kenya in a surprising move. Poaching was rampant in the country at the time as was unregulated ivory trade, which involved wildlife conservation officials, ministries and many of the political elite in the country at the time.

It would have been unthinkable for Leakey to refuse the public appointment from the President, but he did understand the difficult task of constructing a completely new Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS) agency. Of course, the simple matter of creating the agency wouldn't be sufficient to repress poaching and ivory trading. It was necessary to train and equip modern units of rangers capable of defeating the poachers in bloody combat. Leakey in the end, thanks to his extraordinary resiliency and headstrong nature, was able to achieve this goal but his efforts to battle corruption met with strong counter-punches from his opponents, including unsupported claims that the KWS preferred members of the Kukuyu tribe (Leakey's ancestors had been missionaries to the tribe) and that he was raising a private army. These claims were, however, ineffective but did manage to create an atmosphere of paranoia and a lack of confidence in President Arap Moi towards Mr. Leakey. In countries where there is no threat or fears of an armed coup, this idea of overthrowing a government by state conservation staff would be restricted to clients locked up in psychiatric facilities, but in Kenya, this was a serious matter taken up by the highest political leaders. And it didn't even involve the army! Leakey later would nearly die in a plane crash when the aircraft's motor was damaged by saboteurs. No one ever investigated the incident to determine who had tried to get rid of him.

117 Richard Leakey is the son of world-famous paleoanthropologists Louis and Mary Leakey, whose discoveries of *Australopithecus* and other hominids in the Olduvai Gorge, in the Laetoli in Tanzania and Rusinga Island near the Kenyan shores of Lake Victoria were key in the determination that East Africa was indeed the cradle of modern humanity. Richard himself continued in his family's work and made important contributions to the development of our species and its ancestors with important fossil discoveries near the Omo River in Ethiopia and in the area around Lake Turkana in northern Kenya.

118 *Války v divočině: Můj boj za záchranu přírodního bohatství Afriky*, Prague: BB Art, 2003. The original name for this book co-authored with Virginia Morell is *Wildlife Wars: My Battle to Save Kenya Elephants* and was first published in 2001. The book is an excellent insight into the lives of Kenyans from those in the highest circles of power to the lowest, most insignificant tribes and everyday people. The no-holds-barred account highlights the inner workings and brutality of Kenyan politics, the rampant corruption in the country, complex relationships between individual ethnic groups and of course between black and white Kenyans. It is also an authentic effort by honourable Kenyans to elevate their country and numerous aspects of their beautiful country. For me, as a former worker for the World Bank, it was, naturally, extremely interesting to read Leakey's personal experiences related to this global institution. You won't be able to set the book down if you are at all interested in conservation and perspectives on the majestic fauna of Africa.

Natural resource trap

As serious as the conflict trap is, it is not the only trap that the most impoverished of countries find themselves in. One could, as an example, make the conclusion that the discovery of reserves of natural resources in a country can be a catalyst for its prosperity. Occasionally such natural resources become just the opposite, a cage really, as has proven to be the case in Nigeria and North Africa. 29% of the people in the bottom billion live in countries where the extraction and export of minerals and similar raw materials dominates the economy. Exports of oil, diamonds and other raw materials allow these countries to live on an income of rent while the transfer of foreign currencies also forces the local currency to appreciate, thereby undermining any hope of exporting other products and commodities. Economists call this phenomenon the Dutch disease because the extraction of natural gas in the North Sea once affected the Dutch economy in just the same manner. Oil extraction began in Nigeria in earnest after the end of the war in Biafra in the 1970s, which rendered the previously successful exports of peanuts and cocoa un-rentable and their production quickly collapsed.

The high volatility of commodity prices is another mechanism that destroys the local economy when there is dependence on the export of a single or select few commodities. During a boom and when prices are high, politicians dive head first into popular, financially demanding projects and start distributing funds. It is then that they are able to easily borrow money on financial markets, which inflates expenditure even more. As soon as the price for the commodity begins to fall, the country's budget is suddenly in crisis: revenues drop sharply and, conversely, the cost to service the debts incurred during the boom rise. Such episodes can easily push a country's inhabitants into poverty.

Societies that are dependent on exports of raw materials frequently pay the price in the form of a failed democracy. A quick glance at a list of the 15 largest oil exporters in the world illustrates that only two of them are liberal democracies—Norway and Canada. All of the oil-rich countries of the Middle East have either authoritarian regimes (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Iran) or had such regimes that were recently pushed out thanks to military intervention by the West (Iraq and Libya). Other important oil-producing countries have elected governments but they cannot be considered liberal democracies with any confidence (Russia, Venezuela, Nigeria and Angola).

What are the possible reasons for the relationship between oil riches and a lack of democracy? There is yet another, more important question: why aren't the countries that are formally democratic oil powers able to use their income for development? Collier says that one of the reasons may be the fact that they have excessively large public sectors. The mass of officials wandering Nigerian airports and extracting bribes from travellers is an excellent example of this in practice. The second problem is that democracies in general have a tendency to avoid investing in the future and prefer to use such funds for immediate consumption, as every election, and not just in Africa, is a long festival of buying votes by increasing public expenditure. Not only do these countries invest less and spend more, with a few exceptions, they also tend to make bad investments.

Too much money flows into poor projects, which have been poetically deemed “white elephants”. There are too many examples to count: the world’s tallest building in Dubai, the gigantic mosques and government buildings in the Nigerian capital of Abuja and the football stadiums in South Africa.¹¹⁹ Billions of dollars are thrown at these projects and they look really nice on election posters and flyers but the population in these countries are just as poor with or without them. In reality, they are actually poorer as millions of tons of oil leave the country during the process of building these white elephants.

Another aspect of the relationship between raw materials and the organization of a country is based on the fact that the governments of such countries are directly dependent on income from the export of these raw materials and do not need to tax their own inhabitants. There is no awareness among their populations that the state is spending their tax dollars and therefore they have the right to expect specific services from the government and its officials. This widens the gap between the political elite and the general population. Diametrically opposed to taxation, income derived from exports of raw materials allows for patronage to take place in which voters receive bribes directly from public funds just before elections. Of course the best access to such funds is enjoyed by those in control of the country and bribing voters allows them to tighten their grip on power. Buying votes in societies with strong clan and tribal connections largely takes place on a wholesale basis with a concentration of such bribes being given to local leaders. Of course, such funds often need to be shifted out of public finances and into some black market funds in order to so flagrantly bribe voters with public funds.

Collier reaches the conclusion that in countries where such patronage is not profitable or possible; politicians are more likely to attract honest people with interest in the solid governance of the country. Where such patronage is possible, just the opposite occurs: democratic politicians are more likely to attract crooks than altruists. *“Economists in general think that competition itself leads to the survival of the fittest. When political patronage is feasible, an election leads to a victory of the most corrupt candidate. This leads us to the law of the political jungle: survival of the fittest,”* he writes.

Speaking of oil, political patronage and corrupt voters, it’s important to note that one of the forms of national corruption in oil-rich countries is the subsidies provided for petrol and diesel fuel. Cheap petrol and diesel fuel lead to waste that is reflected in rapid increases in domestic consumption: Saudi Arabia with its 27 million inhabitants consume as much oil as 80-million strong Germany. Germany has at least three-times as many people and is a global economic and trade superpower. Unsustainably high and growing domestic consumption in oil-rich countries has serious consequences, and not just domestically; it accelerates the arrival of a global oil crisis and will accelerate a drop in the quantity of oil available on international markets.

119 Of course these projects are not restricted to developing and oil-rich countries, examples in Slovakia include the money spent on the national tennis centre, hockey arenas and completely unnecessary and overly expensive motorways and tunnels—there is no need to look abroad.

Trap of being landlocked with bad neighbours

Over the past decade economists have discovered the fact that geography also plays an important role. American economist and author of books on development Jeffrey Sachs¹²⁰ reached the conclusion that a landlocked position robs a country of around half a per cent of its economic growth. Up to 38% of the people in the bottom billion live in landlocked countries and 30% of them live in the interior, in the resource-poor countries of Africa.

Of course it's also clearly possible to object that there are a large number of landlocked countries around the world that have been very successful. Examples can be easily found nearby, including Austria, Switzerland and the Czech Republic.¹²¹ Then why are, for example, Uganda, Malawi and South Sudan so poor, when Austria is so rich? Another example from Africa is the landlocked country of Botswana, one of the most prosperous countries on the continent. The causes of poverty in landlocked countries include the fact that exports of a majority of raw materials or goods from landlocked countries to global markets depend on the transportation infrastructure in neighbouring countries. Exports from Austria depend on railways and roads in Italy and Germany, while exports from Botswana rely on the transportation networks in South Africa. Exports from Uganda and South Sudan depend on miserable roads and hundred-year-old decrepit railroads in Kenya. Production for export in these countries is very problematic, and given their low domestic purchasing power, no capital is available to enable production for domestic consumption.

On a completely different level, Germany and Italy are more than simple routes to market for Austria's production: both countries are important and very wealthy markets for Austria's goods themselves. Looking at Uganda's neighbours, long stagnated Kenya is the best of the bunch. Its other neighbours are Rwanda, slowly recovering from a bloody genocide, South Sudan, which was devastated by a ten-year civil war, the Congo, the site of the most tragic war in the world since World War II and Tanzania, which itself conducted a war with Uganda. A review of South Sudan's neighbours is even worse, even when considering just how low Uganda set the bar.

120 Jeffrey Sachs is a professor of economics at Columbia University in New York and is an advisor to the Secretary-General of the UN Ban Ki-Moon. After overseeing the shock therapy applied in Poland and Russia in the 1990s, he began to focus on the issues facing developing countries. His book, *The End of Poverty* from 2005 received a tremendous response from both proponents and detractors of development aid. One argument he makes is that the world would be able to eradicate extreme poverty in 20 years if the richer countries of the world tripled the amount of development aid they provide and properly targeted its use. He based these claims on the improving situation in China and India in the years before he wrote his book.

121 While today's Czech Republic lags behind the other two countries mentioned in many economic and social indicators, its relative backwardness is primarily the result of 40 years of Communism in the country. During Austria-Hungary, the Czech lands were among the most industrialized and developed parts of the monarchy and had prospered before during the Middle Ages and after in the first half of the 20th century, when Czechoslovakia was one of the world's most advanced countries.

Bad governance trap

The last of Collier's four traps is bad governance in small countries. The term bad governance to most people likely evokes the image of corruption. Corruption, undoubtedly, is a major component of bad governance, and no less important are a lack of competency to govern and a lack of competent people.¹²²

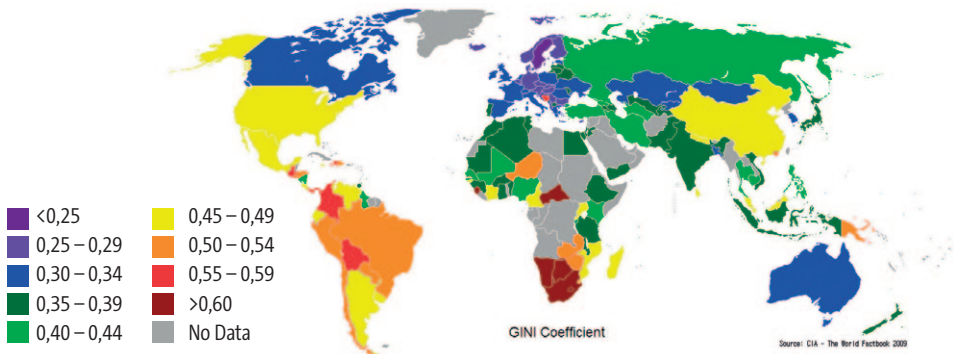
There are many truly legendary stories of African corruption. The fact is that when a person returns from Nigeria or from Kenya to the corruption ridden countries of Central Europe they don't suddenly exclaim: "Behold—an advanced democracy!" Collier referenced a study that studied the flow of cash released by the Ministry of Finance in Chad for rural health clinics. How much of that money reached its intended beneficiary? One per cent! Somehow the remaining 99% got lost along the way. The problem of corruption and incompetency are just one of the common threads of the previously mentioned book *Wildlife Wars*: "...perhaps it's hard to understand just how demoralized every sector of the government was at the time. The situation could be partially explained away by a lack of representative and responsible officials, but a majority was caused by the omnipresent corruption. For example, it was difficult, if not impossible, to get a regular permit, such as a driving license, without a bribe and a business license was even worse. Many government employees reached the conclusion that their employment was an undeniable right and therefore worked as little as possible. They were also on the lookout for 'something more', thanks to the low pay they received, which led them to steal state property or collect bribes from the public..." Dozens of pages later Richard Leakey continued: "When similar public works projects are started in Kenya, they are very often almost instantly abused. Government officials with relatives in the construction industry ensure that the order stays in the family. Others then join the project thanks to bribes. Finally all of the critical funds assigned for the project dry up. The project soon runs over-budget and is only partially finished."¹²³

122 This problem is particularly widespread in Africa, but it would be a mistake to conclude this problem is restricted to developing countries. Simply look at the complete incompetency of Slovak, Czech, European and American economists and politicians towards the financial and economic crisis. Everyone understands the management of a country and economy when the economy is growing: once it drops, they suddenly have nowhere to turn and take chaotic action, basically in the hopes that such economic growth will somehow return and they will once again find themselves in familiar territory. The maximum that a person capable of critical thinking can expect is that they do the least amount of harm during a crisis.

123 Given the frequently arbitrary definition of prices and costs, construction and the extraction of raw materials are the sources of the highest levels of corruption around the world. The intimate connections between leaders and members of political parties on the one hand and the owners of large construction companies on the other hand is the cause of completely unnecessary or extremely over-priced contracts paid using public funds. This is the same in Africa as well as the countries known as PIGS or those in post-Communist Europe. The difference is in that individual construction projects in Europe are at least finished, even if the ultimate cost is repeated budget increases compared to the original, "faithfully tendered" price. In other words, our politicians steal and embezzle public funds in a more sophisticated manner than their African colleagues.

The paradox of the world's poorest countries is that many of their leaders are among the world's richest people. The way things work (or don't work) at home suits them just fine so they need to keep their people uneducated and uninformed. Collier writes: *"Unfortunately many politicians and higher-ranking officials in the countries of the bottom billion are criminals... (but)... there are also honest people among politicians and officials, and every once in a while, against all expectations, they gain power. These are moments for reform. Only these economic reforms are not only dependent on political will. They are also more technical in nature and among the bottom billion there is a chronic lack of people with know-how and education. Only a few people have the required education and those who have it are often the first to leave."*

Political corruption in African countries has made a significant contribution to the formation and widening of social inequalities. The Gini Index is frequently applied to measure social inequalities by measuring the coefficient of inequalities of income. The global situation is captured on the following map.



The value for the Gini Index in the individual countries of the world is based on CIA sources available in 2009. Purple and blue corresponds to the lowest level of inequality in the distribution of income with brown and red representing the highest levels of income inequality. The map illustrates that Europe remains the continent with the lowest levels of social polarization despite increasing inequality in Europe itself, while the largest levels of social polarization were the developing countries of Africa and Latin America.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gini_coefficient

The Gini index was developed in 1912 by Italian sociologist Gini Corrado. The index is a number ranging between 0.00 and 1.00 where a value of 0.00 corresponds to a hypothetical society where every member has the same income as all other members and a value of 1.00, conversely, corresponds to a society where one person has all of the income. The determination of this number depends on the availability and accuracy of statistics, which is why the value has not been determined for many African countries. Even when statistics could be gathered, sometimes they are kept secret for political reasons or are manipulated in order to cover up social inequalities. Their publication would allow the inhabitants of Saudi Arabia or Libya, as examples, to better understand the social gaps that exist in their countries.

The highest values for the Gini Index available are in the African countries of Namibia, South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Sierra Leone and the Central African Republic. Countries in Latin America follow, including Haiti, Columbia, Bolivia and others. Conversely, the countries with the lowest numbers are in Scandinavia and in Central Europe including Hungary, Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Germany.¹²⁴

It is important to remember that the Gini Index maps the distribution of income when considering social inequalities. The income of the poor for all intents and purposes prevents any accumulation of assets as they are simply living hand to mouth. The bottom billion literally live from day to day and not from pay check to pay check (or from social benefits to social benefits), which is the reality in wealthier countries. The incomes of rich people, on the other hand, allow for the accumulation of assets as the personal consumption of individuals and families has its limits, whereby these differences in assets are logically more extreme than the differences in income. The social gap between African billionaires and Africans living day to day and in hunger is much deeper than the difference between billionaires and the unemployed receiving social benefits in Europe.

For more than a quarter century Forbes magazine has ranked the richest people in the world. In 2012 it also published a list of the 40 richest Africans, 16 of which are dollar billionaires.¹²⁵ There are seven Egyptians, four South Africans, three Moroccans and two Nigerians among these 16 billionaires. The 40 richest Africans include 15 South Africans, 9 Egyptians, 8 Nigerians, 5 Moroccans, two from Kenya and one from Zimbabwe.

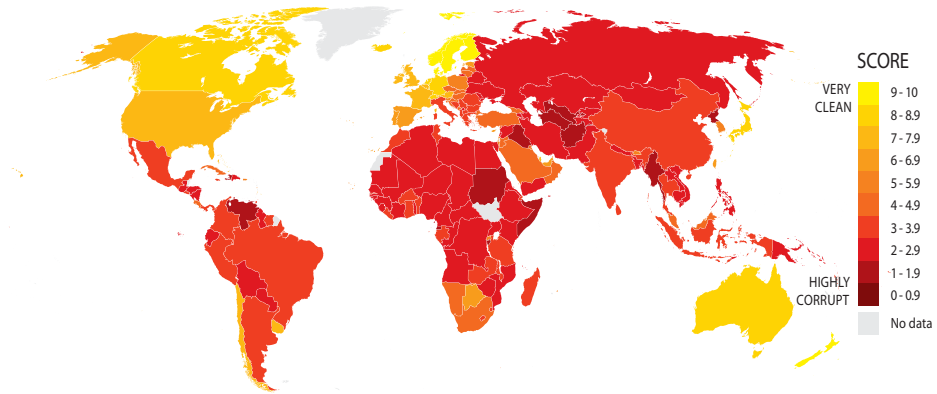
While the 15 South Africans does not come as a surprise, as South Africa is and has been the most developed and richest country in the region with a long history of mining gold, diamonds and other valuable raw materials, the number of other wealthy individuals seems to be a bit high from the other countries. Transparency International maps the corruption perceptions index for 182 countries in the world on an annual basis, while in 2011,¹²⁶ for example Kenya and Zimbabwe had values of 2.2 (on a scale of 0 to 10), ranking 163rd, followed by Nigeria with a value of 2.4 in 151st, Egypt with 2.9 in 119th and Morocco with a value of 3.5 in 85th.

For comparison purposes, South Africa was 65th (4.1), which was better than Slovakia in 68th (4.0) and only slightly worse than the Czech Republic (4.4) or Hungary in 53rd (4.6). In order to provide a complete picture of the situation, this index reported the highest corruption during 2011 in Somalia and North Korea, both of which had values of 1.0. Values above 9 were enjoyed by New Zealand, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Singapore and Norway, in that order. Values above 8 were achieved by nine countries in descending order from the Netherlands, Australia, Switzerland, Canada, Luxembourg, Hong Kong, Iceland, Germany and Japan.

124 Specific values can be found in the table at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_income_equality.

125 The entire list along with details as to their total assets, nationality, age and the source of their wealth can be found at <http://www.therichest.org/nation/richest-people-in-africa-2011/>.

126 The complete overview of results for 2011 can be found at <http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2011/results/>, Transparency International updates the results on an annual basis.



Map of the Corruption Perceptions Index for 2011. Data for South Sudan was missing, but it is expected to be less than in Sudan from which it gained independence in the summer of 2011, which was accompanied by a level of optimism bordering on naivety. Source: <http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2011/results/>

Of even greater interest is a look into the specific names and the sources of the wealth enjoyed by Africa's wealthiest. The richest Kenyan reporting assets of a half a billion dollars is Uhuru Kenyatta, who just happens to be the son of the first President of Kenya Jomo Kenyatta and is a politician who has been the Deputy Prime Minister and Kenya's Minister of Finance since 2008. The source of his wealth? Business with land! He has also been convicted by the International Criminal Court for suspected crimes against humanity and planning and supporting election violence in Kenya at the end of 2007. At least three of Egypt's billionaires have made their fortunes in construction and a construction contract to build military installations was also the starting point for the richest of Africa's billionaires, Nigerian Aliko Dangote.

The problem with the Forbes List of the Wealthiest Individuals is that it is a relatively good tool for mapping wealth in the developing countries with executive institutions, in particular those with tax authorities. In these countries it is possible and even common that wealth escapes to tax shelters and Swiss bank accounts, which means the reliability of the data on such assets is much lower.¹²⁷ This is very much the case of most African countries as their tax systems are full of holes and their wealth is moved to secret bank accounts abroad. The Forbes list does not include the names of Hosni Mubarak or Muammar Gaddafi. While Gaddafi stole billions of oil dollars from Libya, he appears to be a choir boy or a complete amateur when compared to the Mubarak's complete stripping of the

¹²⁷ It's also necessary to emphasize that any amounts held on Swiss accounts by any number of Czech, Slovak and Polish politicians or Ukrainian or Russian counterparts pales in comparison—all of which occurs despite the presence of a free media, tax authorities, laws, prosecutors and investigative authorities we can speculate about.

Egyptian state. It is estimated that the Mubarak family's assets could reach upwards of \$70 billion,¹²⁸ which would make the Mubarak family the richest family in the world and would outstrip the family of Carlos Slim Helu, a man who grew rich in Mexico for a change, i.e. in another country with wide-ranging poverty, according to the Forbes rankings.

The local saying about the corruption of the Mubarak family and the politicians in Egypt says that they would be able to sell their country's sand from the Sahara. To make the conclusion that Nigerian, Congolese and many other African politicians were not embezzling their home country's assets in the same way you'd have to have an exceptional level of faith in politics and politicians.

As has been mentioned, Africans have a legendary ability to believe, which is reflected in the fairy-tale riches of people who make their livings on selling faith: the assets of the richest Nigerian preacher was estimated by Forbes at somewhere around \$150 million,¹²⁹ with the next between \$30 to 50 million and another from \$10 to 15 million. We are talking about a country in which three quarters of the population live in destitute poverty on less than \$1.25 a day. Contemporary Africa in this regard does not differ from Europe of the Middle Ages which had a mass of people living in poverty, hunger and filth being preached to about the life of a poor Jewish carpenter from a golden pulpit by an exceptionally well-fed and supported bishop and priest with garments laced with gold.

Of course, African pastors are not the only skilled traders offering hope and faith. Politicians are another caste of people that sell dreams and illusions and who aren't above stealing, even when it comes to recognizing official income. The Prime Minister of Kenya, the same Kenya to which the Slovak Republic provides development aid and where 71% of the population lives in extreme poverty according to the World Bank¹³⁰ has an annual income higher than the President of the United States or France, higher than the German Chancellor and higher than the Prime Ministers of Japan, Australia and Great Britain.¹³¹ A comparison with the British Prime Minister is even more striking, his or her Kenyan counterpart takes home twice as much. Should you smile or cry?

128 Mubarak family fortune could reach USD 70 bn, says expert. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/feb/04/hosni-mubarak-family-fortune#history-link-box>.

129 The Five Richest Pastors in Nigeria. Forbes, 2011-07-06. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/mfonobongnsehe/2011/06/07/the-five-richest-pastors-in-nigeria/2/>.

130 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_percentage_of_population_living_in_poverty#cite_note-0.

131 Highest-Paid Political Leaders in the World . The Richest people. 2011-10-09. <http://www.therichest.org/world/highest-paid-presidents/>.

How to Get Africa Out of the Development Traps

Africa is today competing with China and India. Real and inherent risks for investors. Capital drain from Africa. Remittances and the brain drain. Financial or technical aid? The problem of high overheads. Support for MICs is more attractive and more efficient. Infrastructure or photogenic aid for education and healthcare? Loans for the poor and grants for the rich. Where financial aid makes sense and where it fails. Conditionality and ways to skirt the rules. Lend or your career isn't going anywhere. Proper timing and the proper mix of experts and money. Fashionable topics and fashionable countries for development aid. The drive for something new and neglecting scaling up. The laws of wealthy countries: when banks turn a blind eye towards money stolen from the poor. Initiatives for transparency in the extraction industry. The Kimberley Process and Blood Diamonds. Potential oil labelling. Freedom in the world, Corruption Perceptions Index, MIGA and others.

The incompetency and corrupt nature of African politics is a theme that could be written about and discussed forever. Its scope is so evident and publicly known that it hides a number of other factors that are the causes of poverty on the Dark Continent. In the previous chapters we have attempted to name many of them, including the four development traps identified by Paul Collier. Let's move on from diagnostics towards treatment and take a quick look at the proposals Collier makes.

From a global perspective, he considers it necessary to base all action on the basic fact that all of the countries of the bottom billion have "*missed the train*". Lifting them out of poverty will be a lot more demanding and will require more intervention than was the case for still developing countries that are enjoying strong economic growth in Asia and Latin America including China, India, Brazil and others.

Let's start with a recap:

- 73% of the bottom billion have survived or are currently experiencing a civil war.
- 30% live in landlocked countries.

- 29% live in countries that are dependent on raw material exports.
- Up to 76% of people in the bottom billion live in countries with seemingly permanent bad governance with a high level of incompetency combined with a high level of corruption among politicians and the state apparatus.

There are countries that are in multiple traps, and such a situation is more the norm than an exception. The sad reality for the bottom billion is that globalization has given the other five billion people a head start on overtaking the billion living in the developed world; globalization has made the situation worse for the bottom billion. Basically the phenomenon we have named as globalization is the free movement of goods and capital as well as, albeit to a lesser extent, people. The paradox, at least concerning the movement of capital and people, is that the countries in the developing world were more globalized a hundred years ago than they are today. The fundamental change in the meantime was the free movement of goods, i.e. the free market. Until the 1980s, developing countries almost exclusively exported raw materials whereas 80% of their exports today are finished goods and services: store shelves are stocked with electronics from China or Thailand, clothing and shoes from Bangladesh, Vietnam and Turkey, while accounting, computer and telephone services for global corporations (as well as the World Bank) and for individuals are conducted in the unmistakable accents of hundreds of thousands of Indians. Cheap productions for export and basic services employ people that are willing to work in these developing countries for a mere fraction of the salary and insurance costs in Europe or the USA. While Germany, France and other European countries, including Slovakia and the Czech Republic, have retained a relatively large industrial base, the USA has lost numerous sectors that have literally completely moved to Asia, leading to advanced stages of the de-industrialization of the American economy. This shift in production chasing cheaper labour has been accelerated by the creation of industrial conglomerates in the form of large industrial parks offering the full range of services, including continuous production and logistics, which have slowly emerged in the coastal cities of China and Southeast Asia.¹³² Of course, the salary costs are progressively rising in Asia as well, but the initial difference in labour costs was so massive that any balance in wages is a long, long way off. While consumers have welcomed the movement of entire production and service segments, which has allowed them to enjoy cheaper products and services, this facet of globalization has been a nightmare for unions and the workers themselves in the affected sectors.

So just why have the countries of the bottom billion not been able to replicate the success of China, Thailand, India and others? The reasons are manifold and many of them are directly related to Collier's traps. No investor is going to take the risk of building a car plant or an electronics factory in a country where there is a threat of civil war. No one would put such a facility in a country with no access to the sea as the local markets are so small

¹³² Smaller variants are relatively well-known in central Europe in the form of South Korean-styled industrial parks.

and poor that the only possible economic purpose would be to manufacture for export. Investors with good reasons to produce something in Kenya or Nigeria would quickly give up the idea due to the corruption and unprofessional reputation of the local officials and politicians. The most likely is that they wouldn't even consider such an option to any serious extent, in large part due to the poor, and often time deserved image of such countries. Of course there are companies that do not have scruples and will lead the way, even at the expense of bribing officials and politicians.

In addition to these barriers, potential investors will run into even more hindrances. In the first place, they are no longer competing with high wages in Europe and the USA; rather they are forced to compete with low wages in India and China, which indeed is a tall task. As opposed to the populous Asian countries with massive human resources, the largely smaller and less educated countries of the bottom billion run into another fundamental problem in the form of a lack of qualified labour. Eastern Asian competition has added another factor: the enormous growth of industrial production in China is now forcing China itself to secure raw materials for its industries. This search for raw materials and land is the main reason for Chinese engagement in Africa, which helps to push African countries even deeper into the trap of raw materials. The unscrupulous practices of Chinese businesses when obtaining licenses, reserves and land, only serves to engrain corruption and bad governance. The strategy of turning back to the East, as was once articulated by one of Central Europe's now forgotten political leaders who had a problem with Western standards, is popular in Africa today but it's only a matter of time before it loses support.

Globalization also has not helped the countries of the bottom billion in terms of capital flows. Even those countries that have made great efforts towards economic reforms to benefit investors are unable to attract significant capital. This is a result of the high risk that potential investors are averse towards. The reputation of a country is easily destroyed and repairing that reputation is difficult and takes an extremely long period of time. Uganda is an excellent case study as it was the centre of the world's attention through the bloody government of dictator Idi Amin (Collier indulges and uses his full official title which we could not resist adding: "His Excellency President for Life, Field Marshal Alhaji Dr. Idi Amin Dada, VC, DSO, MC, Master of all the Animals on Earth and Fish in the Sea and Conqueror of the British Empire in Africa in General and in Uganda in particular").¹³³ At the end of 1978, Idi Amin attacked neighbouring Tanzania and occupied a portion of the province of Kagera. Tanzania responded with a strong counterattack that resulted in the capture of Kampala

133 The bizarre personality of Idi Amin was brilliantly portrayed by actor Forest Whitaker in the international acclaimed British film *The Last King of Scotland*. The film was shot in 2006 and tells the story of a fictive Scottish doctor who first earns the favour of and then falls under suspicion and out of favour with Idi Amin. The film accurately portrays the real events and situation in Uganda in the background of this fictive story as Idi Amin's government was responsible for the violent deaths of 100,000 to 500,000 of Uganda's inhabitants. Forest Whitaker won an Oscar for his acting performance in the film.

in April 1979¹³⁴ and Idi Amin's escape into exile in Saudi Arabia. At the start of the 1990s, Idi Amin had been out of Uganda for more than a decade, but a majority of potential investors still thought he was in power.

The free flow of capital has not brought inflows of capital to the countries of the bottom billion; just the opposite, it has increased outflows. The loss of capital from African countries is frequently hidden and illegal, which makes it so difficult to map. Economic analysis leads Collier to the conclusion that Nigerians alone at the end of the Nigerian military dictatorship in 1998 had around \$100 billion in foreign accounts! For an African country this is a massive amount: simply compare it to the state budget expenditure of Slovakia or the Czech Republic, which were planned at around \$22 billion and \$62 billion respectively in 2011. Other calculations led Collier's team to conclude that Africans held 38% of their private wealth abroad in 1990. Africa, more than any other part of the world, is losing the capital it so desperately needs. Africans themselves are certain that this massive outflow of capital is the result of corruption. Whether this wealth was obtained through corrupt practices or honestly, the capital is leaving Africa because the conditions for its investment on the continent are simply horrendous. Foreign investors aren't the only ones who don't trust African countries and institutions, Africans themselves don't believe in them.¹³⁵

The movement of people, the third key aspect of globalization, enables this flow of capital out of Africa. Migration from impoverished countries to wealthier countries is a controversial subject: some support it, others decry it. On the positive side, such migration leads to an increase in remittances, or the money that migrants send back home. One of the best flows of remittances that has been mapped is between the USA and Mexico and a few other Latin American countries; significant flows also include California to India, from the countries of the Persian Gulf to eastern and western Asia and parts of Africa and from Western Europe to Eastern Europe, the Balkans, North Africa and elsewhere. This money often helps individual families and entire communities keep their heads above water: good examples of countries that survive thanks to remittances are Somalia and the much closer Moldavia and Kosovo. The problem of remittances is their long-term stability: research has shown that the second generation of migrants sends much less money back to their country of origin; as the personal relationship fade out, so to do the cash flows.

134 The Uganda-Tanzania War, which remains a relatively forgotten period of history, led to the end of one of the bloodiest dictatorships of the second half of the 20th century as marked in towns and cities across Tanzania with memorials to its victims. It is estimated that around 1,000 Tanzanians, 1,500 Ugandans and 500 Libyans, who were sent to aid Idi Amin by Libyan dictator Muammar Kaddafi, were killed in the war. The loss of lives among soldiers places the war among the smaller conflicts in Africa but war expenditure was a major and long-term drain on the economy of Tanzania.

135 The loss of capital is also not restricted to African countries: during 2011 and 2012 huge volumes of deposits were withdrawn from Greek, Italian and Spanish banks and moved to Germany, Switzerland and a number of other countries. For example see: <http://eurokriza.sk/2012/03/z-talianska-a-spanielska-utekaju-vklady/>.

Critics of the free movement of people emphasize the problem of the brain drain from developing countries: a Kenyan doctor working and living a modest life in the Czech Republic or Slovakia may send a few hard earned Euros a month back home, but his skills and abilities are missing even more, where 67 children out of a thousand born die every year as a result of insufficient medical care, while the doctor continues to serve a country where 4 to 7 of every thousand children that are born die. In some cases emigrants accumulate sufficient capital and know-how to develop business in their home country, and frequently mentioned examples are Indians from Silicon Valley who have contributed to the development of internet services in India. Unfortunately such examples in the countries of the bottom billion in Africa are much more a mirage and it is highly likely that the freedom of movement and migration hurt their chances to escape the traps of poverty rather than help them. The selective policies of wealthy countries, which enable the migration of the most highly educated populations of other countries, hinder these poorer countries even more: they prevent these countries from achieving the critical mass of educated people needed to push the country forward.

There is a need to be realistic with respect to the development of the bottom billion and when working against the development traps and other barriers in the way. It is not up to foreigners from the outside to help lift them up; these countries have to do it through their own efforts. Wealthy countries, however, can be of great assistance in the fight for progress: Collier states that we've been more spectators, watching them fail, as a result of persistence, ignorance and lack of competency.

Development aid would appear to most people to simply be another way to say financial aid. On the other hand, this represents only one of the instruments the West has available to help developing countries. Collier estimates that development aid has contributed around 1% annually to the economic growth of the poorest countries over the past three decades. Cumulatively, this 1% represents the difference between stagnation and steep decline: in his opinion these countries would be much worse off than they are today without this aid and some would have completely collapsed.

Financial aid, in the form of project financing or what is called budget support, where cash from financial aid is injected directly into the national budget of the recipient country, has its limits and in some cases is a completely unsuitable instrument for providing aid. Analysis has shown that at a specific point such development aid generates diminishing returns, the Washington-based Center for Global Development completed a study that showed that external aid stopped being effective once it exceeded 16% of the recipient's GDP. Moreover, in countries such as the African giant of Nigeria, this financial aid is more or less unreasonable. Over thirty years Nigeria has received more than \$280 billion in development aid and the government has only given its residents a depressingly low portion of this aid. Despite the fact that the development aid the West provided to Nigeria was an enormous sum of money, it truly is small change when compared to the income Nigeria has enjoyed from the oil bonanza. However, analysis of economic data has shown that oil-rich Nigeria, swimming in petrol dollars and profiting from increasing oil prices, had

the same low level of economic growth as other African countries without oil, forced to import it, and thus suffer from high oil prices. Social parameters for Africa's oil superpower Nigeria, measured using the Human Development Index as an example,¹³⁶ are the same as the parameters for Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and other African countries that import all of their oil products.

This can only mean one thing: the massive influx of cash into Nigeria was not used to develop the country. It was a victim of bad governance, be it in the form of stolen money that ultimately wound up on the Swiss bank accounts of politicians or in the form of various worthless white elephant projects. Pushing more and more money into such a country without a change in policy is an obvious waste. It's necessary to add that analyses have shown that the money from development aid was used more effectively than the oil money, in spite of the long-criticized bureaucracy which often diverted these funds. Or perhaps it is possible that this bureaucracy was responsible for ensuring that at least a portion of these funds were actually used as originally intended.

Ensuring funds provided for development aid were used effectively and for the agreed purpose is exceptionally demanding in the countries of the bottom billion. It leads to tremendous requirements in terms of a high level of bureaucracy and large number of people from donor organizations that must be constantly engaged in development projects. These high overheads become an easy target at home and in African countries. It creates the impression that too much money that otherwise could be used to build roads, hospitals and schools is used to pay white men and women. The key word here is the word "could". Without such intensive supervision (and despite the high costs supervision demands) it would be possible and nearly certain that even less money would make its way into schools and hospitals. Remember Chad and the 1% that actually made it to the rural clinics for which the funds had been intended. One of the facts known to analysts for example is that nearly 40% of the budgets of African armies originate in the form of development aid. This does not mean that we can say for certain that 40% of development aid goes to support armies. However, the fact of the matter is that development aid is not intended for military use but finds its way there anyway. This means the politicians and the government officials in those countries make sure that it does.

Problems related to efficient use of development aid and its high demands on administration are closely related to corruption and an insufficient number of qualified people to manage and implement projects. Human resources are the weakest in the most impoverished countries where the aid is needed most; these countries also require the greatest level of administrative support. The result is a serious problem of overheads, which are the portion of a project's budget that are used to administer the project and to provide assistance. Many donors, frequently politicians and bureaucrats in the capitals of wealthy countries who have never worked in the poor and developing world and who have no

136 A list of countries based on their Human Development Index—HDI criteria can be found at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_Human_Development_Index.

idea about local conditions so prevalent in these countries, call for the lowest possible overheads. So where do these funds wind up? In wealthy countries with a moderate level of income (the MICs),¹³⁷ which have their own human resources! The result is that more funds flow into the MICs than into the poorest countries because it is more efficient (from an accounting point of view) and due to the fact that these MICs are much more interesting for commercial and political reasons. In comparison with the aid provided by the European Commission and Member States of the EU, which represent the largest source of development aid in the world, the funds provided to the World Bank are targeted much more effectively towards the poorest of countries. Until recently, only the World Bank was able to provide loans, as opposed to EU funds, which are primarily disbursed as grants. The poorest countries get loans while the richest get grants! Ask yourself, where is the common sense in that? Good question.

While financial aid does not have much use with respect to the natural resource trap and it's extremely demanding in the conflict trap, development aid can play an important and positive role in terms of dealing with the trap faced by isolated, landlocked countries. One logical strategy is to focus efforts on improving roads and transportation corridors to the coast. Despite frequent attempts, Africa's transportation infrastructure, with the exception of a few roads, is often in worse condition now than it was during colonial times, even after decades of development aid. The reason is both the inability of many African countries to secure the maintenance of inherited railroad and shipping infrastructure and the fact that the World Bank and other development agencies stopped considering transportation infrastructure as a priority in the 1990s. It was also the result of unrealistic hope that this infrastructure would be financed by the private sector and a partial shift in priorities towards education and the environment; Collier deemed them as photo-opportunity priorities.

International transportation corridors have also fallen victim to the fact that development projects were organized for individual countries. It is not surprising that international development aid programs suffer this fate, but such practices are common in such supranational organizations as the World Bank and others. Almost every developing country has its own country office but has no comparable structures that would have such international projects as the priority. These offices then cover a wide range of programs where the political pressure from inside the structures of the World Bank against those of the country office is at a minimum. Uganda's access to the world is dependent on Kenya and the connections of Rwanda, Burundi and Zambia depend on Tanzania. Routes on the far western

137 In professional terminology the MICs are Middle Income Countries. Other categories and abbreviations that are good to know are LIC (Low Income Countries) and many of the countries in the bottom billion are in the category of LICUS or Low Income Countries under Stress. The source of such stress may be civil war or other conflicts as well as natural disasters such as drought, flooding and the resulting famines and migrations that follow.

periphery of the country are almost certainly not the top transportation priorities for the governments of Uganda and Kenya.¹³⁸

On the other hand, can financial aid help with the fourth trap, the trap of bad governance? Yes, and in a couple of different ways. The first is by conditioning aid to the fulfilment of a few basic criteria of good governance. This is called conditionality and we have experienced it ourselves: strict legal and technical standards condition aid from European funds in Slovakia. However, just like here in Slovakia, the recipients in developing countries have found plenty of ways to meet criteria on paper in order to ensure that the cash continues to flow into the pockets where the politicians want it: to the sponsors of the political parties, their relatives, companies owned by party members and those who provide the largest kickbacks and bribes in order to win contracts. The only difference is the level of sophistication used to embezzle public funds. Cheaper bidders have to be excluded from public orders by having the selection commission uncover some sort of superfluous technical detail,¹³⁹ rigging the tender itself so that the winning bidder guarantees its own success by securing more expensive competing bids is another option. As well as the politically selected winner chosen in advance by the submission of an artificially low bid allowing it to formally win the tender. Addendums are then added to the contract or outside of public tenders, which means that the final price is sometimes a number of times greater than the winning bid.¹⁴⁰

Achieving the same results in an Africa country requires, in general, less effort and a few more promises that things will get better. One example is the government of Kenya, which, during a single 15-year period promised the World Bank the same reforms five times in order to receive financial aid. The money itself didn't stop flowing, even for a minute. Why? The reason is brutally simple: World Bank workers are involved in professional careers, just like workers in commercial banks, and simply they were promoted based on the volume of loans they provided. Workers that drew a hard line on the fulfilment of loan conditions and stop the flow of money found themselves stagnated, both in terms of salary growth and professionally. This made it more attractive to "verify" promises that were repeatedly

138 After all, when it comes to constructing motorways in Slovakia, the world ends near Košice, which means that Uzhgorod or the Western Ukraine are subject to minimal and perhaps even no focus for the politicians in Bratislava. The real priorities are the areas in the western third of Slovakia where most investment into infrastructure has flowed for the past two decades.

139 The selection of a national toll operator was a celebrated case of this in Slovakia where all of the lowest bids were excluded from the tender for a motorway toll system operator and the most expensive bid for €852 million won the tender; the cheapest bid was €630 million. The National Highway Company used a rather minor technical detail to exclude all of the cheaper bids. More about this interesting scandal which cost Slovaks nearly SKK 6 billion, can be found in an article titled "Máme zrušiť už skončený mýtny tender" ("We have to cancel the closed toll tender") published in the SME newspaper on 2 October 2010. <http://ekonomika.sme.sk/c/5574767/mame-zrusit-uz-skonceny-mytny-tender.html>.

140 The same principles were applied during the construction of the first motorway tunnel in Slovakia, Branisko, but coming as no surprise, no one was ever convicted and we can only guess at how many families are financially secure for generations thanks to the billion Slovak Koruna that were lost. It is necessary to add that this list of tricks for embezzling public funds is by no means exhaustive.

broken by corrupt or incompetent officials rather than causing themselves complications in terms of their own lives. Among a portion of World Bank staff, working at an institution with the mission “*To fight poverty with passion and professionalism for lasting results*,”¹⁴¹ the institution’s motto was cynically transformed into: “*The fight against poverty begins at home*”. I worked at the headquarters of the World Bank for more than 5 years and met with dozens of truly dedicated and driven professionals, which is why it would be remiss if I failed to mention that those who used this phrase were in the minority. The statement simply captures the frustration with the institution’s own internal mechanisms.

Conditionality is full of holes and has yet another problematic aspect: it allows the governments of the recipient countries to shift responsibility for problems onto the donors. This is also not a foreign concept to readers who hail from Central Europe, simply remember that the “European Union is at fault” for all of our problems. A foreign reader of various Czech newspapers would find it easy to believe that the brutal EU had occupied the Czech Republic with columns of tanks, crushed the freedom of its residents and severely repressed the country. Conditionality and institutions such as the World Bank have also been made out to be evil in the eyes of a portion of the world’s public, despite the fact that the numbers are clear: the World Bank is today the largest donor in the world in terms of health, support for education and the equal rights of women.

But, just like the investors who didn’t know that Idi Amin had long since left Uganda, many of the critics of the World Bank failed to notice the radical changes the bank and its policies underwent in the 1990s. These changes were so radical that developing countries now have the ability to borrow from others, such as China, and not just from the bank, and they seem happy to do it, as the Chinese do not require any pesky assessments of environmental impact or the impact on the native population and won’t complicate the lives of local politicians with public tender for contractors. For the MICs that are able to borrow from the financial markets, the World Bank is not nearly as interesting as it once was, in part due to its complex and strict rules. The markets are not interested in anything other than the returns on the loans. No one is going to ask about the environmental or social consequences of such loans. This, of course, complicates things for the World Bank, as important measures of its performance are the number and volume of loans it makes in a year. It is these loans for MICs which are the best in terms of risk as they are much more secure loans than those provided to a Congo destroyed by war, the hungry dictatorship in Ethiopia or a drought-crippled and landlocked country in the Sahel.

Despite all of these limits, a donor country can exert pressure by using conditionality and this is important pressure on poor countries as it cultivates, often at a snail’s pace, an environment that moves the decisive power in the country from the government towards the people. Another parallel can be found in the roundly criticized aid from the European Union; yes it is highly likely that 20 to 30 per cent and even more of public funds,

141 For more, see <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/WBI/0,,contentMDK:20212623~menuPK:575902~pagePK:209023~piPK:207535~theSitePK:213799~isCURL:Y,00.html>.

including European funds, are stolen, funnelled and literally tunnelled out and embezzled using various white elephants in Slovakia, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. Simply look a few hundred kilometres to the south or east towards the Balkans, the Ukraine and Russia and it becomes clear that politicians are willing to steal much more than the, say, 30% of these public funds; the same can be said for the major improvements and progress the new Member States have made under the pressure applied by Brussels. Could we be better off? Sure. Could we be incomparably worse off? Without a doubt!

Many African countries find themselves in a similar situation. The inherent force in civil society in these countries to introduce transparency, increase the standards of governance and decrease corruption are too weak; civil society here in Central Europe is too weak even if we have incomparably better education, enjoy greater wealth and have a much freer population and media. The environment can be fostered in at least a few of these countries thanks to the pressure from these international donors.

Politics is full of transition. Even in Africa polite people, and not just crooks, get into power from time to time. After years of civil war and limitless corruption, public governance is so devastated by corruption and a lack of qualifications that the state apparatus become more of a problem than part of the solution. Richard Leakey describes this in a vivid manner: when taking over the management of the organization he would shape into the Kenya Wildlife Services, he first had to make hundreds and hundreds of corrupt employees who had spent years at “make-work” jobs redundant and replace them with new people. In Kenya this was possible because there were more than enough qualified workers for the work involved, i.e. guarding wildlife reserves and fighting poachers. The situation is much more difficult in countries that are worse off than Kenya, imagine South Sudan or Nigeria, or the introduction of intellectually-complex changes that require specific skills and experience such as healthcare reform, education reform or reforms in the banking sector. Here it makes absolutely no sense to send money to the country when professionals are what are truly needed. Miserable governance simply doesn't disappear by opening a new bank account; miserable governance can only be changed by learning how to govern better. Often it seems we are trying to reinvent the wheel using trial and error to get the job done. Or maybe that we are learning from others.

Technical aid in the form of experts consumes about a quarter of the funds appropriated for development aid and isn't always the best investment; sometimes these funds are wasted on unnecessary consultants and lectures. Sending experts to developing countries is also a regular target for critics: their services are expensive, the same goes for airfare, they usually live in the most expensive hotels and, in the end, the money paid to these experts winds up back in the wealthy countries from where most experts are from. If such criticism is justified primarily depends on if this work actually pushes society forward or if the results of such work is simply reams of paper collecting dust somewhere. Neither of these is uncommon. A great deal depends on the phase of development of the given poor country, the specific topic and, of course, the quality of the consultants. Technical aid to a failing state before internal developments begin a turnaround is generally less effective; the locals pay

attention to the experts, eat well at the conferences and workshops and profit from the curse of Africa in the form of a seating allowance¹⁴² but nothing else happens. Conversely, there are phases in the development of a society, including the rise to power of a new governing authority, which have the ability to suddenly drive the country forward. This is when development agencies should act without planning in order to use this opportunity and to quickly begin providing reformers with the technical aid they need and want.

Another problem facing technical aid is the large number of experts and consultants that circulate through development agencies offering their services. This phenomenon consumes a large portion of the funds dedicated to development aid and means that technical aid is motivated by an excess of supply, rather than demand. Development agencies undoubtedly need experienced specialists who they can send to a country when the window of opportunity to absorb such technical aid opens. Sending experts to the same place year after year regardless of political context and actual demand for expertise is simply a waste of resources. A first year student in primary school cannot be taught to solve a system of equations no matter how much both of you try. The same can be said for the band of crooks in power who continuously drone on about transparent tenders and electronic auctions. The results for the country will be zero, even if you sent all of the experts available. Even worse, they would probably end up teaching the crooks how to steal on a much more sophisticated level.

In addition to proper timing, the priorities of development aid and the appropriate mix of money and experts, another important aspect to effective development aid is the volume of provided funding. In general, the volume of funds provided should increase progressively with how the recipient over time shows that it can responsibly distribute such funds. Unfortunately this is not often the case. Official development aid is subject to policy and therefore is subject to political considerations, pressure and trends. Natural disasters and catastrophes, in particular, are able to focus the attention of the world's media and the public on specific countries and problems. These come into the field of vision of the politicians, who then suddenly feel that the given problem is not to be taken lightly and must be resolved. How? The most common way that politicians "resolve" any problem: they

142 One of the real curses of Africa is the generally applied practice of seating allowances, or in other words, per diems and lump-sum reimbursement for travel costs, which many development organizations including NGOs have started to use to pay locals to participate in the events and activities they have organized. While such amounts may be considered small by most Europeans, they often represent many times the daily income of the participants and nowadays politicians, officials, teachers and regular citizens in all levels in many African countries have grown accustomed to it. The result is topsy-turvy logic and a ruined sense of ownership, professionalism and volunteerism. It has occurred that foreign experts, thanks to these seating allowances, do not educate those who need educating in the specialized subject matter; rather they end up training the acquaintances and relatives of local officials who attend the workshop thanks to dubious connections. The real effect of such technical aid and education is close to zero. One can find partners who are aware of the cancerous nature of this approach in practice and who attempt to change it all over Africa, but their efforts usually end up in some sort of compromise in the form of lower allowances compared to those provided by other organizations.

simply throw money at it. When a large volume of money begins to flow into a very poor environment, it quickly becomes apparent that these people were never capable of managing such wealth and the unexpected flood of money is quickly lost.¹⁴³ A sudden inrush of funds into an unprepared poor country is regularly accompanied by an inability to use such surplus funds with any sense of purpose. Smaller or larger amounts are stolen, a few white elephants appear and what does make its way down to the poorest people who need the money the most ends up in the form of desirable consumer goods; instead of rain water tanks and hoses for irrigation, they purchase televisions and radios, instead of tractors, state officials buy new luxury cars. When the next drought appears, the country is right back where it was before: ill-prepared and hungry.

This cycle is associated with an opposite reaction, i.e. the premature withdrawal of development aid and a redirection of attention to other countries or other topics. Development agencies love innovative pilot projects and their attention is often divided between multiple projects. When an innovative project achieves a modicum of success, the success is quickly followed by a handover ceremony, press releases, photos and, occasionally, a documentary film. All too often, however, attention is simply shifted to something else. Another frequent error is scaling up, which is the multiplication and expansion of successful approaches and technologies. We've been able to build an excellent school garden or a plant for fired ceramic cooking stoves in two or three towns in Kenya. Great: our project now benefits 1,000 students and 100 stove owners, who now only use a third of the wood compared to normal cooking on three stones. Logic says that this should be followed by support for starting school gardens in another 1,000 schools and cooking stove plants in 3,000 Kenyan villages. Except that this frequently does not happen: many development activities remain dedicated to a few pilot projects and their attention is divided as we know people are easily distracted by something new and exciting. Some would say that the other schools will be inspired by a few of the pilot school gardens and begin to build their own without aid. Except that this is usually an illusion: even very cheap investments into rakes, hoes, barrels, drainage channels and other basic tools represent an unattainable amount of money for schools. Without this aid, the inspirational garden from the neighbouring school would remain an unreachable dream.

As we have mentioned for countries that are stuck in the trap of natural resources, such financial aid is useless and maybe even be counter-productive, with the exception of technical assistance at the moment when reformers gain power in the country. Countries such as Nigeria are flooded with cash, adding more simply doesn't make sense. If we want to help the poor masses in these countries out of poverty then other tools have to be used within development aid. The groundwork for such tools includes our own personal actions or inaction and international agreements and charters.

143 A parallel can be drawn to where the average Czech or Slovak wins a million Euros: it is highly likely that the money from such a huge win will be quickly spent or lost in a matter of years and the winners find themselves right back in the same situation as before they won the money.

Significance of Legislation in Wealthy Countries for Impoverished Countries

We have already and repeatedly touched on the fact that Western banks have become a safe haven for money stolen from the poorest countries by their corrupt leaders. This service is provided to thieves, multi-billionaires such as Sani Abacha, Muammar Gaddafi, Hosni Mubarak and hundreds and thousands of lesser crooks, by banks in Switzerland, Great Britain, the USA and elsewhere in the West. After 11th September 2001, the United States of America began careful and in-depth monitoring of the origin and flows of cash within anti-terrorism legislation. We know, therefore, that such monitoring is possible if there is political will to do so. Likewise, it is completely realistic to introduce the obligation to notify any suspicious deposits of any unclear origins into the international banking system and if such funds originated from corruption or another form of organized crime. Suspicious deposits could be frozen and repatriated back to the country from which they were stolen much more frequently than has been the case in the past.

Over the past decade, Swiss (and other) bankers along with quiet bystanders the Swiss government and citizens have not been ashamed to provide their secure banking services to thousands of crooks who profit from the unimaginable poverty of people from whom they have stolen everything, including their lives. The ice finally began to thaw in the spring of 2011 as a result of the Arab revolutions and a Swiss government ordered the assets of the overthrown Tunisian President Zine bin Ali, Egyptian Hosni Mubarak and Libyan dictator Gaddafi to be frozen with Gaddafi's assets being frozen even before he was ultimately overthrown with the help of the West's military intervention.¹⁴⁴ Until 2011 these people had no barriers to becoming wealthy by robbing the assets from the most impoverished people in the world. And who let them do it? The governments and central banks of these countries. The central bank in every country has the role of supervising the banking sector. Unfortunately, their agendas are very different to the agenda of development aid and the stolen money from African and Arab dictators isn't tarnished to them.

These matters long have, and in some cases continue to take on, more bizarre forms: if a French, and until recently any German, company bribes an official in a developing country in order to win a contract, the bribes and kickbacks that are paid out can be reported as legitimate costs of doing business on their tax declarations.¹⁴⁵ Of course the same actions

144 For an example see a report from the 24th February 2011 at <http://www.sme.sk/c/5781352/svajciarsko-nariadilo-okamzite-zmrazenie-kaddafiho-uctov.html>.

145 Obviously, this practice is not restricted to developing countries. In the 1990s the media was full of reports about the business activities of Siemens in Slovakia and its close connections with the leadership of the KDH political party. In 1996, as an example, the party was alleged to have financed a large portion of its party apparatus from kickbacks received from Siemens for a large contract to modernize public lighting in Bratislava. These suspicions were never investigated or refuted. In Germany these were likely legal at the time and common practice for local companies abroad. <http://www.sme.sk/c/2208964/siemens-vraj-cez-tv-com-financoval-kdh.html>.

at home constitute a crime. Finally, in 1999, the OECD coordinated its member countries towards the adoption of legislation to make the bribery of foreign public officials a crime. The question remains as to how strictly companies adhere to this legislation. At the very least, simple bribes can no longer be reported directly in tax declarations. Of course where there is a willingness to be corrupt and a lack of knowledge about the tragic consequences of corruption in poor countries, such bribes can be easily masked by contracts for fictitious services. Two sectors of the economy with the worst reputation in terms of the highest levels of corruption are the extraction of raw materials, which is dominant in many of the economies of the bottom billion, and construction, the El Dorado of corruption in Central Europe as well. Corruption in the construction industry is the dirty little secret of many veteran road builders and will continue to be so.

Money lost to corruption is not restricted to money missing for development. The consequences of such losses are much more devastating as it enables a system of patronage to exist and undermines the foundation of democracy. In countries where costs for election campaigns are very high, cash from corruption and other forms of organized crime often mean that the best and upstanding people who have not stolen have absolutely no chance of getting involved in pre-election activities and to compete for votes. A few decades ago the costs of an election campaign for a senator in Nigeria was half a million dollars. It comes as no surprise that this parody of democracy always got the most corrupt individuals elected to office. They are the only ones who can afford to finance a massive and stifling campaign on thousands of billboards, TV stations, radio stations and newspaper pages or to buy votes in bulk through local leaders and chiefs. Most people in Central Europe, Italy and North America know that this is not exclusive to politicians and politics in Africa.

The introduction of laws and standards can also be an effective development tool. Nothing documents this better than the experience from former Communist countries during the process of integration with the European Union. Conditionality in the form of adopting the *acquis communautaire* was the decisive force in the process of modernizing the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and the Baltic states. Its adoption and application was rewarded with a real promise of easier entry into the Union itself. For the countries of Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, the chances of entering the EU were remote, which meant that this modernizing force was much weaker. Unfortunately for the countries of the bottom billion there is no hope of entry into the EU or any similar mechanism that would motivate them to intensively adopt stricter standards.

Thankfully where no such strong magnet exists, it is possible to use agreements that would help the bottom billion out of the trap of exporting raw materials. A British initiative began in 2002 under the name Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative or EITI, which had the goal of increasing transparency in the extraction industry. In 2009, Azerbaijan became the first country to meet all EITI-defined criteria and these have now been met by 12 other developing countries, including Nigeria. Up to 15 African countries have candidate

status,¹⁴⁶ which means they are preparing for independent certification by rolling out all of the measures needed to achieve full member status. These criteria include a transparent process for awarding research and extraction licenses.¹⁴⁷ Analysis has shown a direct relationship between higher profits from oil companies and worse the governance in a country, which meant companies in the oilfields had motive to encourage such corruption. EITI standards to be adopted include the use of transparent auctions to award extraction licenses.

Another mechanism by which companies drained poor countries was the formulation of contracts: imagine how the government of Chad and its lawyers agreed on the legal details of a long-term contract to extract oil in Chad with the best lawyers the world has to offer paid for by the richest companies in the world. Who do you think benefited the most from such an agreement? Another mechanism of transparency is the obligatory publication of all payments made by such companies to governments and the publication of information on where the governments subsequently distribute such funds. When the new Nigerian Minister of Finance Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala¹⁴⁸ began to publish transfers from the Federal budget to the budgets of the individual states on a monthly basis, the circulation of the newspapers in which these transfers were published immediately skyrocketed: citizens wanted to know how much money was coming into their state. Death threats finally convinced her that the publication of these figures had really hit the nail on the head.

146 A complete and updated list of countries and more information about the EITI can be found at: <http://eiti.org/countries>. The EITI website includes a list of all the companies in support of the initiative and are bound to publish information about all tools applied by the governments of the countries in which they extract raw materials. Global companies are among the dozens of signatories including oil giants Shell, Chevron and British Petroleum, as well as other mining and extraction companies Rio Tinto, BHP Billiton, Anglo American, Newmont, De Beers and others. <http://eiti.org/supporters/companies>.

147 Corruption in the mining industry is in no way restricted to Nigeria and Africa. Media in India in March 2012 broke a story on the findings of a government audit which stated that India lost up to \$210 billion between 2004 and 2010 because the country sold coal grounds to private companies at cut rate prices. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-17471359>.

148 Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the Minister of Finance and later Minister of Foreign Affairs for Nigeria, graduated summa cum laude from Harvard and earned her PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, from the two best universities in the world. Before returning to Nigeria in 2003 in order to become the Minister of Finance, she made a career for herself at the World Bank, where she reached the position of the Vice President for Africa and later, once she returned to the World Bank, as the Managing Director of the entire institution. She returned to Nigeria again in 2011 as the Minister of Finance and was a driving force in the government's efforts to cancel subsidies for fuels, which induced massive protests and shook Nigeria to the core at the start of 2012. Her education and story show that the larger African countries may have the qualified people to carry out a number of critical reforms but the question remains if the politicians will give them the space and the support to conduct such reforms and if these people can be recruited to come back home. In Nigeria's case, a major help was the fact that the government of Nigeria paid her using a special Diaspora Fund, intended specifically for this purpose, at a rate of \$240,000 a month.

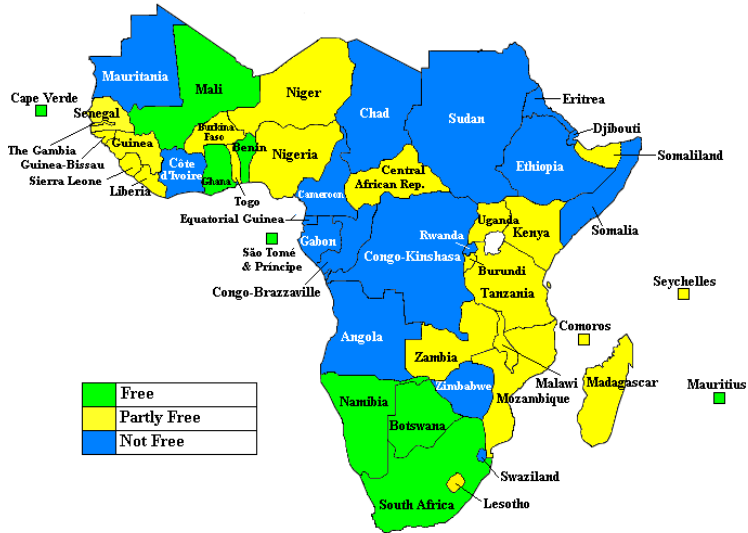
Nothing is going to prevent corruption where there is a huge desire to corrupt and be corrupted; in this case the only option is to compare data from various countries in order to generate pressure from partners and neighbours, known as peer pressure, in order to get them to steal less. The more countries that join EITI, the larger the peer pressure on others to join and not remain outside the club. At the same time it becomes clear to the non-members that remaining outside the club is tantamount to announcing to the public and the UN that “We are the most corrupt!” The existence of the EITI and similar agreements also gives the inhabitants of developing countries reason to demand that their politicians join up or at least to have their politicians explain why the country is remaining off on the side.

Another process that can help clean up this mess, and often bloody hands, in the mining industry is the so-called Kimberley Process, which De Beers, the world’s largest diamond mining company, introduced under pressure from the global community. De Beers had long doubted or called into question the existence of blood diamonds despite the mounting evidence that diamonds had been used to finance debts from civil wars and violence in Angola, Congo, Liberia and other countries. The company finally gave in to pressure from NGOs in wealthy countries and decided to resolve the problem by certifying diamonds. Today every legally extracted diamond has its own identity and certificate and only these diamonds reach the world’s markets legally. As no diamond retailer in Europe or the USA sells any diamonds other than certified diamonds, so-called alluvial, illegally-extracted diamonds from war zones are no longer sold or their prices have dropped to around 10% of market price. Some of the conflicts previously financed by illegal diamonds sales lost their funding, which had ensured the transfer of weapons and ammunition and fed the flames of violence.

Much the same as a diamond’s structure and clarity, it is now possible to trace the origins of every diamond and the origin of every barrel of oil on the world’s markets. Of course, some refineries may use oil from various extraction sites but it is possible to determine what portion comes from what country. Collier speculates public pressure could lead to a technically feasible requirement to inform drivers at filling stations as to the origins of the oil used to produce the diesel fuel or petrol they are filling into their vehicles. Pressure from European and American consumers could ultimately cause oil from countries that are not EITI members or extraction that does not respect the environment to become a good for which there is no demand, thereby lowering the price and increasing market pressures on the given country and company. Of course, as long as China remains hungry for resources such as oil and other raw materials, the effectiveness of such tools remains problematic. Not even China needs to remain outside of similar initiatives, in particular when even China is beginning to discover the limits of its own growth and strength.

EITI and the Kimberley Process are only two of many international mechanisms that are not specifically financial aid for developing countries but are a major part of the package of development aid tools. There are a multitude of similar tools that motivate using mechanisms of comparison with neighbours (peer pressure) or that facilitate private investment in poor countries. One of those we have mentioned is that the corruption perceptions index

published by Transparency International. The American organization Freedom House produces an annual report named *Freedom in the World*, which provides an overview of the quality of freedom and democracy. The results of the report for 2011 do not paint a pretty picture for sub-Saharan Africa, as illustrated in the following map.



Freedom in sub-Saharan Africa in 2011 Legend: Green—Free countries¹⁴⁹, Yellow—Partly free, Blue—Not free countries; Source: <http://africanelections.tripod.com/fh2011.html>

The last examples of development tools that we will mention before moving on to the next chapter are the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) and the International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). MIGA and ICSID are a part of the World Bank group. Their purpose is to provide mechanisms to protect investors in developing countries from nationalization and to provide them with a trustworthy platform to settle disputes between investors and governments. Similar institutions are occasionally attacked by NGOs, which interpret them as simply attempts by the wealthier countries to protect their unfair interests and investments in poorer countries. The problem that these critics run into is the cruel reality that the bottom billion is truly lacking any capital for development. And it is missing this capital because investors are afraid to invest in them. Solid investors need to be attracted before there can be any serious discussion about the quality of investors and investment. With reference to the African money taken off the

149 While Mali was still considered a free country in 2011, a military coup took place, separatist movements cut off the northern half of the country, Islamist extremists destroyed graves and other UNESCO-registered landmarks in Timbuktu and the entire country suffered from a famine in 2012.

continent, one of MIGA's primary insufficiencies could be considered the fact that it only covers foreign investment and local African investors should also be given consideration as they also possess a great deal of capital that usually leaves Africa to the greater safety of Swiss and other foreign banks.

This raises a question: why aren't there more international mechanisms in place that would help develop the bottom billion? The reason is simple enough: those that need them the most have too weak a voice in global matters and also lack sufficient capacities and funding in order to formulate these mechanisms themselves and to sustain them in operation. Conversely, these economic matters are so far off the radar in wealthy countries that there is a distinct lack of funds and political willingness to tackle them. After all, which of the world's most important countries could honestly say that the fate of the bottom billion is its priority?

Military Intervention as Development Aid?

Fiascos in Afghanistan and Libya. Significance of not intervening, intervening too late or withdrawing prematurely. Black Hawk Down. An angry Canadian: general Roméo Dallaire and the withdrawn Belgian contingent. Srebrenica, the worst massacre in Europe since World War II. Only disasters count: forgotten Sierra Leone, British paratroopers and operation Palliser. On the fringe of history: Cubans in Angola. 1975: Cubans save Luanda from falling to UNITA and the South African army. 1988: Cuito Cuanavale, Africa's Stalingrad. Aftermath of Cuito Cuanavale: independent Namibia and the collapse of apartheid in South Africa.

The conflict trap is one of the deepest traps preventing development. Military intervention to break the never-ending and devastating cycle of attack and counterattack, uprising and repression, civil war and military coup has often times proven to be more effective than financial and material aid, investment into infrastructure and international agreements and charters. Military interventions do not enjoy a good reputation in the West or in Central Europe and there is little doubt as to why. Until the fall of communism in Europe, military interventions were the flashpoints of the Cold War and later discredited the American War on Terror. An excellent and notorious example of the tricky nature of such interventions and the long-term, catastrophic consequences they have was the American government's arming and training of the Afghan Mujahedeen fighters in the war against Soviet intervention. American weapons and training then led the Taliban to wrest control of the country nine years after the last Soviet soldier left Afghanistan. The Taliban made Afghanistan a safe haven for Islamic terrorists and drove its residents, in particular women, back to the Middle Ages and into a war that continues to this day. The war was finally brought full circle to America as Afghanistan was the site of the training camp used by Saudi Arabian terrorists the Americans so feared, causing them tremendous losses, both economically and in terms of lives lost. It would appear that North Africa is experiencing a similar scenario, albeit without the Americans. French and British air strikes and weapons allowed Libya to rid itself of the Gaddafi regime in 2011; however, after his downfall, the country

appeared to be headed towards a collapse, warring tribes and factions continued to do battle, major human rights violations were reported along with massive flows of refugees and weapons that threatened to destabilize surrounding countries. Mali, for example, has seen the northern half of the country occupied by the Tuareg people and Islamists armed with weapons looted from Libyan arsenals.

It is generally known and accepted that military interventions in developing countries can end in disaster. We often do not consider the consequences of not intervening in matters once things really start to go wrong. At the end of 1992, the UN sent an international military task force known as the UNITAF (Unified Task Force) to Somalia based on a resolution from the UN Security Council. Its mandate was to secure safe conditions for humanitarian aid to be delivered to inhabitants in the chaos and famine that was spreading through the southern half of the country. The United States provided 25,000 soldiers for the mission, 12,000 of which were sent by another 26 countries, including some from Western Europe. The mission lasted from December 1992 to May 1993 and was successful in the short term. A total of 43 American soldiers died during the mission, 29 of whom died in combat. This number pales in comparison to the thousands of American soldiers that would later die in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but 19 of them died in an event that captured the media's attention to the extreme with television stations showing their bodies over and over to their audiences.¹⁵⁰ The government later banned the media from this practice, but Somalia ultimately paid the price of the psychological wave that these scenes caused in America, resulting in the premature withdrawal of American units from the country. If this hadn't happened, the international community would probably have been able to bring the warring Somali clans and factions to the negotiating table and the situation in the country would have been stabilized. The early end to the military intervention did just the opposite: it strengthened the positions of the warlords and made an important contribution to the fact that 20 years on, Somalia is still a land of chaos, hunger and violence, existing as a country only as a formality on maps. Around 300,000 people had died prematurely and unnecessarily by 1995 alone. Famine and violence are still the norm at the time of writing this book.

Humanity itself was lucky that Somalia collapsed in 1991. If the collapse had come 15 years earlier, it is possible that smallpox would continue to kill and our children would still have to be immunized. The last known case of smallpox was recorded in the Somali city of Merca on 26th October 1977. Peace allowed epidemiologists and doctors from the WHO to catch and diagnose the case in time and to immediately detain, re-immunize and quarantine the last 211 people who had been in contact with the ill person for the period of time needed. Today there aren't many such doctors or specialists to be found in the large, vast territory of Somalia. If the smallpox virus was still alive, it would rule Somalia along with hunger, chaos and men with Kalashnikovs. It would be out of the realm of possibilities

¹⁵⁰ The tragedy involving these soldiers was later used as the basis of the 2001 Oscar-winning film by Ridley Scott named *Black Hawk Down*.

for the developed world to wipe it out, much as the case remains today for polio in northern Nigeria, Afghanistan and Pakistan. This may also be the price of peace in some corner of Africa, all but forgotten by the West and the world.

The consequences of the television footage of the dead American soldiers, unfortunately, far exceeded the borders of Somalia: the policy of “anything but a military intervention!” became the norm and bore brutal fruit within a year. The world wiped its hands of the massacres that accompanied the genocide in Rwanda that broke out in 1994. Paul Collier wrote: “...we didn't want another 18 dead American soldiers and so we got Rwanda”. 800,000 people were massacred in a matter of months.¹⁵¹ A quick military intervention comprised of literally a few aircraft full of combat-ready paratroopers would have been enough to save the lives of thousands of women and children.

All the while, foreign soldiers were in Rwanda during the genocide! The United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) was active in Rwanda from October 1993 on the basis of a mandate from the UN Security Council. The mandate included providing security in Kigali and support for disarmament. Its authorized force was 2,500 soldiers and it took 5 months for the UNAMIR to even reach this figure. The largest contingent of around 400 soldiers was from Belgium, while other large units were provided by Ghana, Tunisia, Bangladesh and Canada. Paradoxically, among the first victims murdered were ten Belgian soldiers who, following orders from their commander, surrendered their weapons to the rebels and were ultimately killed as unarmed prisoners. The shocked Belgian government followed the lesson from American soldiers who had died in Somalia and quickly pulled its contingent from Rwanda. Other countries soon followed its lead. UNAMIR was reduced to a force of 270 soldiers under the leadership of Canadian General Romeo Dallaire, who refused the order from the Secretary-General of the UN at the time, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to leave a country spiralling towards mass killings. Dallaire's soldiers saved the lives of thousands of Tutsis and Hutus in Kigali who had refused to join in the massacres and who would have been victims,¹⁵² but Dallaire's requests for reinforcements were refused. Experts later stated that 5,000 soldiers, as the brave Canadian had requested, would have been able to quickly disarm the Hutus and stop the genocide. This hypothesis would be confirmed in the case of Sierra Leone, which followed a few years later. The politicians preferred endless negotiations to bring Hutus and Tutsis together, but as the weeks passed, the bodies of tens of thousands piled up in the streets, in burned churches, on the sides of roads and in rivers.

151 According to other estimates, the number victims may be in excess of 1 million.

152 An interview with this noteworthy Canadian soldier and statesman provided by Amnesty International in 2002 can be found at: http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Heroes/Gen_Romeo_Dallaire.html. General Roméo Dallaire wrote the book *Shake Hands with the Devil: Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (Canada. Random House, 2003), which was used to shoot a documentary film *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Journey of Roméo Dallaire*.

In the folk song “*Roméo Dallaire*”, written by Canadian singer Andy McGaw, the choir sings:

*Thank you for callin’ the United Nations
We can’t take your call right now cause we’re all on vacation
If you need support, hug your teddy bear
If you’re in big trouble, boys, better say your prayers*

Just as the Belgian soldiers (and leading politicians) had acted in Rwanda in 1994, so did the Dutch soldiers in the UN Safe Zone in Srebrenica in 1995. A force of heavily-armed Serbs was not hindered in any way by 400 lightly armed soldiers bereft of air support. What followed was the largest massacre in Europe since the end of World War II in which 8,300 men, including hundreds of boys under the age of 18, were murdered.

History nearly repeated itself in 2000 in the West African country of Sierra Leone, where the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels had been conducting a brutal civil war since 1991. The RUF in the context of this book is interesting in that, similar to Angola, their war was financed by trading in the aforementioned blood diamonds.¹⁵³ The civil war in Sierra Leone took more than 50,000 victims and was responsible for 2.5 million refugees inside the country. More sordidly, the RUF is infamous for their child soldiers who showed exceptional brutality by removing the limbs of people as a part of a scorched earth policy used to spread terror. In December 1999 the UN finally sent a military mission to the country called the United Nations Mission to Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL): originally a total of 6,000 troops were approved by the UN but eventually this number grew to 11,000. RUF leaders quickly realized the UN soldiers had no interest in actual combat and the UNAMSIL quickly became a punch bag and an additional armoury that could be used to arm and supply the RUF. In May 2000 a truly degrading episode occurred when the rebels captured more than 500 UNAMSIL soldiers and used captured armoured personnel carriers in its efforts to overrun the capital city of Freetown.

The government of Great Britain at the time decided to stop being a bystander and sent in the Royal Marines, elite members of the British Navy, to Sierra Leone. The operation, code named Operation Palliser, is a prime example of a quick and successful military intervention into a developing country. The first British aircraft carrying the commandos arrived in Freetown 36 hours after the British decided to intervene. The support came at exactly the right time: when the commandos arrived, the RUF had already taken control of half of the country and the UNAMSIL was completely demoralized. The original mission for the 1,200 British soldiers was to secure the evacuation of foreigners from Freetown and to restore security in the capital. The initiative of the British commander, General David

153 The war in Sierra Leone was the backdrop for the film *Blood Diamond* from 2006 starring Leonardo DiCaprio in the lead role. He portrayed a South African mercenary looking for his own fortune in diamonds in the war and violence torn country. The film was directed by Edward Zwick and was nominated for a number of Oscars.

Richards, quickly expanded this mandate to include a helping hand to the UNAMSIL and the government of Sierra Leone. Richard's 1,200 elite soldiers trained and prepared for real combat and with support from the British Air Force and Navy, managed to turn the tide in a matter of days. Under pressure, the rebel army collapsed like a house of cards. A number of weeks later the RUF signed a peace agreement.

Operation Palliser was a massive success with minimum losses and costs and directly led to the end of a long and tragic war. Imagine how the situation in Rwanda a few years before would have been different if the French had sent in the Foreign Legion or if the Americans had sent in the Marines. Or maybe the European Union, if of course, it had fast response units capable of such action at the time. The EU's combat units, known as battlegroups, finally reached combat-readiness in 2007 and who knows when Europe will be able to agree on their use in a situation with a clear and present danger of a loss of lives.¹⁵⁴ They could end up saving hundreds of thousands of lives. The paradox is that while the American mission in Somalia and the genocide in Rwanda have become the subjects of very successful films,¹⁵⁵ the public at large did not learn of the successful British intervention in Sierra Leone by watching a film.

On the Fringe of History: Cubans in Angola

The world knows much less about another fascinating tale of military intervention in Africa. Perhaps this is because it occurred towards the end of the Cold War and was overshadowed in the U.S. and Europe by the events of 1989 and perhaps because the hero is a small country, ostracized by the USA and other former Communist countries: Cuba. The story of Cuban military intervention in faraway Angola is exceptional in that it illustrates the long-reaching consequences military intervention in a single country has on the entire region, or more specifically how civil war in one country can escalate into further problems that can destabilize many of its neighbours as well.

A number of Angolan groups had conducted a protracted armed struggle against their Portuguese colonizers. The fall of the military dictatorship in Portugal opened the doors for Angola to declare independence in 1975. The only thing that was clear was that once the Portuguese left Angola, the one-time partners in the struggle for an independent country

154 A Czech-Slovak battlegroup is a part of the EU's battlegroups (CZE-SVK BG EU), reaching combat readiness after three years of exercises on 1st July 2009. The European Union has 18 battle groups trained and equipped to be able to operate in any climate within 6,000 kilometres of Brussels, an operational radius that includes all of western and a large part of central and eastern Africa. The Czech and Slovak units are a part of other EU battlegroups along with troops from Poland, Germany, Latvia and Lithuania. No EU battlegroup has ever been deployed to Africa as of the writing of this book.

155 The 2004 film *Hotel Rwanda* from America is likely the most well-known film depicting the genocide in Rwanda and has also been called the African Schindler's List. The role of the fictive colonel leading the UN forces in the film was inspired by the actual commander of the UNAMIR forces, brave Canadian General Roméo Dallaire.

would tear the country equal in size to roughly a quarter of the EU¹⁵⁶ into pieces, triggering a civil war. In order for the left-wing MPLA movement to resist the forces of the UNITA movement, supported by Apartheid-ruled South Africa, the United States and China and in order to resist a concurrent invasion from Zaire to the north and South Africa to the south, the MPLA sought assistance with a request for military support from Cuba. Cuba at the time had a long history of military engagement in developing countries fighting against colonization.¹⁵⁷ When regular units of the South African army quietly slipped across the border into Angola on 23rd October 1975, the Cubans did not hesitate for long.

Fidel Castro approved the plans for Operation Carlota (named for the leader of a rebellion of black slaves in 1843) on 4th November 1975. The first three ships with 1,250 soldiers sailed from Havana on 8th November with two of the three Cuban aircrafts capable of flying the 9,000 km between Cuba and Angola landing in Luanda on 9th November and carrying with them the first 100 Cuban Special Forces members armed for combat. These units, along with Cuban military instructors sent to Angola in advance, were immediately engaged in combat. The situation was turned around in the extra-territorial enclave of Cabinda, thanks to which Cabinda is no longer a part of the Congo. More importantly, these soldiers helped prevent the fall of Luanda, which at the time was bombarded by artillery and aircraft from the South African army to support an attack by anti-government rebels, units from the Congo and Portuguese mercenaries. This battle, known as the Battle of Quifangondo, allowed the Portuguese to turn power over on 11th November 1975 to the hands of the people of Angola, or more specifically to those in control of the capital city. Thanks to the Cubans, the left-wing MPLA remained in control.

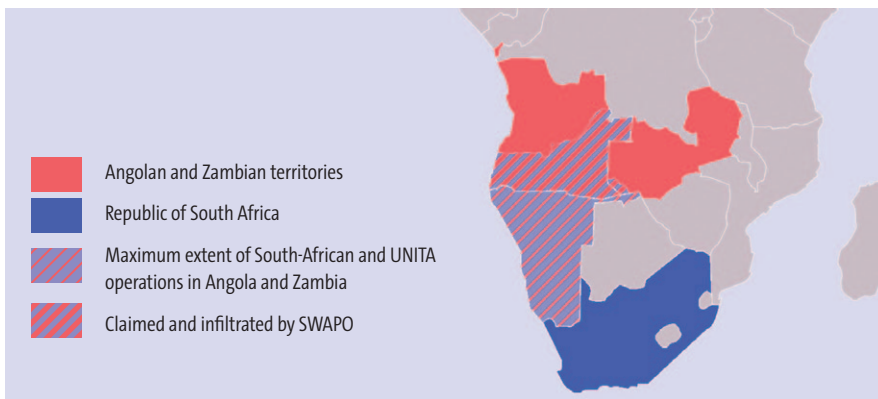
By the end of 1975 there were a total of 25,000 Cuban soldiers in Angola along with military instructors to train MPLA units and by the end of February 1976, most of Angola's territory was occupied by troops of the ruling government, supported by the Cubans. When Angola's President Agostino Neto saw Luanda's port full of Cuban ships in February 1976, he uttered: *"This isn't right. It's going to collapse if it continues."* History has shown, however, that this did not occur.

The histories of Angola and South Africa would most certainly have developed much differently without this lightning fast and massive Cuban intervention, and it remains an interesting case study to the present day. It is also worth noting the fact that the Cubans and Angolans operated on their own and not as puppets of the Soviet Union. The Americans themselves couldn't comprehend this and were long convinced that they had the situation in Angola under control through the affiliated UNITA movement and could only look

156 More precisely 1,247,000 km².

157 Ernesto Che Guevara himself led a group of 120 Cuban fighters into Zaire (today's Democratic Republic of Congo) during 1965, only 6 years after the success of the revolution in Cuba, in order to help organize a guerrilla force. Deeply disappointed by the incompetency and corruption (even then!) of Congolese leaders, Che Guevara left the Congo after 7 months in the jungle, spending the next 6 months living in secret in Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and in Prague.

on nervously as they began to understand the scope of the Cuban intervention.¹⁵⁸ On the other side of the front lines of the Cold War, the Soviets, despite a great deal of opposition, had no choice but to accept Cuban intervention as reality. They churned into action to support Cuba carefully and slowly at the start of 1976 when it was more or less clear that the Cubans in Angola were winning. In the critical first phase, when the Cubans needed to quickly transport their soldiers to faraway Angola and when the situation was truly about every hour and day, Cuba was completely dependent on its only three old aircrafts capable of travelling the distance between the two countries. Until the Soviets agreed to direct deliveries of weapons to Angola, the Cubans could only use their limited transportation capacity to transport soldiers and light arms.



The map shows the extent of territory occupied by the South African Army in Namibia and Angola. The blue lines on the red background show the maximum extent of the South African Army and UNITA operations in Angola. The small red area on the coast north of the border of Angola is the enclave of Cabinda, which remained a part of Angola thanks to Cuban intervention.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:South_Africa_Border_War_Map.png

The world-famous Columbian writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the Nobel Prize winner for literature and personal friend of Fidel Castro, once wrote that Castro himself personally spoke with the soldiers of every unit leaving for Angola and every ship leaving Cuban ports with a course for Angola, remaining in continuous contact with the units after they left. There is a general belief that practically all of the Cuban soldiers who fought in Angola were volunteers. Many people in central European countries where Communism was forced upon them have a problem believing that story. Paradoxically, many of these same people

158 In comparison, it's important to note that the number of American soldiers in Afghanistan from 2003 to 2007 fluctuated between 10,400 and 23,700, while in the same period in Iraq fluctuated between 67,700 and 148,300, while the populations and the military expenditure of the two countries are absolutely incomparable. Details can be found in the official report from the Congressional Research Service from July 2009 at: <http://www.fas.org/spp/crs/natsec/R40682.pdf>.

do not hesitate to believe that American soldiers fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan are there fighting for freedom and democracy in good faith and not for money and their children, under the threat of long years in prison for refusing to fight. The willingness of Cuban soldiers to fight for a conviction should not be surprising for those who know the reality and history of the banana republics of Central America and the Caribbean.

A second, and more interesting story in terms of Africa, brings us to the modern world at the time when the Cold War was coming to an end. Peace did not reign in Angola, even after the Cubans helped secure the MPLA's victory in 1975–1976. The civil war with UNITA continued and the South African army continued to attack, meaning the Cubans did not leave Angola. In the 1980s, however, the Soviet Union began to assume command over military matters and the Soviets behaved in Angola in much the arrogant manner in which they had treated Central and Eastern Europe. Despite a lack of agreement from the Cubans, who were well aware of local conditions, the Angolan government units under the leadership of Soviet instructors began a huge offensive against areas controlled by UNITA in the summer of 1987. This attack led to an increase in military aid from the USA for UNITA (including deliveries of modern weapons, including anti-tank and Stinger missiles, the same type of rockets the Americans had armed the predecessors of the Taliban with in Afghanistan) and a massive attack led by the South African army and supported with heavy artillery into Angola. The South African counter-attack massacred the Angolan government units, who were abandoned by their Soviet instructors and left without commanders. In the face of this military catastrophe, the Angolan government once again turned to Cuba for help in November 1987. The Cubans returned the call, even though they were not responsible for the disaster and had even warned of it in advance.

What followed was a second massive wave of Cuban military units and weapons, including heavy arms, arriving in the country across the South Atlantic. This time more than 15,000 Cuban soldiers arrived to reinforce those permanently stationed in Angola. The number of Cubans in Angola finally reached a level of around 55,000. The Cuban's first priority was to ensure that the strategic base and airfield at Cuito Cuanavale in south-eastern Angola did not fall into the hands of Apartheid-led South Africa. The South Africans undertook six large assaults on this target at the start of 1988 but Cuban reinforcements had arrived in January and all of the attacks were repulsed. By the end of March the South Africans realized the Cuito Cuanavale was a lost cause and withdrew. Around 20,000 soldiers died in this, the largest battle in history south of the Sahara. Eye-witnesses in 2010 confirmed that this one-time African Stalingrad was still littered with rusting hulks of artillery, tanks and armoured personnel carriers.¹⁵⁹

159 The Battle of Cuito Cuanavale, and Cuba's entire military engagement in Angola, is considered by Fidel Castro to be such an important part of the modern history of Cuba and of his life that he devoted much attention to the subject in interviews given to leading French intellectuals and the Lead Editor of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Ignacio Ramonet. Ramonet published these interviews in book form in 2005 under the title *Fidel Castro. My life: A spoken autobiography* which was also published in Slovak. It is interesting that the Slovak translation of this 650-page biography was available in Slovak before an English publication was made available.

The rapid advance of a second column of Cuban forces towards south-western Angola near the border with Namibia halted the South African attack near Cuito Cuanavale. By the start of June the situation was so dire for South Africa that the government drafted 140,000 reservists into service. Cuban Mig-23s controlled the airspace above Namibia and despite the hard-line censorship in place at the time¹⁶⁰ huge numbers of body bags with the remains of dead white soldiers began flowing back into South Africa. A total of 2,300 of them died in Angola, which, given their minority in the country, was a horrendous loss for the white South Africans. This fact could not be kept secret from the public no matter how hard the sensors clamped down. Fears of a Cuban invasion began to spread through South Africa. By the end of June the South African army had pulled back from Angola, blowing up the bridge over the Cunene River in order to prevent Cuban forces from advancing and occupying Namibia.

The South African defeat in Angola changed the balance of power in the region and forced South Africa and the United States to negotiate with Angola and Cuba in order to meet UN Security Council Resolution 435 regarding Namibian independence, which had been a long-term demand. In December 1988 the Three Powers Accord was signed, which laid out the plan for the withdrawal of Cuban soldiers from Angola and guaranteed free elections in Namibia as well as a declaration of its independence. Free elections were conducted in Namibia on 1st November 1989, two weeks before the revolution in former Czechoslovakia. Half of the Cuban soldiers had left Angola by that time. Namibia became a fully independent country in March 1990, far from the minds of most Europeans jolted by the events that took place at the end of 1989. The last Cuban soldier left Angola in May 1991 and a total of 2,077 died in combat, with another 15,000 wounded.¹⁶¹

The triumph of the Cuban expedition forces sent shock waves around the continent. The last openly racist regime in the world would never recover from the defeat and the loss of confidence it caused.

“The defeat of the Army of Apartheid was an inspiration for the people of South Africa to fight! The defeat of the racist army at Cuito Cuanavale enabled democracy in South Africa! Cuito Cuanavale was a milestone in the history of the independence of South Africa!”

These words, and the exclamation points, do not originate from some irrelevant academic or Cuban propagandist. The truth is that you probably wouldn't expect such words

160 Television broadcasts only began in cities in 1975 and in the rest of the country a year later in an attempt to keep the public as cut off from the world and information from the outside. All of the news reports were explicitly censored. The closing off of South African society from the outside world allowed the white residents of the country, the only ones with the right to vote, to keep the public in fear of the outside world. This extended support among the misinformed and uninformed whites for the South African regime of Apartheid.

161 In comparison, 4,474 American soldiers have fallen in Iraq and another 1,976 American soldiers and 3,000 allied soldiers have died in Afghanistan as of May 2012. More than 15,000 American soldiers have been wounded in Afghanistan alone. (<http://apps.washingtonpost.com/national/fallen/>). As mentioned, 2,300 South African soldiers died in the conflict.

to come from Nelson Mandela. But if you consider Nelson Mandela a person with poor judgement, maybe you'll be convinced by the words of American Ambassador Freeman: *"Castro can be considered the father of Namibia's independence and the man who ended colonialism in Africa."*

It is impossible to reliably predict how long the occupation and guerrilla warfare in Namibia and the repressive, racist regime in the Republic of South Africa would have continued without the Cuban military intervention. We do know that the bloody civil war in Angola continued for another 11 years after the Cubans left, until the driving force and inspiration for the civil war, Jonas Savimbi, was finally killed. After the death of this Chinese trained terrorist or long-time freedom fighter from the American point of view¹⁶², the quarter-century long conflict in Angola ended in a matter of weeks. Estimates put the cost of the war at more than half a million inhabitants of Angola with millions more refugees.

162 Ronald Reagan in 1988 had the following to say about Savimbi and his UNITA, the Nicaraguan contras and the Islamic Mujahedeen: *"Our souls and our history tell us that these are also our wars and those who wage them are our brothers and our sisters,"* Translated back from the Czech translation of the original book by William Easterly, *The White Man's Burden*. Prague: Academia, 2010, pg. 337.

Who Helps More?

OECD committee for development aid and the Commitment for Development Index (CDI). Lack of post-communist countries on the committee for development aid means no assessment or comparison. Complete domination of Sweden, Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands. It's not all about the money: seven parameters of development aid. Countries accepting immigrants from around the world. United States dominates in military intervention, thanks to Afghanistan.

The previous chapters have provided us with a basic overview of the depth, scope and genesis of the problems currently facing sub-Saharan Africa, the history of relations between Europe and Africa, various types of development aid and their pro, cons and inherent limits. With the exception of an occasional reference to the World Bank, so far we have not touched on who the providers of development aid are and how they compare to one another. From the perspective of the bottom billion and sub-Saharan Africa it may not matter much, but it is not such an indifferent matter in terms of the ability of the citizens of wealthy countries to evaluate just how active their country is with respect to development aid. Remember, the phenomenon of peer pressure generally occurs when countries are able to compare themselves to others.

The actors involved in development aid are a diverse bunch, from individuals acting on the basis of their personal conscious, empathy, faith or rational analysis and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs), religious groups, companies and communities on up to the easily most important actors in terms of development aid, the countries themselves that have created international organizations along the lines of the UN, the OECD, the WHO, the FAO, the UNDP, the World Bank and many, many others. Given the key role that states have as actors within development aid and the fact that the citizens of democratic countries have at least a defined ability to influence their governments, let's take a look at just how these individual countries behave.

The highest quality and most widely respected overview of the world of donor countries is provided by the Washington-based NGO the Center for Global Development, which

annually publishes, in cooperation with the Foreign Policy magazine, the Commitment¹⁶³ to Development Index (CDI) and has done so since 2003. The CDI evaluates the extent to which development aid from the countries that are members of the OECD's Committee for Development Aid contribute to development aid.¹⁶⁴ These rankings only concern 22 of the 34 member countries of the OECD. Originally the index only included 21 countries until South Korea joined their ranks in 2008. It is also worth noting that the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia are OECD members but none of the former Communist countries are on the Committee for Development Aid and their engagement in providing development aid is not evaluated.

One of the major drawbacks of CDI is the fact that it does not differentiate between aid the evaluated countries provide the countries of the bottom billion, to wealthier countries with a low income level (LIC) and to countries with a moderate income level (MIC). Aid provided to Serbia, the Ukraine and Thailand, at least according to the index, has the same value as aid provided to the poorest countries in Africa or southern Asia. Thankfully, the index does list aid provided to the world's regions and as we know that the people in the bottom billion live in sub-Saharan Africa, we can compare the commitment of the individual OECD countries that have been evaluated for this specific region. The first major pro of the index is that it is not restricted to financial support, or aid; rather it includes six additional important aspects of development aid:

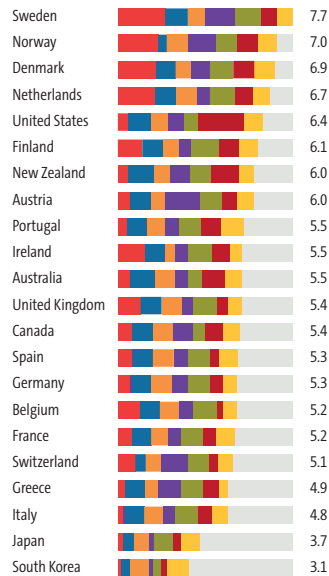
- Openness to trade
- Private investment into developing countries
- Acceptance of refugees and migrants
- Approach towards the environment
- Contribution towards security, and
- Technology transfer

These various development tools are given the same weights in the index and measurement methodology is continuously evolving, meaning the results from 2005 cannot be simply compared to the results from 2011. In order to be more precise: comparison is possible but the parameters must be recalculated using the methodology for the current year.

What were the results for the most recent year evaluated, i.e. 2011, when this book when to print? The rankings, total amount and structure of the index for each of the 7 evaluated categories are shown in the following graph. Red indicates financial aid, blue represents trade, orange investment, purple migration, olive the environment, dark red security and yellow technology transfer.

163 The term "commitment" in this context has no precise equivalent in Slovak, which is why it has been translated along the lines of engagement and endurance.

164 The website of the OECD's Development Aid Committee is a valuable resource on information about the volume and efficiency of development aid provided by its members. See: http://www.oecd.org/department/0,2688,en_2649_33721_1_1_1_1_1,00.html.



Source: <http://blogs.cgdev.org/globaldevelopment/2011/11/2011-commitment-to-development-index-is-out.php>

The CDI's online presentation¹⁶⁵ is interactive and allows for the total value of the index and a ranking of countries to be displayed as well as details to show where individual countries lead or lag behind. Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands have not only shown the highest commitment for development, but they also excel in the volume of funds, of course, calculated per capita, they provide for development aid. The United States of America is a giant among donors and many Americans are convinced that the USA spends huge amounts of money on development aid. When calculated per capita or against GDP, the USA is, however, in the bottom quarter of the table, just above Portugal, Greece and Italy, in other words those very countries that are now unflatteringly referred to as PIGS.

In terms of accepting immigrants, it may come as some surprise that neighbouring Austria dominates, followed by large and sparsely populated Sweden and Norway, little Switzerland and most surprisingly Greece. Enormous Canada is just behind them. It is surprising that another geographically large and sparsely populated country, the United States, is in the middle of the table, right next to much more densely populated Germany. The low openness of the former colonial powers such as France and Great Britain towards immigrants is likewise surprising. Much more expected were the results at the bottom of the table for this parameter: Japan and South Korea.

165 http://www.cgdev.org/section/initiatives/_active/cdi/

The rankings look much different when we consider openness of individual countries towards migrants from the world's individual regions: in these rankings we see that Austria and Greece dominate thanks to immigrants from Europe and central Asia (abbreviated as ECA), while most migrants from Latin America head to the USA and Spain with migrants from eastern Asia and Oceania heading to Australia, New Zealand and Canada. In terms of migrants from the Middle East and Northern Africa, Spain, Belgium, Sweden and the Netherlands they are open, followed close behind by Italy and France. We'll get back to Africa a bit later.

The category in which the United States is the undisputed leader is security with a score of 13.8, followed by New Zealand with 8.7, Australia with 7, with all other countries having a score that is less than half of the USA. Why was the score so high? If you guessed Afghanistan, you'd be correct. While the war in Iraq was not considered development aid by the CDG, and given the devastation and upheaval it caused it would have been a major paradox, the war in Afghanistan is counted. This is based primarily on an arbitrary decision to consider intervention "requested" by the UN or a regional association along the lines of the African Union as development aid. The war in Afghanistan was legitimized, as opposed to the invasion of Iraq, and was undertaken by a "coalition of the willing".

No less interesting than the current rankings are the development of the CDI over time. This provides the individually evaluated countries to see how they compare to other partners. The rankings from 2006 to 2011 have developed as shown in the table on the next page (2011 methodology has been applied).

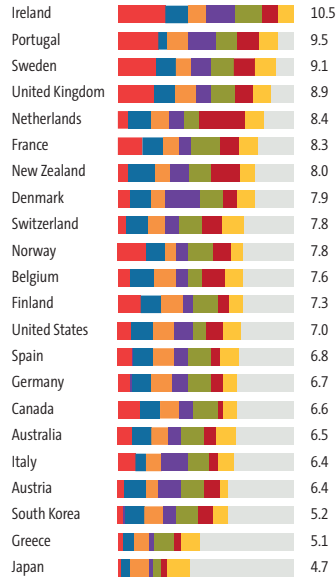
While four European countries, Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands shared the top four spots for the entire term, the situation below them is much more dynamic and the second five include smaller European countries such as Austria, Finland and Ireland, none of which ever had colonies. Any residual guilt over owning colonies in the past clearly does not play a role in motivating countries where the government and people pay the highest levels of attention to developing countries. The former colonial powers of Great Britain, France, Spain and Portugal were in the bottom half of the table for nearly all of the years monitored.

The development of the USA in the table is interesting: jumping from 17th in 2009 to 7th in 2010 and finally to 5th place in 2011. Unfortunately this has not been the result of any radical changes in the USA's approach to developing countries under President Obama. The secret behind this virtual success is an increase in the number of American soldiers in Afghanistan from 32,000 in 2008 to 97,000 at the end of 2010. If this massive military force in Afghanistan, which the Americans themselves see as an anti-terrorism mission, was not interpreted as development aid, the United States would fall into the lower quarter of the table. This is going to happen once the announced withdrawal of soldiers from Afghanistan takes place. To be fair it's important to note that the USA is the largest provider of food aid in the world and with rising food prices and increasing numbers of people going hungry, the value of food aid in terms of saving lives and financially will both increase in the future. This food aid can help the USA's standing in the CDI over time.

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
1. Norway	1. Denmark	1. Sweden	1. Sweden	1. Sweden	1. Sweden
2. Denmark	1. Sweden	2. Netherlands	2. Denmark	2. Denmark	2. Norway
3. Sweden	3. Netherlands	2. Denmark	3. Netherlands	3. Netherlands	3. Denmark
4. Netherlands	4. Norway	4. Norway	4. Norway	4. Norway	4. Netherlands
5. Austria	5. Austria	5. Ireland	5. Ireland	5. New Zealand	5. USA
6. Australia	5. New Zealand	6. Australia	6. New Zealand	6. Ireland	6. Finland
6. Finland	5. Canada	7. U. Kingdom	7. Spain	7. Austria	7. Austria
8. Switzerland	8. Ireland	7. Austria	7. Austria	7. Finland	7. New Zealand
8. New Zealand	8. Finland	7. Canada	9. Finland	7. USA	9. Australia
10. Canada	8. Australia	7. New Zealand	10. Australia	10. Portugal	9. Ireland
10. Germany	11. U. Kingdom	11. Finland	10. Canada	10. Spain	9. Portugal
12. Ireland	12. Germany	12. Spain	11. U. Kingdom	12. Canada	12. Canada
12. Belgium	13. Belgium	13. Germany	11. France	12. Australia	12. U. Kingdom
12. France	14. France	14. Belgium	14. Germany	12. U. Kingdom	14. Germany
15. U.Kingdom	15. Spain	14. Portugal	14. Belgium	15. Germany	14. Spain
16. Spain	16. Portugal	16. France	16. Portugal	15. Belgium	16. Belgium
17. Portugal	17. Switzerland	17. USA	17. USA	17. France	16. France
17. Italy	18. Italy	18. Switzerland	18. Switzerland	18. Italy	18. Switzerland
19. USA	18. USA	19. Greece	19. Italy	18. Greece	19. Greece
20. Greece	20. Greece	20. Italy	19. Greece	20. Switzerland	20. Italy
21. Japan	21. Japan	21. Japan	21. Japan	21. Japan	21. Japan
		22. S. Korea	22. S. Korea	22. S. Korea	22. S. Korea

Let's take a more in-depth look at aid to the continent that interests us the most and which needs the most assistance. Some interesting changes become evident when compared to the general view. The former colonial powers suddenly come back into the picture for sub-Saharan Africa: Portugal according to the 2011 index was the 2nd most committed supporter of Africa (globally reaching 9th), with Great Britain 4th (overall 12th) and France 6th (overall 16th). The strong rankings of Ireland and Portugal and to a lesser degree Great Britain and France are significantly conditioned by their relative openness towards immigrants from former African colonies who speak English, Portuguese and French, which helps integrate them into European society. In terms of size, the largest providers of financial aid to Africa are Ireland, the four Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands. Given the serious economic problems that Portugal and Ireland are currently experiencing, it is

not unreasonable to expect their development aid levels to shrink. In terms of security, the French are the most committed to Africa, followed by the USA, Ireland, New Zealand and Great Britain.



Development commitment index for sub-Saharan Africa.

Source: http://www.cgdev.org/section/initiatives/_active/cdi/

It is clear that the CDI does not provide a complete or indisputable overview of the countries providing development aid. After the fall of the Soviet Union, members of the OECD were nearly synonymous with providing development aid, but this has changed greatly over the past decade. Quickly growing countries such as China, Brazil and even Russia eventually began providing aid as well. The aid that these countries provide lacks transparency and the Center for Global Development has not been able to obtain any trustworthy statistical data that could be evaluated within the CDI.

Another chapter in and of itself is the relatively new members in the OECD, which have not fully embraced the concept of global responsibility for development and a significant lack of political interest has so far kept them outside the Committee for Development Cooperation. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland became OECD members in 1995–1996, around the same time as South Korea, which is now a member of this committee. Slovakia followed a few years later, entering in 2000.

Schweitzer's Dream

All men will be brothers. Comparison of results of healthcare systems in Cuba, the USA and Slovakia. Educating doctors from developing countries in Cuba. The Henry Reeve contingent. Pakistan earthquake 2005, hurricane Katrina and Haiti earthquake 2010. Europeans—rich in money, poor in humanity?

The volume and efficiency of development aid can be viewed through the prism of statistics and indices assigned arbitrary weights or other forms of development intervention. For the inhabitants of the poorest countries, these are largely abstract numbers far away from the reality of their lives. However, they do understand sacks of rice with the USAID (United States Agency for International Development) logo, a soldier with a blue helmet on a dusty city street or a doctor from a distant country in a white coat treating sick children. Medical and healthcare assistance was considered by Albert Schweitzer a hundred years ago as the embodiment of the West's humanitarian mission in Africa. He had a dream in the jungles of equatorial Africa about the brotherhood of the suffering from which he derived his mission in life: "*doctors should go forth among the wretches in faraway places and do what is necessary in the name of culture and humanity.*"¹⁶⁶

Just where are we on this long and winding road of humanity and culture? Where are Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary, where is Europe, the proud mother of Western civilization and the continent with an anthem from the immortal Beethoven that resonates with Schiller's words: "*Alle Menschen werden Bruder*"? And if not us, Europeans, is there at least one country in the world that is at least converging on Albert Schweitzer's dream and able to send aid to Africa and other developing countries in the form of thousands of doctors and healthcare professionals?

Yes, such a country exists. No, it is not the former colonial powers of Spain, Great Britain or France; it is not Portugal, or the Netherlands or even the industrial giant Germany, which has grounded its prosperity and the prosperity of Europe on exports around the world. It is

¹⁶⁶ Translated from Schweitzer, Albert: *Ľudia v pralese*. Bratislava: ÚMSK, 1993, Page: 109.

not the United States of America and it is not the entire European Union put together. It is a country that many in Central Europe and North America would have a hard time hearing any positive references to, but from an intellectual point of view, it simply would be a grave error to not mention it in a book about Africa and development aid. The country is a small Caribbean island with the same population as the Czech Republic or Hungary, 11 million strong Cuba.

6,000 Cuban doctors left Cuba after the revolution in 1959, with most leaving to the USA. 45 short years later, in 2005, Cuba had 70,000 doctors and another 25,000 students enrolled in medical schools. An unbelievable 30,000 Cuban doctors had at that point in time already worked in medical missions around the globe. This fact is so unbelievable and hard to digest for some that they have written it off as Communist propaganda. Others doubt the quality of these Cuban doctors. The facts speak for themselves and the American CIA, which would indeed have a difficult time viewing Cuba with a sympathetic eye, has said that Cuban life expectancy is 77.7 years (the precise term is “life expectancy at birth”) with child mortality rates in Cuba at 4.9 per 1,000 live births.¹⁶⁷ For comparison purposes, an average Slovak can expect to live 75.8 years and child mortality rates are 6.6 deaths per 1,000 live births. Life expectancy in the super-rich USA is 78.4 and the child mortality rate there is 6.06 per 1,000 live births. It quickly becomes apparent that the Cuban healthcare system is exceptional. It is highly unlikely that it would achieve better results in these key health indicators than Slovakia and fully comparable parameters in the USA if it did not have doctors of the highest quality. Just as an aside, the CIA did in fact confirm their high numbers when it published that there were 6.4 doctors per 1,000 inhabitants (data from 2007). In Slovakia we have just less than half that number, 3 per 1,000 inhabitants, while the wealthy USA only has 2.7 per 1,000 inhabitants.

Fidel Castro’s dream, for some equated to the devil and a despot and for others a hero and humanitarian, is to have 100,000 doctors for Cuba by 2015 and to educate another 100,000 for developing countries by that time.¹⁶⁸ The domestic goal of Cuba’s healthcare system is clearly defined and completely logical: in the coming years, the goal is to increase the average life expectancy among Cubans to 80 years. It is also to provide medical aid anywhere it is needed in the world.

When a destructive earthquake struck parts of northern Pakistan in October 2005, killing 80,000, the first 85 Cuban doctors arrived in Islamabad 48 hours after the disaster. Eventually more than 2,500 trauma specialists, surgeons, general practitioners and other healthcare professionals were working in the 30 field hospitals Cuba provided, fully equipped with equipment and drugs and in refugee camps, in mountain villages and Pakistan’s own field hospitals and regular hospitals. Cuban health units worked for six months in the destroyed mountainous areas of Pakistan, staying on until the end of the brutal winter in the country’s highest peaks.

167 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cu.html>. Accessed on 2011-10-08.

168 Ramonet, Ignacio: Fidel Castro. Životopis pre dva hlasy. Bratislava: Ikar, 2007.

Many of them belonged to the Henry Reeve Contingent, which was created shortly after Hurricane Katrina when Cuba offered the United States 1,610 doctors to help assist in disaster recovery efforts in storm-damaged New Orleans. I myself am a man who is naturally suspicious and critical of Communist regimes; as a student and a soldier I lived through repeated interrogation by Communist state security services and as opposed to many more recent Communism-bashers, I have personally experienced its methods of intimidation and corruption. Please refrain if you have an irresistible urge to paint me as a supporter of Communism. Thanks to my own experience in the fog of Communist propaganda, I checked into reports about the work of Cuban doctors in developing countries and spoke with Pakistani and African collaborators at the World Bank and in the field in Africa. All of them said the same thing, it wasn't propaganda. They are there. In the words of a friend from Ghana "*lots and lots*" of them. There is no doubt that Cuba sends these doctors to the impoverished countries of the world for propaganda purposes as well. But it really doesn't matter for someone for whom a Cuban doctor has saved the life of their child. In the end, even the large colourful USAID logo on the sacks of food aid is there so that American food aid is not confused with food aid and sacks from France. Many other countries expend a great deal of funds on propaganda as well; Slovakia and the Czech Republic are no exceptions. Some promote themselves using expensive advertising campaigns in foreign media, other support various athletes and entertainers while Cubans support doctors.

From the perspective of development and humanitarian aid there is a completely different question: why is no other country in the world able to provide medical aid at this level? Why doesn't anyone else feel compassion for the suffering of people in faraway and poor countries, is the difference simply a different government and different people? How is it possible that we, Europeans, proud of our culture and humanitarian tradition, educated and wealthy, are not even remotely capable of what the relatively poor, at least in terms of economic statistics, Cubans have been able to accomplish? Let's compare data on the per capita gross domestic product as published by the CIA in 2011 in its World Factbook: European Union: \$34,000, Czech Republic: \$25,900, Slovakia: \$23,400, Poland: \$23,400 and Hungary: \$19,600. Cuba: \$9,900.¹⁶⁹ The nominal gap between wealthy central Europeans and the relatively impoverished Cubans is even larger. And yes, these "poor" Cubans send thousands of doctors to developing countries and educate tens of thousands of others, while we...?

So just who is cultured and humanitarian from Schweitzer's perspective and who is the poor relative?

These are questions that we shouldn't shy away from in the European Union or at home in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. We should at least be aware and recognize the Cubans

169 All of this data has been recalculated for the population's parity purchasing power. The nominal per capita GDP in the European Union is \$32,600, Czech Republic: \$18,900, Slovakia: \$16,000, Hungary: \$12,000 and Poland: \$12,200. In Cuba it is \$5,500 per capita. Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_\(nominal\)_per_capita](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(nominal)_per_capita).

even if this reference from a European giant like Albert Schweitzer does not serve as a sufficient reminder. But really, how could it: how many Europeans even know about Cuban medical missions around the world? This is a fact that is kept secret from Europeans and Americans. When a massive and devastating earthquake struck Haiti, the poorest country in the western hemisphere, on 12th January 2010,¹⁷⁰ images of the victims and American helicopters taking off from aircraft carriers and dropping food packages to the desperate survivors provided ample media content around the world for a number of weeks. Just like after the giant tsunami in Asia, the world responded with a wave of compassion and aid for those closest to the disaster. The Slovak government for a moment gave in to the suggestions and decided to send aid to Haiti as well by sending two three-member teams of doctors, each for 10 days.

Shall we compare with Cuba? Let's try: more than three hundred Cuban doctors and nurses had been active in Haiti before the earthquake. Shortly thereafter, another two hundred medical professionals arrived as reinforcements, including Haitian medical students and young Haitian doctors who were studying at medical schools in Cuba.

The average American or European didn't hear much about this assistance. Only a small ray of light penetrated this curtain of silence as America's CNN did publish a minimalist article about the Cuban doctors in Haiti.¹⁷¹ Slovak media hasn't yet stooped to that level, but if America's CNN can, who knows what we can expect here at home. Perhaps soon we'll see the Washington-based Center for Global Development take a look at the development aid provided by poor countries like Cuba and try and incorporate the work of the thousands of doctors and the studies of tens of thousands more doctors in Cuba into the commitment for development index.

170 The Haitian government estimates that more than 300,000 people died as a result of the earthquake while USAID estimates that anywhere from 46,000 to 85,000 people died, which, while lower, is still a horrendous loss of life. The breadth of the estimates themselves illustrates the total chaos that an already impoverished country, Cuba's next-door neighbour, could fall into. Suddenly, this poor country was plunged into a situation with hundreds of thousands of injured victims, spreading infections, hunger, anarchy and violence.

171 <http://edition.cnn.com/video/#/video/world/2010/01/19/darlington.haiti.cuban.doctors.cnn?hpt=T2>.

Stop the Aid! Radical Criticisms of Development Aid

Finding simple explanations and remedies for Africa's problems. Development aid—the sacrificial lamb. James Sikwati and his call to Spiegel: "For God's Sake, Please Stop the Aid!". Dambisa Moyo: "Dead Aid". European frustration in Namibian newspapers.

I do not know if there are voices calling for a halt to Cuban medical and health aid to developing countries from inside Cuba. Maybe so. It would certainly be convincing by pointing out that Cuba has enough poor people of its own and that all Cubans are poor when compared to the average resident of nearby Florida. Perhaps these calls are among those made by Cuban dissidents and they certainly should have the right to express these beliefs. Other Cubans in this debate could easily point out the poverty, violence and extreme criminality that other nearby populations are experiencing, in particular in Haiti or Central American countries such as Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador and in Mexico which is being torn apart by a drug war.

The right to criticise is respected in Western and Central Europe, so it comes as little surprise that development aid is the target of criticism. Just like with everything else, anything that does not work well, which apparently is the fate of almost all such efforts given developments in Africa since independence, there are calls from critics how to improve, and development aid is no different. There are others who say that development aid must be completely stopped. Such radical calls are relatively common and easily find grateful supporters. Slovakia, which has given back very little to the world, especially when one considers all the hand-outs it has accepted in the 20th and 21st centuries, is no exception.

In the best tradition that freedom has to offer, a rash statement was made without deeper consideration for the topic itself in December 2011 when a young Slovak blogger, who called himself a libertarian, posted a translation of the article "For God's Sake, Please Stop the Aid!" This text is now more than 6 years old as it was originally published by the German weekly Spiegel in 2005. I am not against translating older texts; I just hope it stands up to the test of time. This article involved an interview with then 35-year-old

Kenyan economist James Shikwati and is a good example of the way radical critics attack development aid. James Shikwati is the leader of the Nairobi-based think-tank Inter Region Economic Network¹⁷² and believes the road to prosperity in Africa is free enterprise and sensible public policy. These assertions would not appear to be incorrect at first glance. Just the opposite, neither Kenya nor Africa is going anywhere without effective businesses or good governance. The problem is that Africans are not going to achieve either of these goals without foreign aid.

Even more interesting than the contents was the fact that the article received a lot of support and was chosen for the “Selected” portion of the site. This portal allows Slovak readers to show their support for the content and ideas contained in a given text by voting. The article was published under the title “African Expert—For God’s Sake, Please, Stop the Aid!” and received nearly 700 supporting votes.¹⁷³ That level of support in the “Selected” section isn’t even enjoyed by politically charged texts during election campaigns. It does tell us a good deal about a portion of the readers of one of the two truly opinion-forming newspapers in Slovakia. One could also speculate that an article named “African Expert—For God’s Sake, Give Us More and Better Aid” would have easily been lost in the mass of other articles. The text is not long which allows me to provide the original version in English.¹⁷⁴

African Expert—“For God’s Sake, Please Stop the Aid!”

Kenyan economics expert James Shikwati, 35, says that aid to Africa does more harm than good. The avid proponent of globalization spoke with SPIEGEL about the disastrous effects of Western development policy in Africa, corrupt rulers, and the tendency to overstate the AIDS problem. Here is a transcript of the article “For God’s Sake, Please Stop the Aid!” published by the Spiegel.de website.

Spiegel: *Mr Shikwati, the G8 summit at Gleneagles is about to beef up the development aid for Africa...*

Shikwati: *...for God’s sake, please just stop.*

Spiegel: *Stop? The industrialized nations of the West want to eliminate hunger and poverty.*

Shikwati: *Such intentions have been damaging our continent for the past 40 years. If the industrial nations really want to help the Africans, they should finally terminate this awful aid. The countries that have collected the most development aid are also the ones that are in the worst shape. Despite the billions that have poured in to Africa, the continent remains poor.*

Spiegel: *Do you have an explanation for this paradox?*

172 More information is provided at www.irenkenya.com.

173 The Slovak version of the article can be found at: <http://vybrali.sme.sk/c/Africky-expert-Preboha-prosim-zastavte-pomoc/>.

174 The Slovak version of the article can be found at: <http://vacko.blog.sme.sk/c/282347/Africky-expert-Preboha-prosim-zastavte-pomoc.html#ixzz1loaydQob>.

Shikwati: *Huge bureaucracies are financed (with the aid money), corruption and complacency are promoted; Africans are taught to be beggars and not to be independent. In addition, development aid weakens the local markets everywhere and dampens the spirit of entrepreneurship that we so desperately need. As absurd as it may sound: Development aid is one of the reasons for Africa's problems. If the West were to cancel these payments, normal Africans wouldn't even notice. Only the functionaries would be hard hit. This is exactly the reason why they insist the world would stop turning without development aid.*

Spiegel: *Even in a country like Kenya, people are starving to death each year. Someone has got to help them.*

Shikwati: *But it has to be the Kenyans themselves who help these people. When there's a drought in a region of Kenya, our corrupt politicians reflexively cry out for more help. This call then reaches the United Nations World Food Program—which is a massive agency of apparatchiks who are in the absurd situation of, on the one hand, being dedicated to the fight against hunger while, on the other hand, being faced with unemployment were hunger actually eliminated. It's only natural that they willingly accept the plea for more help. And it's not uncommon that they demand a little more money than the respective African government originally requested. They then forward that request to their headquarters, and before long, several thousand tons of corn are shipped to Africa...*

Spiegel: *...corn that predominantly comes from highly-subsidized European and American farmers...*

Shikwati: *...and at some point, this corn ends up in the harbour of Mombasa. A portion of the corn often goes directly into the hands of unscrupulous politicians who then pass it on to their own tribe to boost their next election campaign. Another portion of the shipment ends up on the black market where the corn is dumped at extremely low prices. Local farmers may as well put down their hoes right away; no one can compete with the UN's World Food Program. And because the farmers go under in the face of this pressure, Kenya would have no reserves to draw on if there actually were a famine next year. It's a simple but fatal cycle.*

Spiegel: *If the World Food Program didn't do anything, the people would starve.*

Shikwati: *I don't think so. In such a case, the Kenyans, for a change, would be forced to initiate trade relations with Uganda or Tanzania, and buy their food there. This type of trade is vital for Africa. It would force us to improve our own infrastructure, while making national borders—drawn by the Europeans by the way—more permeable. It would also force us to establish laws favouring market economy.*

Spiegel: *Would Africa actually be able to solve these problems on its own?*

Shikwati: *Of course. Hunger should not be a problem in most of the countries south of the Sahara. In addition, there are vast natural resources: oil, gold, diamonds. Africa is always only portrayed as a continent of suffering, but most figures are vastly exaggerated. In the industrial nations, there's a sense that Africa would go under without*

development aid. But believe me, Africa existed before you Europeans came along. And we didn't do all that poorly either.

Spiegel: But AIDS didn't exist at that time.

Shikwati: If one were to believe all the horrifying reports, then all Kenyans should actually be dead by now. But now, tests are being carried out everywhere, and it turns out that the figures were vastly exaggerated. It's not three million Kenyans that are infected. All of the sudden, it's only about one million. Malaria is just as much of a problem, but people rarely talk about that.

Spiegel: And why's that?

Shikwati: AIDS is big business, maybe Africa's biggest business. There's nothing else that can generate as much aid money as shocking figures on AIDS. AIDS is a political disease here, and we should be very sceptical.

Spiegel: The Americans and Europeans have frozen funds previously pledged to Kenya. The country is too corrupt, they say.

Shikwati: I am afraid, though, that the money will still be transferred before long. After all, it has to go somewhere. Unfortunately, the Europeans' devastating urge to do good can no longer be countered with reason. It makes no sense whatsoever that directly after the new Kenyan government was elected—a leadership change that ended the dictatorship of Daniel arap Moi—the faucets were suddenly opened and streams of money poured into the country.

Spiegel: Such aid is usually earmarked for a specific objective, though.

Shikwati: That doesn't change anything. Millions of dollars earmarked for the fight against AIDS are still stashed away in Kenyan bank accounts and have not been spent. Our politicians were overwhelmed with money, and they try to siphon off as much as possible. The late tyrant of the Central African Republic, Jean Bedel Bokassa, cynically summed it up by saying: "The French government pays for everything in our country. We ask the French for money. We get it, and then we waste it."

Spiegel: In the West, there are many compassionate citizens wanting to help Africa. Each year, they donate money and pack their old clothes into collection bags...

Shikwati: ...and they flood our markets with that stuff. We can buy these donated clothes cheaply at our so-called Mitumba markets. There are Germans who spend a few dollars to get used Bayern Munich or Werder Bremen jerseys, in other words, clothes that some German kids sent to Africa for a good cause. After buying these jerseys, they auction them off at Ebay and send them back to Germany—for three times the price. That's insanity...

Spiegel: ...and hopefully an exception.

Shikwati: Why do we get these mountains of clothes? No one is freezing here. Instead, our tailors lose their livelihoods. They're in the same position as our farmers. No one in the low-wage world of Africa can be cost-efficient enough to keep pace with donated products. In 1997, 137,000 workers were employed in Nigeria's textile industry. By 2003,

the figure had dropped to 57,000. The results are the same in all other areas where overwhelming helpfulness and fragile African markets collide.

Spiegel: *Following World War II, Germany only managed to get back on its feet because the Americans poured money into the country through the Marshall Plan. Wouldn't that qualify as successful development aid?*

Shikwati: *In Germany's case, only the destroyed infrastructure had to be repaired. Despite the economic crisis of the Weimar Republic, Germany was a highly-industrialized country before the war. The damages created by the tsunami in Thailand can also be fixed with a little money and some reconstruction aid. Africa, however, must take the first steps into modernity on its own. There must be a change in mentality. We have to stop perceiving ourselves as beggars. These days, Africans only perceive themselves as victims. On the other hand, no one can really picture an African as a businessman. In order to change the current situation, it would be helpful if the aid organizations were to pull out.*

Spiegel: *If they did that, many jobs would be immediately lost...*

Shikwati: *...jobs that were created artificially in the first place and that distort reality. Jobs with foreign aid organizations are, of course, quite popular, and they can be very selective in choosing the best people. When an aid organization needs a driver, dozens apply for the job. And because it's unacceptable that the aid worker's chauffeur only speaks his own tribal language, an applicant is needed who also speaks English fluently—and, ideally, one who is also well mannered. So you end up with some African biochemist driving an aid worker around, distributing European food, and forcing local farmers out of their jobs. That's just crazy!*

Spiegel: *The German government takes pride in precisely monitoring the recipients of its funds.*

Shikwati: *And what's the result? A disaster. The German government threw money right at Rwanda's president Paul Kagame. This is a man who has the deaths of a million people on his conscience—people that his army killed in the neighbouring country of Congo.*

Spiegel: *What are the Germans supposed to do?*

Shikwati: *If they really want to fight poverty, they should completely halt development aid and give Africa the opportunity to ensure its own survival. Currently, Africa is like a child that immediately cries for its babysitter when something goes wrong. Africa should stand on its own two feet.*

At least according to James Shikwati; as sometimes occurs, the ideas contained in the interview are a diverse mix of statements and observations that are in principle correct, mixed in with a few insignificant details that are of disproportionate interest from the media (the legend of bananas, which must have European Union approved curvature, is replaced by the story of Germans auctioning off shirts from Africa on eBay). All of these are intertwined with statements that are not backed by any serious analysis. The mixture of

these red herrings with clearly correct statements gives groundless statements a feeling of solidness. Such a mixture of the truth, half-truths and absolute absurdities is a standard component of intentional or unintentional manipulation of the public. Politicians are typically the masters of this art. One virtuoso and for his time exceptionally successful manipulator of his local tribe once made a statement that, in abbreviated form, said: *“Slovakia is a small and mountainous central European country, which is why a Swiss future awaits it”*. This is just about as absurd as it can get, and yet he was elected prime minister to multiple terms and was allowed to almost completely devastate the entire country.

Just as most of Slovakia is indeed mountainous, Mr Shikwati’s statement that most Africans would survive without development aid is also basically true. The fact that he overlooks or ignores is that tens of millions of them would die prematurely as a consequence of hunger, epidemics and violence. To someone from Kenya, which is not landlocked, has not gone through an exhaustive civil war and is not dependent on exports of raw materials but which suffers from the trap of poor governance and corruption, it may seem that a world without development aid would be almost desirable with the free market proving sufficient to ease these problems. Especially in Nairobi, a city which is relatively prosperous for Africa and which is completely saturated with foreign donors and organizations. Nairobi is also the main gateway for foreign tourists who are, after exports of flowers, tea and coffee, the main source of foreign income for Kenya.

The world is completely different a scant 100 km from Nairobi and this is the world in which foreign aid (most of which is absorbed in Nairobi) is largely an unknown phrase. At the end of 2007 Kenya found itself on the brink of civil war after elections, in which “only” 1,000 people were killed in the pre-election run-up and “only” 600,000 forced from their homes, which must have been the result of the tremendous diplomatic efforts of all the donor countries and the UN. The fact that Kenya did not fall into civil war in 2008, in which the Kikuyu, Luo, Kalenjin, Luhya and other peoples would have murdered one another, and the rule of law did not break down in this fractured country must have been caused by the invisible hand of the free market. However, the textile industry in Nigeria was not destroyed by imports of used clothing from Europe and the USA; rather it was killed off by a flood of cheap products exported from China, India and Bangladesh, in other words, exactly the open market that the economist from Nairobi had considered to be the cure.

We won’t get into knocking down all of the faulty issues raised in this interview; anyone who feels the need can check the veracity of any of his other statements as well. One of the important fallacies that Mr Shikwati raises and that must be highlighted is a common generalization. Africa is an enormous and very diverse continent and to make such wide-ranging conclusions as “Stop the Aid!” on the basis of the reality of a single city is very, very misleading. Simply leave Nairobi and go to the Kenyan side of Lake Victoria; a person quickly sees that HIV/AIDS is an exceptionally serious problem and any attempt to say that the problem is blown out of proportions, is, well, extremely misleading, to be polite. The difference between three million infected and one million is large but saying only one million infected Kenyans and several million children orphaned as a result of HIV means we should

“end the aid” demands an incredibly thick skin. It would appear that academic liberals have just such skin.

If Mr Shikwati had said “Stop the Aid to Kenya!” perhaps it would be possible to take him at least a little bit seriously. If he had been even more precise and called for the aid flowing into Nairobi to stop, then we could begin to approach this subject in a much more serious manner.

In order to expand the scope of this chapter on radical critics beyond a single example, one of the more famous criticisms of development aid was made by Zambian Dambisa Moyo, a graduate in economics from Oxford and the author of the book *Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way For Africa* published in 2009. Her main hypothesis is that the large scope of foreign aid to African countries has resulted in dependence on such funds, supported corruption and even extended bad governance and poverty. Foreign aid, in her opinion, drives the cycle of poverty and torpedoes the economic development of the entire continent. She proposes a prescription based on this diagnosis: if the West was only to cut back on development aid, African governments would have no choice but to look elsewhere for other resources and would have to become more responsible.

Voilà! Hallelujah—here’s the solution!

Unfortunately even this optimistic statement falls to the wayside when faced with the unfortunate image of Nigeria, which is not and will not fall in line with this encouraging scheme. If Nigeria was as large as Rwanda, we could overlook it, but how are we to overlook it when we know that every fifth African is Nigerian? It simply is impossible because we must recognize that the even large countries with massive resources, i.e. oil in Nigeria’s case, which is disproportionate to the development aid, is failing just the same, if not a larger problem are the countries that lack such resources and that are much more dependent on external aid. Such other, domestic resources far and away do not automatically lead to decreased corruption or better governance. Solid studies have even confirmed the opposite; the cash from development aid funds is regularly used more effectively thanks to strict (and expensive) supervision by foreign donors than those internal funds for African governments that their own populations have proven unable to control. This and a wider range of evidence shows that development aid in specific circumstances does work, which Dambisa Moyo chooses to ignore. Surprisingly, she also overlooks that many African countries have minimal or zero chance to find other resources.

What cannot be denied by Dambisa Moyo herself is that her criticism of development is much more serious than the claims levied by Mr Shikwati and that she does really strike the nail on the head in some cases. Above all this applies to what would appear to be the main source of her discomfort from development aid, which is the topic of its long-term sustainability. The questions she raises are: “*What will happen to African countries in 20 to 30 years? Will they still be dependent on development aid?*” absolutely legitimate, correct and essential questions to ask. A half a century of development aid since independence

in the majority of African countries has seen around a thousand billion (a trillion) dollars flow from the West to Africa. Such a volume of aid was possible during the conditions of economic boom, driven by until recently inexhaustible sources of oil and energy, with food from fields that were one or two degrees colder and to be split among a population that was more than a half billion smaller in Africa alone (there were a quarter of the people in Africa in 1960 as there are today). Without cheap oil, surpluses of cheap foods and strong growth, the West simply will not be able to sustain such a pace of growth, even if it continues to have the strong political will to do so.

Calls from the likes of Dambisa Moyo and James Shikwati will continue to be heard, even if they are heard more along the lines of economic reality rather than based on strong arguments. Significant cutbacks in foreign aid may come much quicker than they, and more importantly the inhabitants and rulers of African countries whose lives and power depend on foreign development aid, think.

The development of African countries after decolonization is a source of frustration for Africans themselves and for Europeans and North Americans who have provided development aid to African countries for decades. At the end of May 2009 I was reminded of an article titled "*Welfare and Charity... the Bane of Africa*", published in a Namibian newspaper, the Independent Mirror, which I happened upon quite by chance at the airport in Windhoek. The Namibian newspaper article was taken from Biophile Magazine, which itself claimed that it had originally been published in the Irish Independent, but I have been unable to find the original source or author. The Namibian newspaper noted that while controversial, the article did raise a number of points of interest and the newspaper had published it in order to encourage discussion. A translation back from a Slovak translation of the original article is provided below:

Welfare and Charity—the Bane of Africa?

...No. I'm not going to be the one to do it. They're sending around the collection plate for Ethiopia again. Almost 25 years have passed since the Ethiopian (and Bob Geldof's) famous Feed the World campaign and since then the population in Ethiopia has risen from 33.5 million to today's 78 million. (Note JM: In the summer of 2012, the CIA estimated that Ethiopia had a population of nearly 94 million.)

So why, for god's sake, do I have to do anything to support another catastrophic population increase in that country? What kind of logic is that? That's no logic at all. Of course they say there are two things where logic does not apply. One is my conscious and the second is a picture, shown over and over, of a child with wide eyes, full of hunger, looking into the lens, once again documenting the tragedy...

Unfortunately.

My conscious has already been here both physically and financially. As opposed to most of you, I actually have been to Ethiopia, and, like most of you, I have made contributions to charities in order to end the hunger. The boy with wide, moist eyes, who we saved there 20 years ago, is today a crazed maniac with a Kalashnikov fathering children wherever his whimsy

takes him. Certainly there are great arguments as to why we should extend the life of this ravenous and dysfunctional economic, social and sexual system. But I just don't know those reasons. On the other hand there are many reasons for me not to write an article like this.

It's not going to win me many friends, only evoke justified outrage among the self-righteous, letter-writing zealots, the kind of people who never miss a chance to dive into any debate in Irish life with their smarmy smiles and moral superiority..

So please, spare me, you righteously outraged, with your talk about our own great famine or any other nonsense analogies. No comparison exists. Twenty years after the famine in Ireland (Note JM: the author is referring to the Great Irish Famine, "Gorta Mór" which lasted from 1845 to 1852. Ireland at the time lost 20 to 25% of its population, many more immigrated abroad and the country has never reached the same population as it had before the famine) its population was 30% lower. In the same time, thanks to Western food aid, Mercedes ten-wheelers and Hercules aircraft, the population of Ethiopia has more than doubled.

Unfortunately this poor country hasn't been alone in this madness. Somewhere over the rainbow is Somalia, another excellent country for loafers with permanently bloated stomachs, who shoot off their Kalashnikovs, chew khat leaves and mutilate the genitals of little girls. Today we have nearly an entire continent of sexually hyperactive paupers and tens of millions of people who have only survived thanks to aid from the outside world.

This dependence has not led to political prudence or healthy common sense. Just the opposite, it appears that voodoo idiotism is now on the rise, led by the future president of South Africa who firmly believes that water from the tap on a post-coital penis is sufficient prevention against infections. Not to mention that poverty, hunger and social collapse was not prevented by the wars in Somalia, Uganda, Congo, the Sudan, Eritrea, et cetera.

Of course, now I'm just rambling on. However, these are indeed the impulses with which they are writing the sentences and chapters of their own history. Japan, China, Russia, Korea, Poland, Germany, Vietnam, Laos and even Cambodia have taken more severe blows in the 20th century alone than just about any part of Africa.

Today nearly all of these countries provide Africa with aid or invest in Africa, while Africa with its never ending savannah and fertile grasslands hasn't given anyone anything back—with the exception of AIDS. Even among African nations, resources are being exhausted at the cost of catastrophic ecological degradation. In 2050 the population of Ethiopia should reach 177 million, or the equivalent of today's Germany, France and Benelux combined, but located in arid and nutrient stripped deserts of the Great Rift Valley.

What sense does it make to actively support increasing the population levels in countries that are already overpopulated, environmentally devastated and economically dependent on others? What kind of morals involve saving the life of a hungry Ethiopian child who can expect a brutal circumcision, poverty, hunger, violence and sexual abuse, only to breed another half dozen children with the wide and open eyes of hunger and comparably "joyous" lives? Of course, it may give you a warm feeling, which is the main reason for such charity.

But that is not enough.

Because the self-serving generosity has become one of the main traps in which Africa finds itself. It helps maintain the political systems that would otherwise collapse. The war between Ethiopia and Eritrea took nearly a decade.

It inspired Bill Gates to start a program to rid the continent of malaria. Malaria is one of the most effective forms of population control known to exist in the absence of nearly all personal self-discipline. If his program is successful, tens of millions of children that would otherwise have died will reach adulthood—a triumph for Gates. OK, fine. But then what? I know. Let them all come here.

What a great idea!



SECTION THREE:
Low Hanging Fruit.
Central Europe and
Development
Aid for Africa



Central Europe, Slovaks, Czechs and Development Aid: Old News or New News?

International and military assistance pre-1989. Export and construction of investment complexes. A clear conscience? Czechoslovakia as one of the largest weapons exporters in the world. Angolan captivity for Czechoslovak experts and their families 1983–1984.

What we call development aid today is not a new phenomenon of post-revolutionary development for central and Eastern Europeans. Just the opposite. Before 1989, aid to developing countries reached much larger dimensions than is currently the case, both in terms of financial volumes and the number of people involved in such aid; however, this aid was delivered under the name “international aid” or “military and economic assistance”. Many Czech and Slovak doctors, scientists and specialists in various other disciplines including builders, technologists, machinists and other technical specialists were active in developing countries as well. The Czechoslovakia of the day was responsible for building entire factories and other investment projects in a number of countries; but it certainly was not anything to be confused with the modern development aid provided by the Czech Republic and Slovakia. By no means were any of the efforts considered to be “gifts” provided to the supported countries and a majority of these activities were deliveries of equipment and material purchased with loans to be repaid in time. My father, as a manager in the Stavoindustry factory in Banská Bystrica during the 1980s was involved in the construction of many industrial complexes in cities across the Arab world. The names of these places are commonplace in today’s media but most Czechs and Slovaks simply have no idea of the common history we share. To this day there are dozens of people around Banská Bystrica and thousands across the former Czechoslovakia as a whole who worked on the construction of chemical works and machine tool factories in Basra, Iraq, Benghazi, Libya, Homs, Syria and in other cities and countries. Who knows how many of factories they built managed to survive the wars that have engulfed these countries in the 21st century, or remain under threat to this day.

Czechoslovak development aid, just like aid provided by other countries from the former Eastern Bloc, played out in the context of the Cold War between the Communist East and Capitalist West. This conditioned that such aid be subordinate to the political calculations of the day. There's no point in maintaining any illusions that it was any different for the other side either. The United States of America's support for brutal dictators in Central and South America, yet further dictators in Iran, Egypt and Pakistan and Islamic fanatics in Afghanistan are just some notorious examples. Today such support remains the source of strong anti-American sentiment across nearly all of Latin America, the Arab world, Iran, Pakistan and elsewhere. The Cold War was more than an economic battle for ideological and political influence in Africa, Asia and Latin America and it had several intense and bloody flashpoints. The participation of Czechs, Slovaks, Poles and others was not exclusively in the spirit of giving either. A relatively unknown fact among the public remains just how many military instructors and advisors from Central Europe were involved in the training of guerrilla fighters and all of the places they were dispatched. Simply mapping this area would be a good topic for a separate dissertation thesis, if not a number of such works. Another cold remember of that era is the name for the explosive "Semtex", which is derived from the name of the Semtina a suburb of the Czech city of Pardubice where the explosive is produced.

A tragic and major component of the international aid provided by Czechoslovakia to developing countries included the delivery of weapons and munitions produced in our factories. During the Communist regime from 1950 to 1990, Czechoslovakia was the seventh-largest arms exporter in the world for nearly a full half century. Only the global superpowers were ahead of us in these bloody rankings: the Soviet Union, USA, France, Great Britain, East Germany and China, while China as an arms producer only managed to overtake Czechoslovakia near the end of this period.¹⁷⁵ Neighbouring Poland was in 13th place in the "salesmen of death" rankings. In all, 7 European countries among the 10 largest arms exporters in the world: 6 are now Member States of the European Union and the other was Switzerland. This tragic statistic has not changed much over time. While exports of arms from Slovakia and the Czech Republic dropped significantly after 1990, the cumulative per capita totals from 1950 to 2010 make Czechoslovakia the 8th largest arms exporter in the world. Six of the ten largest arms exporters in history are countries on today's "Continent of Peace" and they or their successor states are all in the European Union: France, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, the former Czechoslovakia and the Netherlands.

In order to maintain some degree of objectivity, it's important to note that a large portion of Czechoslovakia's arms exports went to the former Soviet Union and other countries in the Eastern Bloc. Most of these were never used and rusted away, never firing a shot in anger, as long as they were not exported subsequently. Only a small amount of these

175 A list of the largest arms exporters at any period in time including the total volume of exports in individual years can be generated from the database maintained by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) at http://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/html/export_toplist.php.

arms were exported to the developing world, in particular to Arab countries. In spite of this fact, the battlefields of Iraq, Iran, Libya, Syria and other countries are littered with the burned out hulks of thousands of tanks, armoured personnel carriers, artillery systems and other weapons that passed through the hands of workers in Martin, Detva, Dubnica nad Váhom and many other cities and towns in Slovakia, Moravia and Czech lands. Ultimately, hundreds of thousands of Czechs, Slovaks and Poles as well as others in the recent Member States admitted to the European Union that they have the weapons that caused so much death and suffering across Africa, the Arab world and elsewhere to thank for their employment and welfare in general (perhaps lower relative to the West but clear when compared to countries to the east and south).

Of course one argument is that if we hadn't supplied those arms, someone else surely would have, but does this part of our history make us somewhat responsible for the current condition of the world? Every once in a while one of us, a central European, says that we never had colonies and that we have no responsibility for their current condition and therefore no duty to contribute. Is it so cut and dry?

Let's step away from arms and turn to Czechoslovak deliveries of peaceful equipment and industrial complexes to the countries of Africa. Their mapping and recording interviews from the entire generation of people involved in such projects is again deserving of a separate publication. One project, however, stood out from the rest and entered the collective consciousness of everyday Czechs and Slovaks. In 1983, only six short years before the fall of Communism, a total of 66 Czechoslovaks (including 14 women and 21 children) survived captivity and a 1,300-kilometre, 84-day long march through jungles, swamps and savannahs of Angola. The Czechoslovak engineers, technicians and electricians had been charged with restarting the largest paper mill in the country in the town of Alto Catumbela but were kidnapped along with their families. The kidnapers were members of the UNITA separatist movement led by Jonas Savimbi. If you remember the previous chapter, he first fought against Portugal, the colonial power in Angola. When the Portuguese left in 1975 and Savimbi did not become the political leader of Angola, his UNITA movement fought on with the support of the USA, China and South Africa against the Angolan government supported by the Soviet Union and the Soviet Bloc. UNITA released 45 kidnapped Czechoslovak citizens on 30th June 1983. Bratislava native Jaroslav Navrátil died during the ordeal and another 20 of his fellow citizens remained in captivity until June 1984. The tale of these Czechoslovak specialists and their families became the inspiration for many books, articles and interviews, including a made-for-TV film "Angolský deník lékařky" (A Doctor's Angolan Journal)¹⁷⁶ and the hour-long documentary film "Zajati v Angole" (Captive in Angola)¹⁷⁷ which was filmed by Czech Television in 2009.

176 A film was also shot in 1984 by Vladimír Kavčiak, a director with Slovak roots; the lead was portrayed by Jana Břejchová with other well-known actors in supporting roles, including Jozef Adamovič.

177 Lubomír Sazeček, one of the kidnapped Czechoslovak citizens who was involved in the film project, incorporated the theme of the work of Czechoslovak experts in Angola and their kidnapping in the

Central Europeans and Development Aid on the Brink of the 21st century

It is unlikely that development aid provided by the newest Member States of the European Union will ever reach the scope and intensity in the future that they reached before 1989. Any talk of potential opportunities to build factories and to export large investments to Africa can be easily quashed simply by giving Slovak or Czech development aid a cursory glance. Let's pose a more productive question instead: How can we, global and responsibly thinking individuals, communities and public institutions, provide the most effective development aid right now? The following section of this book focuses precisely on this theme.

trilogy of "Captive in Angola" documentary books: "Zajati v Angole—Než přišla UNITA" (Before UNITA Arrived), "Zajati v Angole—Přepadení a pochod" (Ambush and Marching) and "Zajati v Angole—Rok v buši" (A Year in the Bush). Contemporary newspaper articles published on this topic in Slovakia include an interview with another kidnapping victim, Jan Zlocha from Prievidza, published by Slovak daily Plus jeden deň in 2011. <http://www.pluska.sk/slovensko/spolocnost/zlocha-unose-pochodovali-sme-cez-pralesy-1300-kilometrov.html>.

An Individual Face to Face with the World: A Passive Bystander or Development Actor?

Wealth and forms of “hidden” capital: infrastructure, education, health, institutions and others. Financial gifts and contributions. Long distance adoptions. Fifty million African orphans: did they have to be born? Did their parents have to die?

No one is going to singlehandedly save a distant continent, but, surprisingly, almost all of us can make a contribution to improve conditions for the people in Africa at least a little. At face value, these contributions depend on individual material and human capital, as well as how deeply we understand Africa’s issues and of course on how much we want or desire to help.

If we want to help, either on the basis of empathy, compassion for the suffering of others, in the interests of saving Africa’s nature or for any other similar impetus, the simplest method is to share at least some of your material capital. Despite rising poverty at home, a majority of central Europeans possess many times the wealth of most Africans. This is not restricted to the money in our pockets or bank accounts, even though financial capital is more mobile and easier to donate and send to a recipient. The capital that a large majority of us possess, regardless of if we recognize it or not, are the physical and social infrastructure built by generations of our ancestors and available to us. The current generation of Europeans takes for granted water mains with drinking water, electricity and gas utility networks, railroads, asphalt roads, hospitals, schools, public transport, social facilities, institutions and many other infrastructure elements of modern society. The generation of our grandparents still remembers a completely different and dark world without electricity; a world of horse-based transport, dusty roads, manual work in the fields, water-powered mills and saws; a world of smoky villages and cities, water manually pumped from wells using buckets and backbreaking labour. The world was not unlike modern Africa, except we were already wealthier.

Another form of capital considered to be a given, and even a fundamental right, is general literacy and free education led by professional teachers, which ensures that central Europeans have a relatively good level of average education. Likewise, many of us are not aware that the health condition of today's population is much higher compared to those of our grandparents and earlier ancestors who died so young that living to 50 or 60 was almost pure fantasy. Many of them lost siblings due to exceptionally high rates of infant mortality, indeed the death of a child was commonplace in many families. Our modern health capital is built on a foundation of good nutrition that our mothers enjoyed during pregnancy and our own nutrition during childhood, prenatal and paediatric care, timely diagnostics of many health problems and, last but not least, the range of immunizations we received against a spectrum of infectious diseases that killed off droves of the siblings of our grandparents. Of course, this capital is also supported by thousands of doctors who train more generations of doctors at medical schools at a relatively good European level: this was not the case 90 years ago.¹⁷⁸

None of this capital is commonly available to the average African living in a world of dusty roads, muddy wells and darkness, without electricity, smoking fire pits and inaccessible or poorly equipped schools and hospitals. The difference between the wealth of the average Slovak, Czech, Pole or Hungarian and the average Kenyan, Tanzanian or Ugandan is much more complex than just a simple comparison of their financial incomes.

Many of you have certainly received requests from various organizations asking people to contribute to some kind of aid for children or the poor in Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia and elsewhere in the developing world. This is likely why money is the first thing we think of when someone says "help Africa". Sending an SMS costing a Euro or two or tossing spare change into a collection jar or the collection plate at a church really is the simplest form of aid. It doesn't require a great deal of effort or any special knowledge. Everyone, with a few exceptions, is able to donate at least a small amount in this manner.

People with a deeper interest in the distant parts of the world have many additional options to make financial contributions to development aid. These include assigning a percentage of their income taxes to a development or humanitarian organization¹⁷⁹ or a standing payment order to make regular monthly contributions from every pay cheque. A relatively popular option is the financially more demanding option of long-distance adoption, whereby the "adoptive" parents provide a fixed monthly amount to an organization that provides it to the parents or a tutor for the adopted boy or girl. One of the sad realities

178 The oldest medical school in Slovakia is the Medical School at Comenius University, with Czech professors and doctors sent by the Czechoslovak Republic to Slovakia in order to found the school in 1919.

179 The Platform of Non-Governmental Development Organizations (Platform MVRO) is the umbrella organization for these NGOs, which in 2011 boasted 31 members and 7 observers with a diverse range of thematic and geographic focuses. You'll read more about MVRO and its member organizations active in Africa in a subsequent chapter of the book.

of Africa is that it is the continent of orphans.¹⁸⁰ This is an acute problem in regions where nearly an entire generation of young people has been decimated by AIDS with millions of orphans left to grandparents and other relatives. If, hypothetically, every Slovak family adopted a child in Africa, all of Slovakia would only be able to adopt around half of the orphans in Tanzania or Kenya. The unfathomable depth and scope of this tragedy with more than 50 million African orphans and families decimated to such a large extent by the AIDS epidemic would force us to understand the critical need to remove ideology from the topic of contraceptives and emphasize the need to support programs to lower birth rates and prevent against the spread of sexually-transmitted diseases. This provides an excellent opportunity to return to the discussion about this very topic in the context of the Pope's visit to Africa in spring 2009.¹⁸¹

180 According to UNICEF and the UN Program for HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) statistics, more than 48 million orphans under the age of 18 lived in sub-Saharan Africa in 2005. A quarter of them were left orphaned by AIDS. The number of orphans in Africa rose from 1990 to 2000 from 30.9 million to 41.5 million. Based on projections, their numbers should reach 53.1 million by 2010, nearly a third of which (15.7 million) will be orphaned by AIDS. Among the countries that have been mentioned in this book, Tanzania has 2.4 million orphans, Kenya and Uganda have 2.3 million apiece, South Africa has 2.5 million, Angola has 1.2 million, Rwanda has 820,000, Liberia has 370,000, Sudan has 1.7 million and Nigeria has 8.6 million orphans; see: <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=35827>.

181 In the face of the massive scope of the HIV/AIDS tragedy and the millions of orphaned children, it is good to point out that based on information in the "Development Aid" bulletin from the Platform MVRO in the autumn of 2011, the Slovak Catholic Charity had facilitated a long-distance adoption program for 15 years, whereby Slovaks had adopted 2,740 children in India, Albania, Haiti and Vietnam. Every human life is unique and has unimaginable intrinsic value, but 2,740 are around one one-thousandth of the number of orphans in Tanzania or Kenya alone. This should be used as a chilling memento to remind everyone to pay greater respect to the life-threatening dimensions of the problem of sexually-transmitted diseases and uncontrolled birth rates in many African countries.

Primum Non Nocere—First Do No Harm; When Ideology Rules over Logic and Feeling

Controversy surrounding the pope’s visit to Cameroon and Angola. Precisely what the pope said. Do condoms make the population situation and the AIDS epidemic better or worse? Whistling past the graveyard.

It is not so often and more precisely until recently it had never happened, that the problems of developing countries and the questions related to our interference into them become the subject of public discussion in Slovakia and ultimately controversy. Even in the 21st century, most of Slovakia’s population lives a traditional life on the fringes of the wealthy world, spending most of their time staring at their own belly-button with one eye keeping watch over the goings on over at their wealthy neighbour’s. Of course Slovakia is also home to people who are interested in current events in the world around us, and, after all, you wouldn’t be reading this book if you were not interested in the world.

The article titled “When the Devil Wears a Tiara” certainly induced this controversy among specific circles of residents. Shortly after its publication, an open letter was received in response from Marián Čaučík, the long-time head of the eRko Christian Children Communities Movement and the director of its development cooperation program Dobrá novina (Good News).¹⁸² Good News takes up a public collection just before Christmas every year for development projects undertaken in Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan. Over more than 15 years, Good News carollers have collected a substantial sum of more than €5 million (SKK 150 million).

With all respect to religion-inspired humanitarian work, the ethical principle of “Primum non nocere”, meaning first do no harm, has been applied since the times of ancient medicine and this rule should also apply in development aid where we are frequently working with unbelievably vulnerable and helpless people. The sharp debate with Mr Čaučík may

182 You can find out more about Good News at: <http://www.dobranovina.sk/>.

be interesting for the viewers from this perspective and that is why I have included at least a few passages from it:¹⁸³

Marián Čaučík (hereinafter MČ): *No one doubts that AIDS is a massive evil and a huge problem, in particular for the African continent. The solutions offered by the Catholic Church of lifelong fidelity to a single partner and sexual abstinence before and outside of marriage are the only reliable prevention against infection with the HIV virus. I would have expected applause for this stance and a willingness to spread the message from those people actually fighting against AIDS, from functionaries in high posts at the UN and from people working in the field. Instead the Church has been showered with criticism and scorn. Why?*

Juraj Mesík (hereinafter JM): *The Catholic Church has not offered an effective solution to the AIDS epidemic, or for the problem of population growth in Africa whatsoever; the only thing they have offered is their ideology. Faithfulness and abstinence are perfectly alright, if people actually behave in such a way. A huge number of people in Africa and here in Slovakia behave, and always will behave, differently; they live and will live sexually and sometimes, for various reasons, with multiple partners. If you think they deserve to die for their lifestyle, then that is your opinion and humanitarians will always take issue with it. The most effective and most verified method for lowering the risk of transmitting HIV or other sexually-transmitted diseases for which there is no effective immunization is the ABC method (abstinence, be faithful and condom), which recommends people who are not asexual or monogamous use condoms. The most effective way to dampen unsustainable population growth is to make contraceptives readily available along with appropriate information on how to use contraceptives.*

MČ: *If people of faith follow the advice of the Church, they have a 100% guarantee of protection against HIV infection unless the HIV virus has infected a transfusion in hospital or from transmission from mother to child. People who live sexually active lives outside of marriage are breaching the moral principles of the Church simply by doing so and likely take issue with using a condom. Why would they respect the Church's views when they freely ignore them elsewhere?*

JM: *If Catholics in Slovakia followed the advice of the Catholic Church, we would have a much higher birth rate than we actually do. Thankfully a majority of them make their own decisions. People in Africa, however, are very religious, and most have no education, or only very limited education. That makes it very easy to suggest to them the idea of the "sinfulness" or the ineffectiveness of contraceptives, including condoms. Sexual abstinence for millions in Africa and Europe is a fantasy. One day vaccination will be the only effective protection for sex with an infected partner, both consensually (including prostitution, which millions of men and women are involved in, in Africa) and*

183 I have tried to reproduce Mr Čaučík's statements without making any changes but have abbreviated them in some places to help keep it brief; no contents were changed however. The full debate can be found at: <http://www.changenet.sk/?section=forum&x=418663>.

non-consensually. As long as no HIV vaccination is available, the only effective form of protection is a properly used condom. Studies have shown that the correct use of a condom lowers the risk of infection to less than 1% during sex with an infected partner. Condoms are not a universal solution and I have never made that claim. They are, however, effective, and for many people the only real form of protection. Ratzinger did not say that at all, he simply declared that condoms were making the situation worse. This is an absolutely groundless statement that is a direct threat to the lives of many people he had been deceived.

MC: *Your statement was that “Ratzinger’s Church was spreading death across Africa, all the while sanctimoniously framing itself as a proponent of the culture of life” is completely off base. The Catholic Church, of which I am a member, does not preach the gospel of death across Africa. It is spreading the message of live and love to those who want to embrace this message. The Ten Commandments still apply and offer a better life-long agenda than the consumption of sexual learning and condoms.*

JM: *By fighting against contraceptives, Ratzinger’s Church is contributing to a massive wave of population growth in Africa. The consequences are tens of millions of starving African children, sporadic and repetitive famine, and the expansion of deserts, deforestation and a whole host of other environmental problems that will continue to get worse in the future. Ratzinger’s Church misinforms the uneducated, using ideology to render these people helpless with respect to evaluating the effectiveness of condoms on their own, just like you are trying to do in this discussion. This is the Church’s contribution to the spread of the AIDS epidemic, which is leaving millions of dead and orphans in its wake.*

MC: *The Church is doing an awful lot to eliminate and at least decrease poverty levels in Africa. It is doing a lot for justice and human rights. I’d like to mention an example from South Sudan where the Church was present during the civil war, even when nearly all other institutions had left; now the Church is involved in healthcare, education, healing the trauma from the war, peace building and civil awareness in addition to its pastoral work. The Sudanese government has accepted the Church as its partner in the area of humanitarian and development aid.*

JM: *All of that is praiseworthy. The problem is the collateral losses that are caused by ideologically-motivated and active dissemination of disinformation about contraceptives, including condoms. Decreasing poverty levels is a complex task. According to the UN’s Action Plan for the International Conference on Population and Development there is a “mutual relationship between poverty and risk factors from a poor environment, nutritional problems, low status of women, limited access to social services and healthcare, including access to family planning services...”*

MC: *Pope Benedict XVI on his recent trip to Africa spoke of peace and cooperation between individual ethnic groups, about inter-faith dialogue, mutual respect and shared ethical responsibility with Muslims, corruption as one of the greatest evils to be defeated, economic, political and social responsibility, about how the faithful should use the*

Church as an example for social teachings and contribute to building a more just world in which everyone will be able to live a dignified life.

JM: *Those are all noble words and objectives, which, unfortunately, significantly undermine any contribution made by Catholic ideology with respect to population growth and the spread of HIV. The Action Plan I mentioned also says: “The ultimate goal is to secure quality of life for current and future generations, which is why the pace of demographic transformation in the countries with unbalanced demographic growth must be hastened, with social, economic and environmental goals at the forefront long with complete respect for human rights. The world’s population must be stabilized.”¹⁸⁴ This is the only way we are going to be able to provide a dignified life to the children born in Africa and in other impoverished parts of the world. “Living with dignity” also means being born into a family that is able to provide for a child’s basic needs at the very least. That is why the WHO has said the family planning options increase the chances for survival and, ultimately, a dignified life for new-born children.*

MČ: *The Western media has missed the basic points made by the Holy Father’s mission to Africa related to poverty, reconciliation, justice and peace. Due to the controversy over condoms, no information was provided on the poor living conditions endured by many Africans who continue to die from any number of diseases, famines and wars. It is unfortunate that the principle of providing objective information doesn’t seem to work among the media and journalists who seem to focus on a single controversial theme that the Pope touched on only in passing and that was also taken out of context.*

JM: *You say that the entire world has incorrectly responded to what Ratzinger has said. I’d like to just remind you what precisely he said:¹⁸⁵ “...condoms are not the solution; they only make the situation worse”. What he is saying is very clear, clearly misleading and extremely dangerous for those Africans who consider its author an authority. As opposed to ideology, epidemiology has proven the use of condoms to be a very effective tool to lower the risk of HIV infection and that the use of contraceptives helps dampen population growth, thereby making a significant contribution to preventing hunger and poverty.*

MČ: *The Church gives people living in extreme poverty the courage to move forward as well as awareness of the value of human dignity. People suffer and die from AIDS regardless of if they used condoms or not. We have ample experience thanks to cooperation with religious organizations and institutions in Africa for 14 years. I’d be happy to discuss that experience. But only on a certain level. I have no desire to discuss with people who grossly and unfairly attack the Church and all it represents.*

184 The full text of the UN’s Action Plan for the International Conference on Population and Development adopted at a global conference in Cairo in 1994 can be found in Slovak at <http://www.moznostvolby.sk/kahira94.htm>

185 A video of the incriminating statement can be seen online, for example at the Deutsche Welle website: http://www.dw.de/popups/popup_single_mediaplayer/0,,4107860_type_video_struct_1433_contentId_4109384,00.html?null&format=FlashHigh.

JM: *This topic is not about desire or lack thereof, it is about the moral obligation of humane people to stand up against a huge wrong. The dissemination of misinformation about contraceptives and condoms in Africa is, in my opinion, a massive travesty with enormous and tragic consequences. Yes, for centuries it was generally accepted that the Church was not to be criticized. Today we live in a free society and the simple fact that you take a critical opinion as an insult is not an argument to compel decent people to keep quiet about such a grave mistake.*

Money Is Not Everything

“Clean your plate, children in Africa are starving!” Impact of the lifestyles in wealthier countries on consumption and global food prices. The world of extremes—obese rich and malnourished poor. Decreasing individual consumption: frugality, decreasing meat consumption, vegetarianism and home food production. One more reason not to smoke.

Setting aside the controversy around condoms, contraceptives and sexual education, let's return to things individuals can do to help the poor in the world apart from simple financial aid. Many people in central Europe probably wouldn't know that there is a kind of aid we can give on a daily basis that actually doesn't cost a thing; just the opposite, we actually save money. While it does have a very indirect and even abstract basis, in reality this type of aid is very real and ever so important.

Perhaps during your childhood your grandmother told you to “clean your plate because there were starving children in Africa!” No matter how absurd that may seem to us now, your grandmother's prodding to get you to finish your meal was indeed a form of empathy driven primarily by her own personal experience of having to go without during childhood. More importantly this statement contains a deep truth. Of course your unfinished food wasn't going to make it to the stomach of a hungry child in Africa—there's no such magic involved. Our excess consumption of foods and food waste has been reflected in more than just the obesity epidemic alone. Around two-thirds of the population in the developed world is either overweight or obese and the situation is much graver among children. Higher food prices, keeping with the laws of supply and demand, will continue so long as the wastebasket continues to fill up with our excess food as a result of our excessive consumption. Such higher prices are reflected on the shelves and the world's food markets. These global food prices have a direct correlation to the health and lives of people in countries that import a large portion of their food.

The issues associated with food aid have been touched on in the chapter dealing with the Arab Spring and perspectives on the MENA region. Simply remember that every country

in North Africa and the Middle East imports more than half of the food needed to satisfy the food needs of their populations. Many of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa are likewise dependent on imported food. This dependency, combined with population growth, is compounded and exacerbated on an annual basis by the sale and lease of African agricultural land to Chinese, Saudi, European and American companies that use African soil to establish plantations for products intended for export. Expensive food means even deeper poverty for already impoverished Africans and their children, who suffer the lifelong consequences of hunger and malnutrition during childhood. A heat wave in Russia in 2010 drove global food prices to more than twice their average from 1990 to 2005 and these record high prices remained in place until 2012 when they declined, albeit only slightly.

In February 2012, Save the Children published a study evaluating the nutrition among children as a result of the record-high food prices. The study's conclusions were that there would be half a billion children with a physical or mental disability if we were unable to effectively resolve the problem of malnutrition in the next 15 years,¹⁸⁶ with most of these children in Africa and India. Annually 7.6 million children die around the world and 2.6 million of them die from malnutrition.

Global food prices are much more important than usual during droughts and subsequent famines when millions of lives depend on food delivered as humanitarian aid. The governments and organizations providing food aid purchase these foodstuffs at global prices and any increase in price means less food is purchased or that food purchases will be supported to the detriment of other development projects. Food aid had to be reduced by the World Food Program (WFP) in 2011 for just this reason as a famine was spreading through Somalia. *"In February we had to start decreasing the food rations. Now, in May, it's getting extremely serious. We're only getting 30% of the food we need to feed a million people. In reality we're only feeding 66% of these people but the quantity of food we're receiving is only 33% of what we should be getting."* said Peter Smerdon, the spokesperson for the WFP in an interview with the BBC.¹⁸⁷

Unfortunately, food security prospects going forward are not positive. In addition to the continuing population explosion in Africa and the loss of hundreds of thousands of

186 Many children simply have nothing to eat all day as was reported by 7% of parents in Nigeria. 20% of parents were able to respond that their children "occasionally" experienced all day hunger. The research did not include any other African country, but the Nigerian results certainly won't differ much from the rest of Africa. Indeed, it is justified to conclude that the situation may indeed be much worse in other countries in Africa. A summary of the study's results can be found at <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/Nutrition%20survey.pdf>.

187 The full interview is available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13485108>. At the same time the WFP was forced to cut food aid due to insufficient funds to purchase expensive foodstuffs intended for the mountainous regions of western Nepal down to a level of 100,000 people from an original 1 million. This was also a priority region where up to 70% of the population is malnourished. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-13422384>.

square kilometres of agricultural land to foreigners, the security of food supplies will be dramatically worsened by factors we have already mentioned. Let's review them: the first is quickly progressing global warming and climate change, the second is the phenomenon of the oil slump, the third is a lack of water and the use of underground aquifers by a number of key countries around the world for agriculture and the fourth is the phenomenon of the phosphorus collapse.

While Africans go hungry and malnourished children fall behind in their overall development and the development of their nervous and immune systems with more than two and a half million of them dying every year as a result of malnutrition, we continue to consume much more than we need, we grow fat and we throw away spoiled foods that our hungry eyes couldn't manage to eat in time. Refraining from overeating and wasting food is an important way we can give effective and targeted support to our own health and decrease demand for food worldwide, which would lead to a slowdown in global food price increases for the poor in Africa and elsewhere in the world.

If we understand and begin to take seriously the connection between our own food consumption and the lack of food for the poor, we open up other avenues to make our own contributions towards a better world. A bit more complex is the willingness to cut back at least a portion of our consumption of meat with complete vegetarianism being all but impossible for most. A majority of the meat, milk and eggs in wealthy countries are from industrial farms where livestock are fed grain, corn and soy, in other words foods that people also consume. Every kilogram of meat contains many more kilos of plant matter: beef cattle raised for meat consume up to 7 kilograms of grain for every 1 kilogram of meat produced; in smaller livestock this ratio is smaller with chickens, for instance, at a ratio of 2:1. When we consider the fact that grains themselves contain very little water, meat, on the other hand, is largely water and the actual conversion in this case is 4 to 5 times worse than simply livestock feeds. Understandably these considerations apply to "industrial" livestock fed grains and soy; free-range animals are roughly neutral from this perspective.

Awareness of the consequences of the food we buy may be one of the small steps needed to ensure that the fruits and vegetables we consume are grown in private orchards or a community garden, on apartment building balconies and on window sills. Another option for combining our eating habits with aid for the people of Africa is to save the change we would otherwise use to buy excess food and put it into a piggy bank and then donate this money to an NGO focused on aid to Africa once we finally break the bank open. Of course, the same can be done with money that is no longer used to buy cigarettes. Growing tobacco as a cash crop uses a tremendous amount of soil and water that otherwise could be used to produce food. And just like obesity, cigarettes themselves also destroy our health.

Turning Over What We Know: Save Him, White Doctor! Doctors and Women in Africa

Half a century after Albert Schweitzer: doctor Chrappová's notes from work in Guinea from 1965–1967. Infant mortality. The standing of women. The tragedy of female genital mutilation (FGM). FGM at the brink of the 21st century: 99% of women in Guinea, 97% in Egypt (a favourite holiday destination) and 50% in Kenya where we send development aid. The loss of half the geniuses: the consequences of unequal standing for women in a society. “Kirche, Kuche, Kindern” versus Nachthexen. The reality of doctors working in the tropics. “Traces of my work were lost like a drop of water in a desert.” The World Happiness Index.

Another form of aid Czechs, Slovaks and other central Europeans provide to inhabitants of African countries both in the past and in the present day is by “exporting” individuals with specialized education and abilities, otherwise known as experts, critical for improving the lives of people in Africa. Such people with the required critical skills, including doctors and teachers, go to Africa as members of local or international NGOs (for instance the aforementioned Doctors without Borders), university staff, experts recruited by commercial businesses and even private individuals with a more daring or independent spirit may also take off on their own accord, spurred on by their own initiative.

Hundreds of Slovak and Czech doctors have been active over the past few decades in developing countries. Their motivations varied between the complete altruists to those seeking an opportunity to earn more abroad than at home. Their work has enjoyed a modicum of publicity among the public in recent years thanks to mass media and websites;¹⁸⁸ it

188 In the context of malnutrition and its devastating consequences on the lives and development of children who go hungry, an interesting example is an interview with paediatric professor Adriana Ondrušová from the School of Development Studies and Tropical Healthcare at the University of Trnava in August 2011 in the Pravda daily. http://spravy.pravda.sk/nikdy-nemozete-vopred-povedat-ktore-dieta-sa-da-zachranit-pmq-/sk_svet.asp?c=A110818_165245_sk_svet_p12#ixzz1V5orDleH.

is much more difficult to find information on the work of our doctors in these countries in the more distant past. There is one shining exception, however, a book with the same title as this chapter.

Doctor Jarmila Chrappová was one of the first female Slovak doctors active in sub-Saharan Africa. Perhaps she wasn't the first, but she certainly was one of the first to record her notes and observations about tropical Africa and actually publish them. Her book named *Zachráň ho, biely doktor! (Save Him, White Doctor!)*¹⁸⁹ describes her experiences and observations from 1965 to 1967 as a paediatrician working in the city of Boké in the West African country of Guinea. The book was published by the Obzor publishing house in 1974, nearly ten years after she left for Africa, but the book itself is composed of her notes and letters, which help the book retain a sense of authenticity and freshness. Some of the 8,000 copies of the first and only edition can still be found in Slovak and Czech libraries and antique dealers.

While the observations made in the book are nearly half a century old, the facts she describes remain true to the present day in many of the corners of sub-Saharan Africa. At the time Doctor Chrappová and her husband, surgeon Ivan Chrappa, were saving the lives of children and adults in Guinea, nearly half a century had passed since Albert Schweitzer's first stay in Lambaréné, but the world of Guinea's rural areas was not much different from Schweitzer's time on the banks of the Ogooué River in Gabon. The same, unfortunately, can be said about many of the doctors active in Africa to this day. The drum of tam-tams from the time the Chrappas were in Guinea has since been replaced by the ringtones of mobile phones, but doctors in Africa continue to encounter children suffering from severe malnutrition, people whose bodies are repeatedly infested with parasites and others who suffer from long-neglected disease that would seem to be from another world and another time to inhabitants of central Europe. The only thing to change in Guinea is the population: growing from 3 million in the middle of the 1960s to more than 10 million in 2010. The city of Boké, in which the Chrappas were active, with more than 120,000 inhabitants, would be the third largest city in Slovakia.

"Abu had four children. Three died and only a two-year-old daughter is still alive. That kind of number is frightening. Most children die at a pre-school age..." wrote this white doctor in March 1965. Thankfully this is one area of life that Guinea has been able to change. Around 1965 the rate of infant mortality up to the first year of life was 205 out of every 1,000 children born in Guinea. That meant more than 20% died before they turned 1! Infant mortality rates in the Czechoslovakia at that time were around 23 out of every 1,000 births. In the first half of the 21st century, the rate was cut in half with infant mortality at 93 out of every 1,000 births in Guinea. However, the same rates had improved to 3 out of every 1,000 in the Czech Republic and 6 out of every 1,000 in Slovakia. The decrease from 205 to 93 is

189 Today a book with such a politically incorrect title would have a hard time being published and the doctor's reference to race would probably today be assessed as an expression of racism. This, however, was not an issue in Communist Czechoslovakia in the 1970s.

indeed encouraging but comparing the dynamics of change shows that Guinea still lags far behind. Infant mortality in Guinea did drop by nearly half but it dropped 7 times over in the Czech Republic and 4 times over in Slovakia.

Many of Doctor Chrappová's notable observations as a paediatrician regard the standing of women: *"I sat down next to the director of the hospital, who presented his first and second wives to me. By that time I was no longer shocked. Only occasionally would I let my astonishment slip when I was introduced to someone's seventh or eighth wife. That was rare, however. Four was typically enough for even the most demanding officials."* Her words and sentences about the standing of women were not always laced with humour. Indeed her words about a brutal practice that remains a bane of many African societies even into the 21st century, specifically *female genital mutilation (FGM)*, provide such stark contrast. The World Health Organization defines FGM as *"any procedure that partially or completely removes external female genitalia or otherwise damages the female sex organs for any reason other than medical grounds."* African and Arab societies practice three types of FGM, from Type I, the "gentlest" form, which involves the removal of the clitoris alone, followed by Type II, in which the victim's clitoris and inner labia are cut off and Type III, where the victim's clitoris, inner labia and outer labia are cut off. Around 85% of the victims in Africa have undergone Type I or Type II FGM, but there are examples, with the Sudan being one, where Type III FGM is the predominant form of female mutilation.

"In two-and-a-half years I didn't see a single married woman who hadn't undergone an incision. Some families were in a hurry and had their girls 'christened' as little children, others waited, with the girls only undergoing the procedure just before their wedding, often at the groom's request. An extremely deep-rooted tradition here holds that that a woman who hasn't been initiated is less faithful to her husband and less fertile. ...In the hospital we treated and saw many patients die as a result of the horrendous scarring left behind by the incision, which ultimately was a barrier during childbirth. The procedures were performed in unhygienic conditions, with an old can, piece of glass or knife used to make the cut. The old women who did the procedures... often damaged the urethral sphincter, meaning the girls were condemned to a life of incontinence after the procedure. In other cases, infected wounds festered for a full week, leading to septic shock, tetanus, or in the best case, they simply healed up without the massive scarring mentioned above." The mother of a young girl responded to her question with a simple smile: *"It's just tradition, we survived and, most importantly, who else would marry her?"*

These were the conditions in Guinea just seven or eight years after independence (1958). And what are conditions like today?

FGM at the beginning of the 21st century was practiced in 28 countries around the world, primarily in eastern and western Africa, parts of North Africa and in the nearby Middle East. There are around 92 million women in Africa alone who have undergone this torture and mutilation reminiscent of the Middle Ages. How many girls and young women didn't survive is a secret kept by the deserts, savannahs and jungles. At the turn of the century, more than 50 years after the work of Doctor Chrappová in Guinea, the results are much the same:

99% of all women in the country still undergo female circumcision! And what about Egypt, a favourite destination for Slovaks, Czechs and many other European tourists? An unbelievable 97%!¹⁹⁰ This flies in the face of the fact that Egypt is one of the largest recipients of development aid on the planet... Where are the human rights for women?

The situation in some countries has improved as more and more countries in the West finally began conditioning additional aid to African countries with a stop to this brutal practice. A very serious and unanswered question remains why they didn't do so sooner. Even Slovak aid, no matter how small in comparison with the development aid provided by more generous and responsible countries, provides aid to countries that continue to practice FGM on a massive scale including the previously mentioned Sudan (South Sudan since 2011) where up to 91% of women are mutilated and Kenya where 50% of women are mutilated.¹⁹¹ Both countries are official signatories to the Maputo Protocol by which the countries in the African Union pledged to fight against this brutal practice in 2003. Sudan signed the Protocol in 2008 and Kenya made FGM illegal in September 2011. The only issue is that politicians signing an international agreement is one thing, actually introducing the obligations arising from it into practice is completely different. We in central Europe are well aware of this issue.

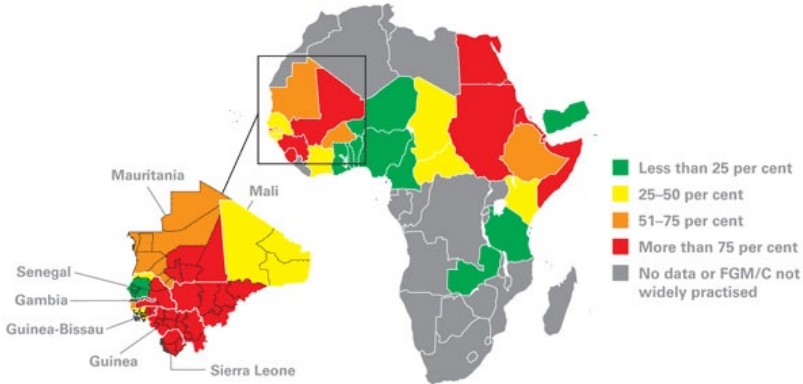
The question as to if the West should provide any form of development aid to the countries that allow half of their populations to be mutilated or that do not take real and significant action against this practice is one of the most serious questions regarding development aid, and it is not alone in this distinction. One of the most widespread and logical of these questions is why the wealthy world provides development aid to countries that are sadly notorious for their corruption. The answers are often complex but as a rule they are derived from the basic fact that stopping development aid would threaten the lives and thousands and sometimes millions of innocent people, including women and children, who receive benefits from at least a portion of this aid. After all, reams of paper could be filled with stories as to how many billions of the aid provided by the European Union to Slovakia, the Czech Republic and other new Member States has been siphoned off through kickbacks and overpriced projects awarded to friends and sponsors of political parties. Estimates put such losses into double-digit percentages¹⁹² and billions more flow

190 More detailed information on this morbid topic can be found in the work *Female Genital Mutilation* compiled by Comfort Momoh and published by British publisher Radcliffe Publishing Ltd. in 2005, which is available at: http://books.google.sk/books?id=dVjIPORfVAMC&pg=PA6&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false. I cannot recommend it, however, for those with weaker stomachs.

191 A detailed overview of FGM practices in individual countries can be found at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prevalence_of_female_genital_mutilation_by_country.

192 Great Britain's Ambassador to Slovakia, Mr Michael Roberts, touched on the subject of rampant corruption in Slovakia, even before the "Gorilla" scandal broke. The interview was published in December 2010 in the daily SME with the title of "20 per cent of every tender goes to bribes". <http://www.sme.sk/c/5692408/na-uplatky-ide-20-percent-z-kazdeho-tendra.html>.

into economically and socially unproductive projects.¹⁹³ Corruption in Africa is a memento that shows a lack of conscience allowing someone to become a parasite on the poverty of the most pitiful people in the world who are dying of hunger. Or, using one the buzz words popular at the start of 2012 in Slovakia, even the poorest of countries have their own “gorillas” and some even have their own King Kong.



The map shows the percentages of girls and women between 15 and 49 who are victims of FGM in Africa. Countries in red are higher than 75%, orange is 51 to 75%, yellow is 25 to 50% and green is less than 25%.

This data is from the period from 1997 to 2006.

Source: UNICEF, http://www.unicef.org/progressforchildren/2007n6/index_41847.htm.

Circumcision was not a tradition in all parts of Guinea. Members of the Baga nation, for example, began to practice FGM in the 1930s. “Many members of the Baga tribe began to adopt Islam. They built mosques and the villagers were terrorized by fear because human sacrifices were needed in order to christen these new mosques. They began to circumcise little girls at this time, which they had never done in the past. To this day the older women continue this secret practice in the bush.”

Moving away from this tragic face of Africa and returning back to the book *Save Him, White Doctor!*, the consequences of the unequal standing of women in many African countries take a range of other forms in addition to the mutilation of female genitalia. Doctor Chrappová said that for instance: “Mothers would breastfeed the children as long as the father demanded... The length of such nursing was used to determine what wife was the favourite. A woman could also not be touched while nursing. Supposedly, she would lose her milk. Older wives usually nursed for a long period of time... Small children up to six years of

193 The tip of the iceberg among these projects are the planned construction of a 7.5 kilometre-long motorway tunnel from Višňové to Dubná Skala, which could be easily replaced by a 400 m-long tunnel and the route of the D3 motorway to Poland along the so-called Kysuce route along which fewer cars travel than between two larger Slovak villages. The embezzlement (colloquially referred to as “tunnelling” in Slovakia) of public and European funds on both cases could reach into the hundreds of millions of Euros.

age look as scrumptious as a chubby baroque angel. But then comes the critical turning point. Mother's milk and rice water do not contain sufficient iron, vitamins or other basic nutrients and the children rapidly lose weight, are anaemic, easily fall victim to various infections and their psychomotor development slowed. Rickets was commonplace. Sometimes I was could feel desperation creep over me when I looked at the unknowing faces of the mothers who simply nodded to everything I said."

While at least some modicum of medical care had made it into the cities, women and children in Guinea's rural areas were in a much worse situation. Exactly these children from the bush were the most ill. *"With distended stomachs and stick-like limbs, they offered the typical image of malnourished children. Only they didn't suffer from hunger. In the bush there was always something to eat, some root or a bit of fruit, but they suffered from poor nutrition and improper diet. Their hair was a light shade of rust, as if the colour had been removed, and their faces carried expressions of anger and annoyance... In more advanced stages the children had massive swelling issues and violently threw up every bit of food they were given. They were suffering from Kwashiorkor disease, the spectre of which continues to hang over African villages.¹⁹⁴ These villages of poverty and ignorance were fertile ground for all kinds of superstitions and prejudices. These were accompanied by the practices of various shamans. The competition between them was unpleasant... Too often I saw children die as they were brought to the hospital at the last minute, when it was already too late. The children had been poisoned by shamans, overdosing on homemade remedies; after an injury a child took so long to 'heal' that the broken limb simply transformed into a single sac of pus; children who hadn't washed anything for half a year simply lay apathetically in rotting, stinking rags, the nails on their fingers, themselves wrapped into their palms, grew into the meat of their hands through the palms and out again through the backs of their hands..."*

Such drastic images are frequent in the book by the white doctor. Some involve children, others adult patients and victims from groups of rebels fighting against Portuguese colonial masteries in neighbouring Guinea-Bissau, who were quickly rushed after being admitted to the hospital in Boké to the care of the only doctors around, Dr. Chrappová and her husband. *"Now we were witness to the horrors of war that we had only read about in war literature. People with wild eyes, scattered limbs, half spent and half crazily marching past us for the third day in a row and we're coping with shortages of the most basic of materials, personnel and time. Upon arrival of the first batch or twenty four severely injured, we collapsed in between fixing wounds and operations right in the operating theatre... The amputations were terrible. The limbs were not properly treated and gangrenous. The wounds were horrendous to look at..."*

194 Nearly a half century later in 2010, Martin-based epidemiologist Rastislav Maďar spoke about Kwashiorkor in an interview published in the weekly Život. The interview reflects on his experience from southern Tanzania, where he was active with the organization International Humanity (<http://www.internationalhumanity.cz/>). Characteristically the article was titled Children in Tanzania could be saved with a box of dry milk. <http://zivot.lesk.cas.sk/clanok/8363/dieta-v-tanzanii-by-zachranila-skatula-suseneho-mlieka.html>.

Let's return back from the sick and injured to the social standing of women, which is one of the key indicators of progress or backwardness of human society. Without equality for women, every society is fated to spiritual and material backwardness, remaining behind the world in which men and women are held in equal standing. Despite this, contemporary Arab societies don't even have the slightest chance of competing with the civilized West as they are only tapping half of the intellectual and creative capacities of their people. In one fell swoop they have deprived themselves of at least half of their geniuses. The second half, women, is condemned to atrophy due to inactivity thanks to the idiotic ideology of gender superiority.

Speaking of the standing of women in society and historical consequences, we'll leave Africa for a short time and move away and back in time. During your schooling you almost certainly met with various interpretations of the causes of Hitler's defeat at the hands of the Soviet Union. Complex events have complex causes and a simple interpretation of history is almost always incorrect. All of us have read about brutal Russian winters, never-ending steppes, war on two fronts, the patriotic, or if you choose fanatic, Soviet soldiers and other explanations for the defeat of the Germans. Personally I am convinced that the Soviets can thank one factor for their victory in the war—the emancipation of women. While German society at the time of World War II was still ruled by the patriarchal philosophy of the three “Ks” where women were responsible for the children (Kinder), going to church (Kirche) and the kitchen (Küche), the Soviets, for philosophical and practical reasons (the low performance of the Communist economy required massive amounts of manpower), permitted the emancipation of women and afforded them equal standing. In a crisis this equalled twice the number of heads, hands and hearts and the country eventually found itself in just such an unavoidable crisis. And was twice as resistant as a result. While the German women cared for children, Russian women went to the Ural Mountains to assemble tanks, while German women slaved over the stove, those to the east of the Volga seeded and watered the fields and while the Germans prayed in the churches, their Russian and Ukrainian counterparts volunteered and fought at the front. One of the paradoxes of history is that at the same time as the beacon of Western democracy, the United States of America, was resolving the issue of if African Americans could become pilots in the air force,¹⁹⁵ the Soviet Air Force already had three air regiments staffed exclusively by women,¹⁹⁶ some of whom fought the entire way from Stalingrad to Berlin.

Alright, let's move back to Africa and the standing of women in Guinea as captured by the book *Save Him, White Doctor!* The book also includes a reaction to another fundamental

195 These African American pilots, known as the Tuskegee Airmen after the name of their segregated airbase in Alabama, began training in the American Army Air Force after the personal intervention of Eleanor Roosevelt in 1941. They first saw combat in the summer 1943. By the end of the war a total of 992 African American pilots fought in the American Army and were responsible for downing 261 enemy aircraft. The Tuskegee Airmen and their fight for racial emancipation was the subject of a 1995 film of the same name directed by American Robert Markowitz.

196 One of these regiments of night bombers, which the Germans named “Nachthexen” or Night Witches, saw more combat during the war than all of the African American pilots from Tuskegee.

part of the life of every woman—marriage: *“One of the litters held a young girl, they were carrying her to the groom’s house... She was smiling. Who knows, maybe the young groom was waiting for her? Or maybe she was being carried off to be the fourth or fifth wife of some wealthy old man? Hopefully she is able to bear children. If it was discovered that she was barren, a sad fate would indeed await. Everyone around her would disown her and maybe her husband would divorce... Relatives had the last word when it came to arranging marriages. In general your relatives stuck their noses in everywhere, and even into the most intimate of matters... The price of a bride had different levels. If she was young and pretty, if she knew some French or if she had gone to school, her price could be up to 100,000 francs. The average price for an average, pretty girl from the bush was around 10,000 francs... Women had few if any rights in a family but many responsibilities. In places where civilizing influences were slow to arrive, women simply lived in the trap of bans, orders, commands, taboos and ritual habits.”*

Dr. Chrappová’s book, perhaps the first and certainly one of the first female doctors from Slovakia active in tropical Africa, is full of interesting observations and a commentary about Guinean life, but French, Dutch, Americans and other foreigners had all been active in Guinea a half century earlier. It is not possible to properly reproduce them all, and even more impossible to know who is actually interested in my excerpts, but you can most certainly find a copy of her book and read it through. Please do indulge me a few more of her reflections and observations.

Many of our doctors who have decided to help in Africa since 1989 have been people of faith¹⁹⁷—Dr. Chrappová writes that she grew up in a family of atheists, which had been passed down for a number of generations. During her work in Africa she inevitably came to know some of the many missionaries who came and despite their differences of opinion, some were able to win her friendship and respect: *“It’s too bad that people like (père) Bienvenu and abbé Barry are men of the faith. In such a virgin country where people live in conditions reminiscent of the Stone Ages, every intelligent and courageous person is exceptionally valuable. And they were just that. Strong-minded, resourceful and above all lovers of this region and its people.”* Many of the grotesque forms of religious belief and tales did not escape her attention and she writes about them with loving humour. When the Chrappas adopted a small chimpanzee, who they named Johnny, they learned of the following, well, the “theory of evolution”. *“When we spoke with Johnny in his presence, Abu lowered his voice*

197 One of the major individuals along these lines in Slovakia is Professor Vladimír Krčméry, a doctor, scientist and tireless organizer and the inspiration for missions of our doctors to developing countries. Professor Krčméry is also the founder of the private St. Elizabeth College of Health and Social Work in Bratislava. One of the school’s websites: <http://www.vssvalzbety.sk/projekty> welcomes us with the following words: “4.8 billion of the 6 billion people on earth live in developing countries. Around one and a half billion of them suffer from hunger, two billion are infected with tuberculosis, 600 million people a year are infected with malaria and around 50 million people are infected with HIV. Tens of millions of children who could turn this situation around die annually from these three most-common infections. Another ten million lose their lives to hunger. It’s better to have our patients on the defendant’s bench at the final judgement than to be on the plaintiff’s bench...”

to a faint whisper. One time he explained to me why he did it. Chimpanzees were created from people, more specifically from followers of Mohammed who did not obey Allah's orders and who did not pray on the holy day, Friday, as was custom. Some of the chimpanzees were created from blacksmiths. 'But that's all just a story' he confided in us."

Religion in Africa has and had much more serious consequences than this unique and humorous "theory of evolution". The phenomenon I have in mind is the brutal mutilation of female sex organs, which is connected to religions pre-dating Islam and was later adopted by various sects of Islam or the fanatic resistance to contraceptives, promoted by various wings of Christianity and contributing to the extremely high birth rates devastating African society and the spread of the HIV virus. In 1967 the world was a long 10 years away from the moment the last verified case of smallpox was diagnosed in Somalia in the spring 1977, which no one could expect at the time. The Chrappas encountered the apocalyptic smallpox as well. It happened during their final trip to Guinea's capital which they described it in the following context: *"After arriving in the city we immediately realized that smallpox was in the city. Officially it was never announced, so the pilgrims went on their merry way to faraway Mecca while fantastic tales spread throughout Conakry of dozens to maybe eighty dead. It was certainly unpleasant. The residents here are not regularly immunized and epidemics can spread to unfathomable dimensions."* Thankfully for the world, smallpox was eradicated in Guinea, Nigeria and Somalia before the religious fanatics managed to prevent these efforts. The same cannot be said today for polio.

If anyone happened to think that the life of European doctors in Africa is one long vacation in a tropical destination, they are certainly way off base. The only difference today is the significant decrease in the feeling of isolation and being alone thanks to mobile communications and the internet. In July 1965, Dr. Chrappová made the following entry in her journal: *"Everything is covered in mould, everything has to be aired out on a daily basis, shoes and furniture has to be cleaned. The films and instruments are in hermetically sealed containers in the fridge. With the rains comes a rapid increase in sickness. Daily I see a hundred to a hundred and fifty children in the office... It tugs at our isolation and the never-ending rain gets on a person's nerves. Both of us overcome a minor bout of malaria... Ninety per cent of the inhabitants of Boké suffer from malaria. We took medication as a preventative measure but somehow we didn't manage to escape it... If only I could help them more effectively! The drugs have run out again. We've had to carefully ration the antibiotics. We've run out of dry milk, the hospital's stores and the city pharmacy are empty..."* In November she continued: *"Here in Boké we have a hard time treating even the most common illnesses, and that's what brings on the feeling of isolation. We feel bound to one another more than ever before because we have become dependent on one another. Sometimes we feel down. We remember how the forest smells at home and we begin to count the months, weeks and days that separate us from our return home. Good thing we still had meprobamate. We always remembered that we had meprobamate in our first aid kit and good whiskey in the bar..."* They certainly didn't have time to dwell however: there were the only two doctors for the four hospital departments serving a radius of 80 kilometres around Boké. Just the two of them.

It's said that you either love Africa or hate it. After all of the countless months and days, the day finally arrived for them to leave. *"The tam-tam from below rings out for the last time before the curtain of darkness descends. I stood by the window and spoke with Hemingway. I hadn't even left Africa and I already was sad to see it go."* Her sadness from the time spent in Boké was transformed into something more than common sentiments expressed when leaving. It was her awareness of the futility of human action against historical forces, which a person realizes more in Africa than anywhere else: *"I didn't hold any illusions that things would function after I left. They had to replace the surgeon but not the paediatrician. When I leave, my paediatric department may simply close for good. There will be nothing left. All of the traces of my work will be lost like a drop of water in a desert."*

The interesting love-hate relationship many Europeans and Americans have with Africa may have something to do with what the author wrote at the end of her book: *"The men smoking outside the houses stopped us and asked us if we really wanted to leave Boké. They told us to stay there, that people in Europe were too serious. It was only when they themselves said it did I realize that everyone here really did smile, smirk, chuckle and laugh; even the oldest blacks were not ashamed to jump for joy."*

Maybe it is really true that we Europeans have created a world in which we do live better, but we are slowly losing our ability to take joy from that world. As someone once said, happiness is a human ability and not an event. Research into the phenomenon of happiness, or happiness studies, have become very popular in recent years and have repeatedly provided surprising results when the happiest people are inhabitants of countries such as India and Nigeria, i.e. countries with endemic and extreme poverty, injustice and violence. It is completely possible that the rugged environment has developed selection pressures in which those who are able to take the most joy from small everyday events survive. People who are inclined to depression often have weakened immune systems and in an environment with high rates of infection many of them would not reach reproductive age. Another excellent protection mechanism is fatalism and the transfer of personal responsibility of life to someone else. In the case of Africa with its not insignificant 100% religiousness this means God, in any of a multitude of names and forms.

Another reason for a feeling of happiness in the conditions of extreme poverty in these African countries can be based on biology: in developing countries the largest portion of the population is children and young people, i.e. the part of the population full of hope and life, unburdened with the weight of responsibility, scepticism and cynicism that comes with time as people age. Another reason for such differences may be rooted in language: in Slovak the English word "happy" can be translated into "šťastný" or "spokojný" which are two completely separate words (the latter translates back to "satisfied"). One way or another, the Global Barometer on Happiness in 2011¹⁹⁸ posed the question of: "So far as you are

198 A press release on the results of the Global Barometer on Happiness for 2011 and more detailed data and graphs can be found at: http://www.legermarketing.com/admin/upload/publi_pdf/Press_Release_Global_Barometer_on_Happiness_for_2011-ENG.pdf.

concerned, do you personally feel happy, unhappy or neither” and 89% of the respondents in Nigeria responded as “happy” (which was a world record shared with Fiji) with 82% of respondents in Ghana reporting the same. When the number of unhappy respondents was subtracted from happy respondents, the group of African countries scored 66% with Western Europe recording 50% and, much more religious, at least compared to Europe, North America reporting only 31%.

Before we end this chapter it is apt to pose a question: why did Dr. Chrappová view the future of her paediatric clinic in Guinea with such scepticism? Perhaps it was because in 1967, a few years after the British and French colonizers had left most of the countries in Africa, it was possible to see and feel that the subsequent development of the Dark Continent would be full of distress and tragedy: *“We listen to the reports from the African continent. They are all the same. Three people were executed by hanging there. The President and Vice President of Gabon, Mr M'Bemba and Mr M'Bonga decided to postpone the date for new presidential elections for another year. An Indian fakir has robbed the national treasury in Cameroon. Martial law has been declared across Liberia. A meeting of the OAU has been extended due to the completely opposed opinions of delegates. State coups, treachery and secret murders.”*

There is nothing anyone can do, not even the most charitable or best doctors.

Nearly 50 years since Dr. Chrappová's expedition to Guinea, a member of parliament was elected in March 2012 to the National Council of the Slovak Republic with field work experience in Africa, Doctor Prof. MUDr. Eva Horváthová, nee Mitterpachová. It remains an open question at the time this book went to print as to if and how the theme of development aid would make an appearance in high politics in Slovakia. It is best to remain grounded and be patient, in particular when one considers the reality of post-Communist Slovakia and the fact that the new MP is a member of an opposition party. We'll close this chapter with her own observations from working in Africa nearly 100 years after Albert Schweitzer first left for Africa, inspiring generations of doctors for years to come.

“My first meeting with the founder, biggest fan and father of all the newly created third world aid projects Professor Vladimír Krčméry was by chance, but this gave it more of an impact. In 1998, when one of the first projects in Kenya began, the professor came and lectured during my studies at medical school. He ended his talk on leukaemia with ease, transitioning to a short and incredibly interesting talk about a new project in Nairobi. I decided that I wanted to go and I should set off on my own journey. And I wasn't alone. Some gave up, or circumstances didn't allow them to go, but many of us stayed the course and sooner or later we reached our destination.

My dreams of Africa went with me at the start of my practical training at the Paediatric Clinic at Trnava Hospital. Fate decided that after 6 months of experience I would fly out to Nairobi, Kenya's capital. My final destination was the Mary Immaculate Clinic. I had no experience with work in the tropics, only the desire to help those in need and maybe to experience something that would push me forward. Today I know that it would have been impossible for me to go without that blissful naivety. It's not about the hard work, the tiring evenings when

we had to learn both professionally and the language, but it's the terrible hopelessness and emptiness a person feels when they come face to face with people, mothers, children who simply don't have anything to eat, who suffer from diseases that could be easily avoided, all because they simply didn't have the money to buy drugs to even lower a fever. You keep going back and forth to work, brooding about how to change it. You don't eat or drink because your stomach is up in your throat...

How do you manage it? You have to have a lot of guardian angels above you and great people around you. I was one of the lucky ones. An experienced doctor was working at the clinic was organizing a new mission to South Sudan. We worked together while all of the organizing work was going on. We treated 50 to 100 patients a day, fighting often with logistics and securing the construction of new buildings, procuring supplies of drinking water, even though there were shortages across the country, and continuously dealt with power cuts. I learned some basics of local Swahili, which helped me communicate with the locals and later on as well. In the end I stayed for 9 months. Today I know for certain that the experience gave me everything. Both in terms of professional medicine and human aspects. Doctors and teachers rotated at 3 to 6 month intervals. In addition to medical care to the most impoverished, we also opened bachelor and later master's level public health studies. It was a detached worksite for Trnava University which educated Kenyan students from the slums and was one of the only options for a lot of them as education, just like treatment and medical care, was not cheap in Kenya. More and more projects were added over time: preventing the transmission of HIV from mother to child, an orphanage for street children, worksites in other suburbs of Nairobi and other cities.

Anyone who ever goes to the African continent will surely want to return. It grows close to your heart. It changes your life. At least that's how it was for me. Two years later I returned for another 6 months, and hopefully it was not for the last time.

Kenya as a country has a lot of problems. Financial aid frequently ends up in the most corrupt hands and that's why I consider the best aid to be the kind that is delivered directly to the most impoverished because you can immediately see the results. There is a lot that a person simply cannot influence. That's why we only try and do what we can."

Atheism, Sexuality and Homosexuality, or Culture Wars and Differences

Mwanza—“the fastest growing city south of the equator”. Perch, Tilapia and evolution the problem of a lack of education in the natural sciences viruses and bacteria may evolve but not people! Watch out for public displays of affection. “Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve”—the human rights of homosexuals and development aid.

By any chance have you seen the French and Austrian co-produced documentary film from 2004 named *Darwin's Nightmare*? If you have the images from the city of Mwanza and its region are almost certainly permanently burned into your memory.

If not, you should know that Mwanza is the second largest city in Tanzania, in a deep cove on the southern shores of Lake Victoria at an elevation of around 1,200 metres. Currently it is home to more than a half million inhabitants. Even more intriguing, and one of Africa's many mysteries, is that an exact and precise count of its population is missing for Tanzania, much the same as for many other African countries. In any case, Mwanza's inhabitants proudly declare that it's “*the fastest growing African city south of the equator*”. Whether that is true or simply a slogan thought up to boost confidence is another question. The migration of people from rural areas to the cities is a general phenomenon in Africa and so it is hard to have any doubts about the quick pace of Mwanza's growth. Justified and serious doubts can be raised as to if the uncontrolled growth of Mwanza, or any other large city in Africa or elsewhere in the world, is something to take pride in. Shouldn't it be more reason to give pause? Of course, people need something to be proud of, which is why we grant this to the people of Mwanza.

I first visited Mwanza two years after *Darwin's Nightmare* was filmed but I wasn't aware of the film at that time. I saw the city through the eyes of most *mzungu*,¹⁹⁹ who come to the city as tourists or for a short working visit, which was my case. I did not see the city where

199 Mzungu is the Swahili word for white people.

the barefoot beggars waded through a rotting mass of waste, full of worms, larvae and flies, to pick the heads off of the skeletons of Nile perch, which they then dried, smoked, sold and ate. At one time as a student I worked in pathology, which was followed a short time later with work as a medical examiner. I've seen countless photos that are not for the more sensitive among us but the image of adults and children among the decaying remains of all those fish bodies riddled with worms and the stench cannot be shaken from my memory. Who knows, perhaps for some tourists these dumps were a sought after attraction. While the frozen perch fillets were jetted off by Ukrainian pilots to European restaurants, maybe other Europeans had come to see what they did with the rest. It's a kind of emotional bungee jumping: one moment you dive into the deepest depths of human misery so you can pull yourself back out thanks to the flexible lifeline that is your credit card.

While many *mzungu* certainly see plenty of morbid images they'd rather not, there is the wonderful scenery of the water, mountain foothills and boulders. One of the most well-known is the postcard perfect Bismarck Rock, which is a jagged rock jutting out from the lake close to the shore that is slightly reminiscent of a castle. Bismarck Rock is a visual symbol for the city and a tourist attraction not to be missed. Another experience that you'll certainly take away from Mwanza if you travel by air to Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar or Arusha are the large plastic containers that nearly every local carries with them as luggage. These containers are stuffed with tilapia, a very tasty fish caught in Lake Victoria and which is the culinary symbol of Mwanza. If you are Tanzanian, a trip home from Mwanza without a container of fish is like travelling to Moscow during Communism without a few pairs of jeans.

Hotel La-Kairo in Mwanza was the site of a conversation that I would come to remember often. One early Sunday morning after a multi-day workshop, two Tanzanian colleagues, Edith and Mercy, joined me over breakfast. After a few moments of small talk a simple yet fateful question was raised: *"What are you going to do today?"*

I answered that I was going to read, and, if possible, go down to the lake.

"You don't go to church on Sunday where you are from?"

"Some do, but I don't," was my answer. I began to get the feeling that a touchy conversation unlike any other that I had experienced in Africa before was just getting underway.

"Why's that?"

"I don't go to church, I'm an atheist..."

I don't know if Edith and Mercy knew what the term atheist meant or they just didn't want to believe what they were hearing. The disbelief written all over their faces forced me to add: *"...I don't believe God exists."*

If Mercy and Edith hadn't heard me speak many times about the responsibility the wealthy have for the disadvantaged, about philanthropy, charity and my conviction that more good people lived on the planet than bad people ("*...but the bad ones are better organized*" continues a Russian saying which I am apt to recite to everyone, and not just to Africans) I think they would have started to look at my head to see if I had devil horns. I had never met with such a look but you could cut the tension with a knife.

“When I was young I did believe and I even went to church, but later I stopped going...”
I added in order to help relieve the situation.

“Why?”

“I realized that there was so much poverty, war, suffering and injustice with the world, too many innocent children dying... If God existed and acted in the way that Christians and other religions describe and in which people believe, then the world and people would have to be different. Better. More compassionate. More honourable. In Europe there are a lot of non-believers, in particular after the war and the Holocaust. If there was a God, how could he let something like that happen?”

Of course many Catholics even in Slovakia have an explanation that God’s objective and God’s will are incomprehensible for us. Songwriter Jaromír Nohavica expressed the same sentiment about the indifference of God towards the suffering of people in a song on the album *Divné století* (Crazy centuries) with the following words *“...God got drunk on cheap Balkan liquor and passed out—otherwise it makes no sense”*. In Africa that cheap and conscious soothing liquor must be poured in rivers.

Our conversation continued on in a most unexpected direction.

“But, if there was no God, how were people created?”

It was necessary to introduce the ever-present and bearded Charles Darwin in the place of the ever-present and bearded God.

“People and other animals are the result of evolution from a simpler form of life. As the world changed, animals and plants continued to adapt, some died off, new species evolved. Genetics today is capable for precisely describing how the individual genes of entire species have changed.”

At first glance it was clear that I had not convinced them with my form of mysticism. I tread lightly, simply because religious conflicts between different faiths burn hot and fast and many religious people think that there indeed is a deep gulf between believers and non-believers if they ever meet one during their lifetime. You’re at the bottom somewhere and the evangelizing instinct among many believers would make many of you lose your lunch. If you push back too hard, however, it can get risky for the rescuer. After all, threatening friends is the last thing you want to do. If you happen to be an atheist working or active in Africa, its best to leave your non-belief to yourself. If you do decide to talk about the subject, don’t push it. Even if you don’t you run the risk that your African friends will have a huge problem maintaining the same relationship with you before your atheist coming out. Image being in a Slovak village 50 years ago and announcing you were a homosexual, which is somewhat akin to announcing that you are an atheist in contemporary Africa.

So I continued carefully: *“The species that evolve are right under our noses. Every season, new flu virus strains mutate, which is why we have to immunize all over again and again before the new season starts. New and new strains of bacteria appear all the time, resistant to the very antibiotics that were still effective until a few years ago...”*

“But people don’t change!” shot back Mercy.

“They change, just a lot slower than a bacteria or virus,” and avoiding Darwin I chose to add an example: *“When people first domesticated cows, goats and sheep a few thousand years ago, most people couldn’t drink the milk because it gave them diarrhoea. Those with the active genes to produce lactase, the enzyme to breakdown milk sugars, could drink milk their entire lives and were given such a tremendous advantage that more of their offspring survived. Their children eventually took over and pushed out those who didn’t have lactase and who couldn’t drink milk. That means that today, basically everyone around the world can drink goat milk!”*

I don’t know the impression that my argument made but I eventually redirected the debate from mutations, gene selection and the evolution of species into less sensitive areas. It later occurred to me that perhaps I could have used a more suggestive example and asked them where the blackest people are on the planet. Of course I don’t have any colorimetric measurements, but I remember the surprisingly dark black skin of the natives in Papua New Guinea, thousands of kilometres from Africa. Later when I studied the colonization of Earth by people after our ancestors left Africa, I realized that the migration of *Homo sapiens* along the coasts of Arabia and southern Asia happened so quickly that they managed to make it all the way to tropical areas of southern Asia, Papua and Australia with their dark skin still intact. As opposed to the migration flows to cooler Europe, Central Asia and then on to America, lighter skin was not selected and they retained their original black skin, as the pigment melanin protects against the strong sun in the tropics. Skin colour in Africa, India and everywhere else in the world where people with darker skin live is such an important and emotionally charged factor that this example would have had a much more powerful impact on Mercy and Edith than my obtuse talk about enzymes, sugars and cow’s milk.

The almighty had given Africans the advantage of lactase, but why hadn’t he given Africans the major advantage of white skin is another different and very sensitive question. White skin is a clear symbol of wealth, but who knows, maybe I would come to realize that God’s will was to create a market for the cosmetics industry and products to whiten skin and straighten curly hair.

In any case, if you are an atheist and find yourself working in Africa, I recommend exercising extreme restraint in any form of theological debate.²⁰⁰ The world around us is not much different from a Slovak village four to five generations ago, or maybe even deeper into history.

Topics related to sexuality and homosexuality in particular are no less taboo. Sexuality is one of the most taboo subjects in modern Africa as a consequence of the activity of puritan missionaries and the strong positions enjoyed by Christianity and Islam in African societies. My friend Lukáš Zorád, who I’ll speak about later and who was active in the city of Nanyuki under Mount Kenya, experienced a serious argument with his Kenyan partners after unknowingly kissing his Slovak girlfriend on the street. I emphasize that this wasn’t a French kiss or a joke of some kind. Lukáš’s local partners warned him that a repeat of such

200 Of course don’t leave home without a popular line along the lines of “God likes us atheists the best because we don’t bother him with our requests!”

indecent behaviour would force them to terminate their cooperation. Such youthful moral decay was unacceptable in Kenya.

A colleague from Olomouc Jirka Pánek, for a change, enjoys retelling a conversation he had on the topic of homosexuality during his work in Nairobi's slum of Kibera. When he defended the rights of gays and lesbians during this discussion (of course in a one-on-one environment as he wouldn't have risked such a discussion in a public forum) he argued that homosexual behaviour had been observed in the animal kingdom and was therefore a natural phenomenon. His local opponent brought him down to earth with a simple argument: "*God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve*". There was nothing left for Jirka to do but to simply quit and give up in the face of such an argument.

Calls to recognize the rights for homosexuals in African society are unlikely to simply fade away. It is quite possible that over time they will become a major source of tension and disputes between African governments and development aid providers. In October 2011, the British Prime Minister David Cameron gave notice at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting that development aid from Great Britain would consider a country's stance towards the protection of rights for homosexual minorities. According to Cameron this wouldn't decrease overall aid; rather it would be a decrease in "budget support", or support that is not used for specific projects but that flows directly into a country's budget. This is the kind of support that recipient countries like best as essentially it is money with no strings attached. In 2011, Britain froze a portion of the support intended for Malawi's budget and considered similar steps against Uganda and Ghana due to fears over the rights of homosexuals.

A reaction won't be long in coming from African politicians and the public. 41 of the countries in the 54 countries of the British Commonwealth have legislation banning homosexuality. The irony of history is that such legislation was inherited from British law dating back to the time of their colonial domination! Ugandan journalist Charles Odongpho commented on Her Majesty's Government's initiative with the following words: "*This is your money and you know where you want to put it but we face very serious issues of corruption, poverty, education and hunger. These are the most critical issues for us, not homosexual rights.*" Of course the problem with such an argument that it can be used to argue against any human and democratic rights (for example against female genital mutilation or suffrage for women, which are both "minor" in the face of poverty and hunger) and that such an argument can be used by any tyrant, elected despot or military dictator. An advisor to Uganda's President took it one step farther by saying the British approach was an expression of an "ex-colonial mentality" and declared that Uganda was fed up with how it was being treated like a child. He added: "*If you have to take your money back, then just take it.*"

These are brave words in a country where foreign aid represents 10% to 12% of GDP annually and where Great Britain is the third largest donor (after the USA and the World

Bank), where they have sent around \$150 million a year in the recent past.²⁰¹ Uganda is also a country where you can be sentenced to 14 years to life in prison for homosexuality and where parliament has taken up a draft law that would make some expressions of homosexuality punishable with the death penalty. In other words if the so-called protection of family values and the future of our children are involved, no punishment for those “who are different from us” is strong enough.²⁰² The theme of human rights, religious doctrine and development aid is so interwoven that it is going to be around for as long as development aid itself will be around.

201 More detailed information can be found in the OECD’s DAC database at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/12/32/1883200.gif>.

202 Also see CNN’s report from 8th February 2012 at: http://edition.cnn.com/2012/02/08/world/africa/uganda-anti-gay-bill/index.html?hpt=hp_t3.

Doing a Lot with Very Little and the Lone Soldier on the Battlefield

What goes underneath the solar cooker? Physics lab at a secondary school in Arusha. How would you use \$10 million to fight climate change? Socolow's wedges and options for resolving the climate crisis. Solar energy—the untapped potential of the continent. Tomáš Miléř, grandmother's inheritance and mission to Western Kenya: efficient cookers, sand filters, solar water sterilization, nitrogen capturing trees, dry toilets and other appropriate and cheap technologies.

Shortly after the discussion in Mwanza I was witness to a situation in the Tanzanian city of Arusha that forced me to reflect and reconsider the quality and content of education in Africa. During a break in training I installed an improvised solar cooker in the hotel's sunny courtyard and placed a black pot with a cover I had brought with me from Slovakia for this exact purpose into the cooker's focal point. I wanted to use a simple example to spark interest among the training participants about solar cooking technology. Widespread application of solar cooking could mean huge savings for tens of millions of destitute Africans, not to mention saving women from the incredibly hard and time consuming task of gathering and transporting wood, thereby saving tens of millions of trees and shrubs from being cut down.

My little black pot quickly came up to temperature in the sun's rays concentrated by the aluminium foil collector on the cooker. My Tanzanian colleagues looked on over their tea and coffee with interest, wondering what kind of hocus-pocus was involved; the more curious among them put their hands to the pot, quickly jerking them back when they realized how hot it was. What I was most interested in about their reaction was not how they instinctively pulled back their hands. It was a different reaction: many of them hurriedly began examining the solar cooker from all sides, looking for a heating source. I understood that just as they didn't have the basics needed to understand evolutionary processes, they also hadn't learned anything about optics in school or in elementary education.

While failure to understand the processes and mechanisms of evolution, maybe with the exception of the flu virus mutation or the development of bacterial resistance to antibiotics, is relatively insignificant in practical terms, the failure to understand the basics of optics and parabolic mirrors is something altogether different in tropical and sub-tropical countries. Without understanding the basics of optics, or at least a basic awareness, Africans were losing the ability to use one of their greatest resources nature had graced them with: solar energy. The next time I visited a Tanzanian secondary school I asked the teachers to show me the physics lab. They showed me a room about the size of a small bathroom with a few empty shelves. To the question of if they had a mirror, the simple answer was no. It's important to note that this was a school in a major city and had been recently evaluated as one of the best secondary schools in Tanzania. It was therefore highly unlikely that other schools would have fared any better. This experience would later inspire me to write the following essay and to enter it in a competition organized by the Alliance Magazine.

The essay had the title *"Doing a Lot with Very Little"*²⁰³. Here it is:

"Nonsense!" was my first and resounding response to this hypothetical question of "How would you use \$10 million to fight climate change" announced by the British magazine Alliance. Given the scale of the climate change challenge, \$10 million is nothing. What could one do with such a ridiculous amount?

But a seed of interest was planted in my mind and step by step, walking on the streets and parks behind a stroller with my two and a half-year-old son, thoughts emerged in my mind and moved, one by one, to an imaginary waste bin.

First I scanned in my mind through the "wedges" proposed by Socolow and Pacala: energy efficiency and conservation. Socolow and Pacala had suggested on a full set of goals at the same time instead of coming up with a single decisive strategy for stabilizing global greenhouse gas emissions and then to achieve these goals using the synergies of partial successes in a number of key areas. So, let's take a look. Energy savings and efficiency \$10 million can pay for thermal insulation of what—1,000 houses? Renewable energy: enough money for two, maybe three, medium windmills? Fuel switch: how many buses could be converted from dirty diesel to compressed gas? A thousand? Planting trees: how would trees just planted compare in their CO₂ effect to millions of grown trees being cut down at the same time? A drop in the ocean. One village, two windmills, a thousand converted buses and a few million trees are not going to have any measurable influence on the climate. We can always justify these kinds of projects by attributing them "a model value. But let us be honest—model value of applying something already a thousand times tested and proved is very limited.

What is it next on Socolow's shopping list? Oh yes—carbon storage. Untested and extremely expensive. And there's nuclear energy, of course. But, other considerations aside, \$10 million does not move construction of a single nuclear power plant more than just

203 The essay was published at www.alliancemagazine.org in November 2009.

a few steps. The father of the Gaia theory James Lovelock argues relentlessly in favour of nuclear energy to slow down global warming and to buy us time for adjustments. Unfortunately, while Lovelock sees nuclear energy as the only tool that may save us from the worst, the deeply rooted suspicion of nuclear energy is not going to fade away anytime soon.²⁰⁴

So is there really nothing I could do even with \$10 million to leave behind a liveable earth for my little son and his generation? Will he and billions of other people struggle through the “perfect storm” envisioned by John Beddington, science adviser to the British government?

Many people believe that our technology is all we need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and stop global warming. I do not see that. With a fast-growing population and consumers’ appetite, we are on track to exhaust limited resources and to devastate this planet regardless of our clever technologies.

If this is true, then maybe I should spend my millions to give people a wake-up call and ask them to consume less. But already so many prophets, old and modern, have called for modesty or at least for “reasonable” restraint in consuming. Decades ago, Erich Fromm asked the question “To have or to be?” For too many people, to be means to have. Could my millions make any difference in talking to the masses mesmerized by omnipresent advertising for more, more and more products you need to buy to be happy, to be someone? I doubt it. Even the most masterly crafted and shocking messages delivered by superstars and aired in the primetime of the main global media would soon be drowned out by thundering waves of ads for cars, phones, cosmetics, drinks, foods, drugs, lifestyles... Drowned out and forgotten.

And then it struck me. Intuitively we tend to focus on what can be done to reduce emissions in the biggest polluters, such as the United States or China. But maybe the right way is to focus on the main victims of the climate change instead. Those are the places where the money can go much further and where the most human suffering from climate extremes is happening.

There it was, my answer to the \$10 million question. Pictures of African women with loads of fuel wood emerged in my mind—and with them the feeling of hammering heat on my head under the tropical sun. I recalled my visits to African schools without mirrors to teach students about concentration of sun energy. Without that, young Africans can hardly believe that their mothers could actually cook their family meals without precious wood or expensive charcoal; without breathing smoke that damages their health; without destroying trees and bushes as far as one can walk around the towns and villages; without producing soot by millions cooking fires burning every day in a year, all over the continent. The same soot is now recognized as an important contributor to global warming.

204 I wrote this essay nearly two years before the Fukushima disaster (March 2011), which has radically worsened the changes for increased development in nuclear energy. Just after the disaster, Germany, Switzerland and Italy all announced plans to rid themselves of nuclear power in the future and many other countries are also reconsidering the future of nuclear and their own plans.

There are several reasons why solar cooking²⁰⁵—a simple and cheap technology—is not used enough in tropical countries. Lack of knowledge is very important. Lack of solid, good-looking and very low cost models is another. With my \$10 million I would hit at these barriers: in a competitively selected African country and working closely with local groups, I would build a small factory to produce simple, but pretty and very cheap solar cookers made of lasting plastics—for instance from PET, used for the production of cheap plastic bottles. Time is precious and this could be done within a few months. Within one year we would start to see large social and environmental benefits—albeit not a cooling planet. I would also make sure that as many African schools as possible get a set of the cookers for their physics labs, so they can teach their students about a practical way of using the abundant solar energy that tropical countries have and must start to use. With tens of millions of African families using solar cookers, some of the students, technicians, entrepreneurs and politicians would inevitably start to think about how to use solar energy for other purposes; for instance, for clean electrification of the continent. That is “conditio sine qua non” if we are serious about pulling Africa out of poverty while fighting climate change at the same time.

While my essay was focused on finding an answer to the question of what I would do with \$10 million, a young teacher from Brno in the Czech Republic decided not to wait for a winning lottery ticket and decided to act. The story of Tomáš Milěš is so inspirational that it would be a grave mistake to fail to mention him.

A few years ago Tomáš inherited a total of around CZK 100,000 from his grandmother and he decided to use these funds in a most unexpected manner. Long before he had contemplated volunteering in developing countries but hadn't had the time or the money. In 2007 he completed his studies in education, physics and technical training at Masaryk University in Brno and suddenly he had both the time and the money, so he decided to spend some of this nest egg on his first trip to Kenya. Before the trip he used the Internet to browse opportunities to volunteer in English-speaking countries in Africa and he ran into a basic school in rural western Kenya looking for teachers. After arriving in Malava, he primarily taught natural sciences and mathematics, but when other teachers were absent from time to time, he took the children and began to teach them about energy efficient technology, and solar cooking in particular. He produced a simple box-style solar cooker from cardboard and took it with him—making it one of the first solar cookers in western Kenya. After arriving in Nairobi, one of his first steps was to contact the office of Solar Cookers International²⁰⁶, an organization that he had only previously seen online. He arranged to

205 Drawings, photos and plans of many different types of solar cookers can be found online, for instance at: <http://solarcooking.org/plans/>.

206 This organization distributed or inspired around a half million solar cookers in the countries of Africa and elsewhere. More information about its activities is available at: <http://www.solarcookers.org/index.html>.

cooperate with SCI and later invited the organization to western Kenya for an environmental seminar he arranged at the school.²⁰⁷

Tomáš's contribution to technology transfer was not in any way limited to simply solar cookers. Along with the parents of his teachers, he founded the do-it-yourself Harmony Development Group and used the summer vacation periods in 2008, 2009 and 2010 to increase awareness and the practice among people from Malava and its surroundings of many other forms of efficient and readily available technology. These technologies have the potential to fundamentally improve the lives and health of hundreds of millions of Africans and to contribute to maintaining environmental stability and protecting nature in Africa. Such technologies are termed *appropriate technologies* and include clay ovens for cooking that use a third of the wood or charcoal traditional African cooking techniques on three stones consume, as well as simple sand filters that increase the cleanliness of drinking water, elementary sterilization of drinking water using ultra-violet light by exposing PET plastic bottles to sunlight, planting trees to capture nitrogen in the atmosphere to help enrich poor African soil, the establishment of nurseries to spread these trees and many other similar activities. In 2010 they erected the first dry toilet in Malava²⁰⁸ that had ever been erected in western Kenya. This simple technology separates urine from solid waste and allows for the solid waste to be composted and then used as manure. Urine is thinned with water at a ratio of around 8 to 1 or more and then used as a nitrogen, phosphorus and magnesium-rich fertilizer.

Tomáš's story illustrates a number of critical details. First it is an example that we don't all have to be doctors and healthcare workers in order to be active in Africa: a majority of central Europeans are educated to a standard far above the African standard, which would enable many more, if they so choose, to make a meaningful contribution to development efforts in Africa. Examples include teachers, the bearers of new ideas and technologies and builders of networks and contacts (as Tomáš Milěř did when inviting people from the Nairobi branch of SCI to Malava) including such connections between Africans and the rest of the world. One of the consequences of poverty is isolation: just like for most Europeans during the Middle Ages where life was spent within a 10 kilometre circle of the family village, the mobility of most of Africa's population is very low when compared to ours. This limits their options to both observe new things from other countries and to learn from perhaps a larger city or capital. Of course our relatively good level of general education does not mean we should all take off to Africa without any semblance of training. Just the opposite, the better and more wide-ranging such preparations, the more capable a volunteer is to help and the larger the development impact.

207 Photos from this first seminar and later activities undertaken by Tomáš Milěř in western Kenya can be found on his website: <http://amper.ped.muni.cz/~miler/indi/solarcookers.php>.

208 Chinese civilization has recycled human solid waste since ancient times, and is certainly one of the mechanisms that have allowed them to farm land continuously for thousands of years while retaining fertile soil. Contemporary sources have noted that hundreds of thousands of such dry separation toilets are in use in China today.

The example of Tomáš Milář is a prime example that an individual can act independently of domestic development organizations and external financial support. The key is to find suitable partners in advance, to learn about dealing with their culture and to prove to them you know many things that are useful and important for them. Of course, after returning from his first stay in Kenya Tomáš began contacting friends, acquaintances and other organizations at home to tap them for support. Their financial support enabled him to continue in his work after he had used the last of his inheritance from his grandmother.

Finally, it is important to note that he didn't keep his experience from applying appropriate technologies in Kenya to himself and Tomáš Milář today teaches a class with the same name to students at the Department of Development Studies at Palacký University in Olomouc in the Czech Republic.

From Engaging Individuals to Engaging Cities and Communities

We have many to thank for where we are today. Cultural maturity and the radius of our responsibility. The large and untapped potential of affiliated communities. Partner community foundations in Banská Bystrica, Zvolen and Arusha. Geographic isolation and the internet as an opportunity to bring schools and classrooms together. The ALOHA program.

So far we have mostly dealt with the ways an individual can become a development aid actor, by changing lifestyle and consumption habits, becoming a donor of financial aid or transforming knowledge and abilities into services to be transferred to those who need them most.

What can you do if you are the mayor of a city or town or a member of parliament, an official in the regional government, the director of a primary or secondary school, the pastor of a parish or diocese or an activist in a local community organization? No one has a job description that extends beyond their own station and function, but we all think and we all know that our humanity and culture do not have the same limits. Many of us have felt the effects of aid received from the outside within our own community, school, town, city and even region. This aid pushed us forward and without this aid there is a very real chance we would not be where we are today. Sources over the past 20 years have been diverse: including private American, European and Japanese foundations and NGOs, programs provided by the governments of European countries, the USA and Canada and the massive amounts of aid the European Union has provided us.

We didn't "deserve" any of this aid in the truest sense of the word. Perhaps we were able to convince our donors that we appreciated their aid and that we would be able to properly and judiciously use this aid, but that is not the reason we received it in the first place. We received such aid because someone richer and in a better situation thought about us and was prepared to share a portion of their wealth with us.

While we are wealthier, more educated and freer than Africa, we are the ones who should think of those worse off than us and share a portion of our wealth and knowledge. Much the same as people came and continued to come to us from Western Europe and across the Atlantic to help us. My father once said that it was “our wretched duty”. I am convinced that development aid and aid to the less fortunate is a measuring stick of our personal, community and national liberty. The measuring stick for the size of every man is the radius of the circle in which he feels a shared sense of responsibility. If this radius does not extend beyond the Mediterranean Sea and does not reach the equator then we remain an immature nation preoccupied with its own infancy.

When we, as leaders of towns, cities and communities, finally grasp the concept we are faced with a question as to what we can do for such a huge continent with its massive population and colossal problems. The answer is the upsetting knowledge that indeed we can do very little for an entire continent. However we can do quite a bit if we break Africa down into thousands of more tangible and fathomable components, into schools, cities, parishes and community organizations. Just like choosing one or two children to focus your attention and the little financial aid you can afford from the millions of orphans and destitute children thanks to long-distance adoption, we can also choose “ours” from among thousands of African schools, cities, towns, communities and parishes.

Nearly every Slovak and Czech city has a number of twinned cities, Bratislava has 5 (Perugia, Dublin, Ljubljana, Stockholm and Vienna), Prague has 24 (18 in Europe and the rest in the USA and Asia), Brno 12 (11 in Europe and one in the USA), Banská Bystrica 18 (16 of which are in Europe) and Košice also has 18 (17 in Europe and one in the USA). What do these cities have in common? None of them have a single twin city in Africa. Why?

Simply, we continue to focus on the places we can learn something from in order to benefit ourselves. On its own this is not bad: the bad part is that we continue to avoid thinking about how and where we could transfer or give something to someone else or to learn something completely different from what we expect.

Another thing that our twinned and other cities have in common is that they have a lot of people who have lived or travelled to Africa or other developing countries. The argument that we don't know these places falls flat. The problem is in how we view the world and how we interpret our position in it. We, central Europeans, more than 20 years after the fall of Communism, still see ourselves as those who should be sticking their hands out to the West, who need help, and not as mature and grown up people who should be helping those less fortunate.

What about it?

In 2008 the Healthy City Community Foundation (KNZM) with activities in both Banská Bystrica and Zvolen commenced cooperation with the newly established Arusha Municipal Community Foundation (AMCF) in Tanzania. Just like every community foundation in the world, this foundation based in Banská Bystrica and Zvolen is dependent upon local donors and sponsors, which is the exact reason why they aren't exactly swimming in cash. Despite this fact, its funding is much stronger than its sister organization in Arusha, a city under

the fifth-tallest mountain in Africa, Mount Meru. Remembering the aid and friendship that KNZM received from numerous American and Canadian community foundations when it was established, the executive council decided to pass it on and enter into a “sibling” relationship with the AMCF. This relationship includes an internal pledge of long-term moral, technical and financial support for the foundation in Arusha.

During the first three years of this partnership the KNZM has sent a financial donation to its sister organization in Arusha along the lines of €1,000 to €1,500. This is not a huge sum of money but its importance is much larger than most people are able to comprehend. It has a huge symbolic value as this is the only money from abroad that the AMCF has ever received as all its other funding is domestic. The money from Banská Bystrica and Zvolen is a thin thread of aid stretched across the ocean and half a continent. The funds are indeed of high importance as the AMCF has been able to use these funds in cooperation with the KNZM to support innovative projects, meaning they are used for technology transfer.

The kind of technology transfer we are talking about may seem humorous to the average European. Funds donated by the KNZM are used, for instance, to construct clay ovens for cooking in school canteens. When one says school canteen in Africa, it's important to picture a small, smoke-filled shanty in which tea is brewed for hundreds of students over an open fire pit burning wet wood. The schools in many countries cannot afford to give students anything more than tea, and sometimes even this is a luxury. Arusha is by no means a laggard. It is the third largest city in Tanzania with a population larger than Bratislava. It is also the headquarters of the East Africa Communities, a regional grouping with 130 million inhabitants combining Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. It is something of an East African Brussels.

Only the schools in this “Brussels” continue to cook over three rocks. But some of these schools no longer have to: thanks to the KNZM's support and the Bratislava-based Center for Philanthropy, such ovens have been built in four school canteens (In Arusha they proudly call them *efficient stoves*) including installing chimneys (also an innovation in Africa) and purchased cooking burners. It looks a bit trivial, but for Tanzanian schools without investment funds, it is almost as if you took an old coal boiler room in Slovakia and converted it to a modern condensing boiler. The result is that these schools burn up to two-thirds less wood than when they cooked on the fire pit. This represents huge financial savings for the schools. The women who use them to brew tea are no longer breathing in the thick smoke from the fire pit, thereby protecting their lungs, eyes and respiratory tracts.

Before the AMCF began supporting the construction of school ovens, Tomáš Miléř, the hero from the previous chapter, arranged a working visit for the KNZM and AMCF in Arusha. The AMCF was holding a seminar for teachers for which Tomáš travelled to Kenya and presented the many benefits of suitable technologies including solar cookers or cook tops for cooking. We do not know what they took away from it and if the teachers will be able to pass it on, but it's not going to happen any other way. A core of teachers and education were the driving force for modernization in European society and in Africa it is unlikely to occur in any other way.

In 2011, cooperation between the KNZM and AMCF managed to bring Lukáš Zorád to Arusha, another one of our experts working in Kenya. For a change, he led training for teachers concerning progressive school gardens, which Tomáš had helped to build in schools below Mount Kenya. In the spring of 2012 a total of five of Arusha's schools had completed the construction of school gardens thanks to cooperation with the AMCF and another school was planning on building a system for capturing rain water from the school's roof in order to use it to water the garden during dry periods. The KNZM's financial aid to Arusha in 2012 went to support these products.

In addition to all their activities, a portion of the aid provided by the KNZM is used to award the Neosolium Award ²⁰⁹ to male and female students (yes, there are separate categories for boys and girls to motivate them both) with the best marks in natural science disciplines. The idea behind this award is to support interest among children about natural science disciplines as this is the route to improve the lives of those living in Africa. Even more, after the KNZM's director visited Arusha (she was going to another conference in Nairobi anyway, meaning her trip cost the KNZM nothing), the KNZM held a collection drive for school uniforms, shoes and school supplies to help 60 orphans and poor children selected by the AMCF go to school.

All of this can be accomplished in a major African city for a few thousand Euros. All you need is the desire and to choose the right people to engage in cooperation. Understandably, more could be done with larger pools of funds, but the point is that a gift of a few thousand Euros even once a year could fit in the budgets of nearly every Slovak city. In theory such a sum is well within the means of many mayors, deputy majors, members of parliament and other public officials. Why is it that no Slovak city is twinned with any of the hundreds of African cities and does not share in any specific development activities? There are around 40 cities in Africa with a population over 1 million, all of which offer ample opportunity for someone to support small yet critical projects.

The answer is clearly a combination of indifference and the feeling that nothing can be done. The problem remains: if the KNZM can have a sister organization in Africa, why doesn't the city of Banská Bystrica or Zvolen have their own twinned cities in Africa. They could easily adopt Arusha and its twin city Moshi tucked under the majestic Mount Kilimanjaro only 70 kilometres from Arusha. Why couldn't Nitra have a partnership with the city of Morogoro, for example, which is also home to an agricultural university? There are many topics and common themes that could be used to foster these relationships over time. If there was a problem in finding such common threads, Czech and Slovak cities could easily seek assistance from our embassies and representative offices.

Affiliated relationships between our cities and African cities may be the prime inspiration for relationships at a level much higher than that in smaller structures, e.g. schools.

209 Neosolium is the Latin name of Banská Bystrica. It's rooted in the name "neo-solium" or "New Zvolen", but in contemporary times the "neo" is interpreted as innovation and "sol" is interpreted as the sun, the most underused natural resource in the tropics.

The KNZM has met with a modicum of success in facilitating partnerships between schools in Banská Bystrica and Zvolen and schools in Arusha: the goal is to progressively strengthen relationships between specific people, students and teachers, both here and there. My generation has lived more than half their lives on the other side of the wire, cut off from the rest of the world by a Communist regime. Perhaps that is why we retain such a vivid memory of how important it was for us young people to have at least occasional contact with the people from across the Iron Curtain. Africans themselves are cut off from the world in a manner similar to what we were; only the source of such isolation is poverty, not policy, and the huge geographic barriers of the Sahara and the oceans. The major difference between today and the period before 1989 is of course the existence of the Internet and email with the ability to send text and multimedia content. Communicating with students at schools in Tanzania and Kenya is not impossible anymore: if a school has internet access, which is the norm, it's always possible to find someone to communicate with over a computer in a much more affordable and faster way than when we were faced with similar isolation.

Thankfully there are many people who recognize the potential of towns, cities and regions in development cooperation. Docent Pavel Nováček, the founder and head of the Department of Development Studies at Palacky University in Olomouc recently formulated this concept into a program via which he began to contact towns, cities and regions across the Czech Republic. The project was named the Community Appliance for Humanitarian Assistance, or ALOHA for short. He contacted communities and all levels of local government with the following inspirational text, which has been translated into English:

“Around one-fifth of the world’s population lives in developed countries with a relatively comfortable living standard and with easy access to food, clean water, shelter, clothes, basic healthcare and education. The other four-fifths live in the developing world where problems are much more serious. One billion people don’t get enough to eat on a daily basis and go hungry, 1.2 billion have no access to clean drinking water, 2 billion live without electricity and 2.6 billion don’t have access to proper sanitary facilities.

For more than half a century, the developed countries have at least attempted to help within foreign development cooperation programs and projects. The Czech Republic has also provided such aid since 1996 equalling around 0.1% of gross domestic product (then representing an annual volume of four billion CZK). Moreover, people at home and abroad lend a helping hand and make donations to various humanitarian collections or development projects including long-distance adoption and others.

In Western Europe, development aid from the state and engaged individuals as well as local government and the city and town level is widespread. Towns and cities can make contributions within their means in order to help improve conditions for aid recipients, which helps them to spread awareness of the lives of people living in communities in very different geographical, cultural, social and economic conditions.

Such development or humanitarian aid at the level of local government here at home is rare (e.g. the South Moravia, Olomouc and Usti Regions have assisted in Serbia, which

is not a typical developing country in the world). In 2011 the city of Olomouc donated more than CZK 200,000 to support communities living in Rwanda, a country that remains affected by the genocide of the 1990s. In talking with representatives of other cities and towns it is clear that they would be willing to contribute aid but on a smaller scale (e.g. Hradec Králové and Šumperk). For this reason I would like to present this opportunity to create an informal alliance of cities and towns that would be willing to concentrate their funds in order to complete a number of development or humanitarian projects. Funds could be collected from the annual budgets of these towns and cities (for example 0.1% of the budget) or calculated as a contribution from every resident in the city (where every resident living in the community would give, say, 2 Czech koruna, which was the case of the Olomouc's donation to the project in Rwanda). A contribution can be defined ad hoc, based on the means and the political will of local authorities. These funds could be used (upon mutual agreement) on a specific project or projects completed by a trustworthy non-governmental organization, which is has been involved in professional development or humanitarian aid over the long-term.

Projects could include operating schools, healthcare centres or a mobile health office, searching for and locating clean water sources (drilling wells), supporting after-school activities for children living on the streets, etc. Residents in participating towns and cities will be kept up to date on the progress and results of development and humanitarian aid using a website, local newspapers, press releases and press conferences at various types of schools, photography exhibitions, etc. This will help create education and knowledge on themes that transcend the borders of the Czech Republic and the European cultural and geographical area.

Palacky University in Olomouc (Department of Development Studies in the Faculty of Natural Sciences) would be the project's coordinator in cooperation with Agentura rozvoje a humanitární pomoci, o.p.s. (ARPOK—Agency for Development and Humanitarian Aid), which has successfully been in operation since 2004 (primarily in the field of development education and global training). Another option would be to have the participating towns and cities form a separate organization that would focus on development and humanitarian aid at the local government level. This would be a more realistic option after a project had been successfully developed.

If the Community Alliance for Development and Humanitarian Aid could be established, the participants could leverage this cooperation to make a contribution to the developing world (home to 80% of the planet's population) and to grow at the community and individual levels, not to mention the local government level, meaning towns, cities and regions.

ALOHA is the abbreviated name for the proposed project and is a typical Hawaiian greeting. We decided this was appropriate as the aid in the form of this project will be directed towards geographically and culturally distant regions. Every letter of this greeting in Hawaiian has its own symbolic meaning, each of which can be motivating and inspiring for those who cooperate with communities in the developing world.

- A** symbolizes the word *Aloha*, which means: “Welcome. All that I have can be yours so share it with me.”
- L** symbolizes the Hawaiian phrase *Loko Maika’i*. This phrase means: “What I say comes from my heart and my good intentions.”
- O** symbolizes the Hawaiian word *Oio’olu* meaning happiness. “It is a part of our heritage—happy Hawaiians who like to help others.”
- H** symbolizes the Hawaiian word *Ha’aha’a*, which means frugality and humility. “Welcome, we’re happy to do what we can for you because we are happy we can do something good for someone else.”
- A** symbolizes the Hawaiian phrase *A’a ka Maka*. This means that the eyes are carefully watching but our mouths are closed. “If we have given you a gift, we know why we have done it and it’s not necessary to speak about it.”

Local Non-Governmental Development Organization Scene

Where are Slovak and Czech NGOs active? MVRO and FoRS. Shouldn't aid be concentrated in a few countries? Aid effectiveness is important. Untapped potential for cooperation between Slovak and Czech NGOs in Africa.

A huge number of international, state and non-governmental organizations with various areas of focus are involved in providing development and humanitarian aid. In various contexts we have already encountered the World Bank, the World Health Organization, the World Food Program and the UN Development Program, which are all examples of important international and global development and humanitarian organizations. In specific aspects, similar organizations include organizations such as Doctors without Borders, which are also active globally and under which doctors, healthcare professionals, logistics specialists and others are involved across the world. This organization, however, is a non-governmental, non-profit organization, and its activities and financing are not subject to the decision making of any specific government in the world or driven to earn a profit for the founders and managers in the organization; instead they seek to produce public welfare.

Non-profit NGOs focused on development work and humanitarian aid in central Europe as well. A majority of them were created as one of the fruits of freedom after 1989, while some, including the national branch of the Red Cross, are much older and have been involved, at least on the fringes, of support and aid in developing countries for much longer. Some of these have a single focus and were created from the ground up as a product of the initiative of a single individual while others were created as part of a network of organizations focused on the same issues abroad. Some are secular, others are based on various religious affiliations and some specialize on a more specific issue; others are relatively universal depending on the needs identified in the given country and react ad hoc to natural and human catastrophes and constantly adapt to match the funds that have just been obtained.

The world of development-focused non-profit NGOs (also referred to as “NGDOs”) in Slovakia and the Czech Republic is not large but is sufficient to have written a book much lengthier than this one. Each of them has their own history, successes and failures, leaders and major personalities as well as lessons that are well worth noting and telling. The story of each such organization deserves respect and appreciation and any other attempt to provide a brief description would be, unfortunately, superficial. Please allow me to limit this chapter to naming these organizations for which it is known that they are conducting some kind of project at the least in sub-Saharan Africa.

In Slovakia all (or at least nearly all) non-governmental development organizations are under the umbrella of the Platform for Non-Governmental Development Organizations (MVRO). Its mission is to *“to represent the common interests of all its member organizations at home and abroad and to influence decision makers during the creation of development cooperation policy and increase awareness among the general public regarding questions of development aid.”*²¹⁰ At the beginning of 2012, the MVRO had 23 full members and 7 organizations with observer status. An investigation into their websites makes it clear that the following ten organizations have conducted or are conducting projects in sub-Saharan Africa.

- eRko—Christian Children Communities Movement—South Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia
- Sila rozvoja—Kenya, Uganda
- Nadácia Integra—Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan
- Združenie Albert—Kenya
- Človek v ohrození—Kenya, South Sudan
- Magna Deti v núdži—Kenya, South Sudan, Congo (DRC)
- Nadácia Pontis—Kenya
- Savio—Kenya, South Sudan, Angola
- Slovenská katolícka charita—Kenya, South Sudan, Uganda
- Dvojfarebný svet—Nigeria, Lesotho

Apart from the organizations that are directly involved in work in the field, MVRO members are also active at home but with work involving developing countries and related to Africa. Example organizations include Partners for Democratic Change—Slovakia (www.pdcs.sk), Fairtrade Slovakia (www.fairtrade.sk) and the Slovak Committee for UNICEF (www.unicef.sk).

In terms of the geographic distribution of the countries in which Slovak NGDOs are active, it becomes evident that the countries to which the Government’s SlovakAid Agency has provided aid or is currently providing aid tend to dominate. The primary beneficiary is

210 The original text in Slovak was cited from an informational brochure published with assistance from SlovakAid and has been translated. A more detailed articulation of its objectives and information about the Platform can be found at www.mvro.sk.

Kenya, which has projects from 9 out of 10 of the named NGOs and South Sudan, where 6 of the 10 organizations are involved. Other countries in which development organizations are active include Angola, Ethiopia, Congo, Lesotho, Nigeria and Uganda.

Let's take a brief look at the Czech scene as well. The umbrella NGO in the Czech Republic is the České fórum pro rozvojovou spolupráci or FoRS (Czech Forum for Development Cooperation).²¹¹ The FoRS was established in 2002 and currently has 37 full members and 10 observers. Those that are active in sub-Saharan Africa are shown below in alphabetical order:

- Adra, o. s.—Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya
- Ambos Mundos—Guinea
- Arcidiecézní charita Praha—Republic of Congo, Uganda, Zambia
- CARE Česká republika, o. s.—Burundi, Ethiopia, Uganda
- Centrum Narovinu, o. s.—Kenya
- Diakonie ČCE—Ethiopia
- Humanistické centrum Dialog, o. s.—Benin, Guinea, Kenya
- Humanitas Afrika—Burkina Faso, Ghana
- Pro Contact, o. s.—Guinea
- Shine Bean—Kenya
- Siriri, o. p. s.—Central African Republic
- Světlo pro svět, o. s.—Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Rwanda
- Wontanara, o. s.—Guinea
- Člověk v tísni, o. p. s.—Angola, Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Namibia, Zambia

Clearly, Czech NGOs are active in many more countries than their Slovak counterparts. The 14 Czech NGOs with projects in sub-Saharan Africa are active in 15 countries (their Slovak counterparts are in 8 combined). Specifically these countries are Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Congo and the DRC, Namibia, Rwanda, the Central African Republic, Uganda and Zambia. The distribution of the aid provided by Czech NGOs is much more distributed as well with four projects supported in Kenya and Guinea, three in Ethiopia and two each in Angola, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Zambia.

Such fragmentation has its benefits in the form of more geographically and culturally diverse know-how, which these Czech NGOs now possess thanks to their activities across multiple countries. Of course this may also be considered a major weakness due to an insufficient concentration of human and material resources resulting in a lack of critical mass needed to achieve a more meaningful development impact. Of course, no one has the right to decide who and where to help when there are so many people and countries that need the help that anywhere you decide in Africa still provides an opportunity to affect the lives of so many. If, however, we focus on using what little and limited resources we provide

211 More detailed information on Czech NGOs can be found at <http://www.fors.cz/>.

for development aid in the most effective way possible (which we should be focused on because there is a major difference between saving 1,000 and 1,500 children), then we should take the time to carefully consider how to make the largest impact with our aid as possible. Development aid in this case could and should learn from the art of warfare. One of its basic strategies is to concentrate force in order to achieve a breakthrough.

The historical, cultural and linguistic proximity of Slovaks and Czechs, as well as the intensive and tangible existing relationships between the people of both countries, provides us with a huge opportunity to more closely cooperate on the distant African continent. If it is possible to have a joint Czech and Slovak European “battlegroup”, we ought to be able to cooperate in order to improve development aid for Africa, either in cooperation between NGOs or between governments and government agencies. One detail worth noting is that neither the MVRO nor the FoRS have a link to their sibling institution in the Czech Republic or Slovakia on their websites. Correcting this minor detail is thankfully quite simple.

As we move towards the topic of official development assistance, let’s remember that the NGOs in the Czech Republic and Slovakia are not the only routes by which Slovak and Czech citizens are engaged in Africa and around the world. Lists of organizations and the countries in which they are active are not exhaustive and they often fail to omit any evidence of the activities of solo actors and the participation of many Czech and Slovaks in international development organizations and organizations for which development aid is a secondary, if important, area of focus (such as the small work done by the Healthy City Community Foundation in Arusha) and private actors within development aid including the St. Elizabeth College of Health and Social Work in Bratislava and its activities in Burundi, Rwanda, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Kenya and Uganda.

Official Development Assistance

Obligation to provide official development assistance as one of the consequences of our membership in the OECD and the EU. Mandatory multilateral and voluntary bilateral assistance—73:27. Words are far from action: tabulating the obligations and current reality of delivered assistance. Writing off the debts of colonel Gaddafi. Helping the wealthy more than the poor many times over. The secret professional competencies of SlovakAid staff.

The Slovak Republic became an OECD, or Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development—otherwise known as the “club of the world’s developed countries”—member in 2000. Several years later both Slovakia and the Czech Republic both joined the European Union. Membership in the OECD and the EU is accompanied by membership obligations, including the obligation to become development assistance providers. As the Czech Republic became an OECD member in 1995, it began fulfilling these obligations a number of years in advance.

Adopting required laws, building official development assistance institutions and developing their agendas is not as simple as it sounds and it took both countries a number of years before they actually began to distribute funds intended as assistance for other countries. Just like many others, we also received assistance from outside with Slovakia in this case receiving support from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Just before entry into the EU in 2004, the Slovak Republic voluntarily accepted the obligation to provide development assistance up to a total of 0.17% of gross domestic product by 2010, increasing this to 0.33% of GDP by 2015. These numbers are one of the aspects of official development assistance (in international terminology, the abbreviation is ODA) that will be looked at in depth over the coming pages.

An expert or an active observer of the Slovak political scene would not be surprised that the referenced and lofty intentions remain exclusively on paper as of 2012, despite the economic boom of the first decade of this century. As a professor and MP Mikuláš Huba, himself a senior Slovak proponent of conservation and civil activism once said, for Slovak

politicians it holds true that God is high above and Brussels is far away, which is why promises made in vulnerable moments shouldn't be taken seriously. Especially when those to whom such promises were made are weak and without a voice. In terms of numbers this means that the funds Slovakia has provided for development assistance have developed as described below:²¹²

The Slovak Republic provided		
In 2004	€30.2 million, or	0.07% GDP
In 2005	€57.7 million	0.12% GDP
In 2006	€54.3 million	0.10% GDP
In 2007	€54.8 million	0.09% GDP
In 2008	€65.4 million	0.10% GDP
In 2009	€54.0 million	0.086% GDP
In 2010	€55.8 million	0.085% GDP

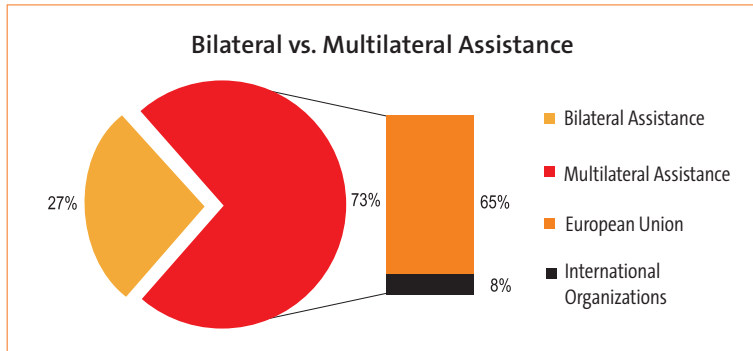
This meant that the Slovak Republic only met its international obligation in 2010 at a level of 50% whereby such aid has not increased since 2008 and conversely it has fallen by 15%. The trend of stagnation and decline began immediately after our entry into the European Union, despite the fact this was accompanied by rapid economic growth. The jump from 0.07 to 0.12% of GDP in 2005 and small increase in aid in 2008 were the result of debt forgiveness (primarily receivables that the Slovak Republic inherited during the breakup of the former Czechoslovakia) and the incorporation of these funds in the development assistance statistics. In 2005 the Slovak Republic forgave debts held against Afghanistan, Sudan, Iraq, Albania and Liberia and Liberia again in 2008 for the last possible time. The irony of this improvement in the figures for Slovak ODA is that in both years the Slovak Republic forgave debts for Libya as well, an oil-rich dictatorship at the time under the iron grasp of Muammar Gaddafi.

Unfortunately the percentage of ODA provided by Slovakia is at the tail end even when compared to the twelve new members of the EU. In 2010 Cyprus gave development aid totalling 0.2% of its GDP, Slovenia 0.13%, the Czech Republic 0.12%, Malta 0.11%, Estonia and Lithuania each at 0.10%, crisis wracked Hungary at 0.09%, poor Bulgaria at 0.9%—and here it comes!—Slovakia at 0.085% of GDP. Only Poland, Romania and Latvia lagged behind Slovakia, which its politicians and the media are all quick to call the “tiger” of central Europe.

Given the small share of ODA in terms of our GDP, a total of around €56 million for official development assistance in 2010 may seem relatively high. After all, with that kind of money, you could get a lot done in Africa. That impression only lasts until we look more closely at these figures.

212 All of the numbers quoted are from the work of Nora Beňáková titled “SlovakAid—an Unemployed Foreign Policy Tool” (SlovakAid—nevyužitý nástroj zahraničnej politiky) published in the International Issues and Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs magazine issued no. 3/2010 and from the MVRO publication “Slovak Development Aid in 2010” (Slovenská rozvojová pomoc v roku 2010) from September 2010.

There are two primary categories in the ODA structure for every country: multilateral assistance and bilateral assistance. Multilateral assistance represents our contributions to international development institutions, basically membership dues that cannot be avoided without losing membership. This is a specific form of “coerced” solidarity. In 2010 multilateral assistance represented 73% of all of Slovakia’s ODA, with 65% going to the European Union and another 8% to other international organizations. Only 27%, a bit more than €15 million remained for bilateral, i.e. “voluntary” development assistance.



Source: *Slovak Development Assistance in 2010*, MVRO, September 2011.

Available at: <http://www.mvro.sk/sk/kniznica/category/2-publikacie>.

But the problems don’t end here: around €2.5 million of the €15 million goes to administrative costs, €2.25 million is set aside for scholarships for students from developing countries and their Slovak language courses, nearly €1.7 million goes to aid refugees, more than €500,000 is used by the missions for the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defence in Bosnia, Kosovo, Georgia, Moldavia, the Ukraine, Afghanistan and more than €360,000 is spent on trainings, business trips and professional internships. When all of these funds are deducted, less than half of the original €15 million is left, with the remaining total of €5.4 million for development projects, €1.9 million for humanitarian aid and almost €350,000 for micro-grants distributed by Slovak embassies.

Now comes the moment when we can finally look at where the Slovak ODA was actually distributed. After the cold shower of realizing that 73% of official development assistance provided by Slovakia is mandatory payments to international organizations and more than half of the remaining funds never leave Slovakia, let’s add a little ice to the tub.

In 2009, two thirds (67% to be precise) of the funds from bilateral assistance were used on projects in countries classified as middle income and upper middle income countries. According to data provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic cited in the MVRO report from 2011, the poorest countries in the world and the countries with the lowest incomes receive only 23% of the sum released by the SlovakAid Agency for project support.

Bilateral Development Assistance	15 203 603,7
Development projects	5 395 501,2
Micro grants	346 299,8
Humanitarian aid	1 894 897,2
Co-financing of Slovak subjects' development projects approved within the frame of Calls for Projects launched by the EC or Donors from the EU	46 030,9
Ministry of Foreign Affairs project—Transmission of experience from accession process	24 000,0
Refugees	1 867 777,0
Stipends for students from developing countries, Slovak language courses	2 251 947,9
Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defense missions to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Georgia, Moldavia, Ukraine	529 702,0
Trainings, business trips, internships	365 739,8
Administrative costs	2 456 043,0
ODA accounting system	25 665,0
Multilateral Development Assistance	40 609 177,1
Contributions to international organizations and international financial institutions	4 249 177,1
European Union	36 360 000,0
ODA	55 812 780,8
Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs	

Source: *Slovak Development Assistance in 2010*, MVRO, September 2011.

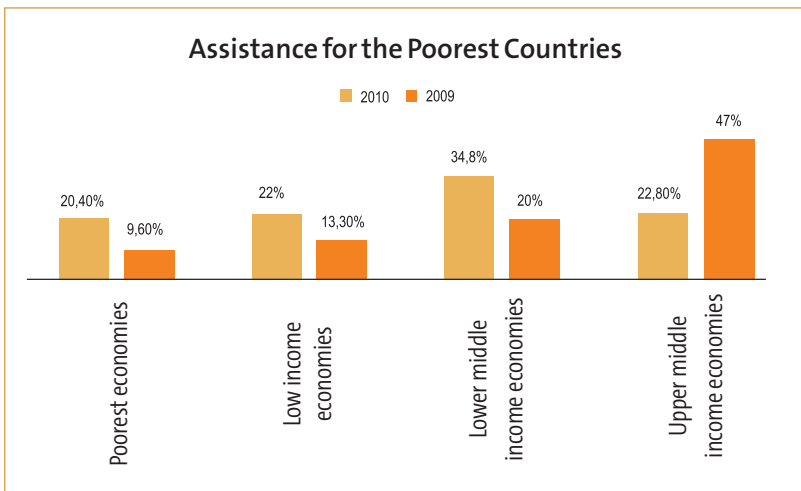
Available at: <http://www.mvro.sk/sk/kniznica/category/2-publikacie>.

Most of the money goes to countries classified as middle income countries such as Serbia, Macedonia and the Ukraine. They are countries that are geographically, linguistically and culturally close and it's noteworthy that we are trying to help them as well. It's just that support for these countries should not come from the budgets intended for development assistance. It's perfectly reasonable to expect that the Serbs and Ukrainians would find it uncomfortable if not insulting if they know the assistance provided by Slovakia was, in other words, torn out of the mouths of starving children in Kenya, Ethiopia and Sudan.

For the sake of being objective, it's important to note that last year's data was processed before this book was finished, i.e. in 2010, the ratio of funds flowing to wealthier neighbours and the distant impoverished countries improved a bit compared to the prior years. Countries among the most impoverished countries in the world, Sudan, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Afghanistan and Haiti, received 20.4% of all assistance (€1.18 million) and 22%, or €1.27 million, went to support projects in low income countries—Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Vietnam, Uzbekistan, Pakistan and Kosovo. Despite this shift, the fact remains that nearly 58% of Slovak ODA ends up in much wealthier countries. More than €1.1 million went to Serbia

(an upper middle income country), €450,000 to Bosnia, €380,000 to Moldova, €360,000 to Georgia, more than €350,000 to Macedonia and a quarter of a million to the Ukraine.

This imbalance is even more apparent when we consider the populations of the countries we have mentioned. Serbia with a population of less than 7.2 million received as much official development assistance as the five countries considered the most impoverished in the world with a total of population of 173 million (Ethiopia with 84, Sudan 31, Mozambique 23, Afghanistan 25 and Haiti 10). The nominal per capita GDP in Serbia²¹³ reached \$5,270, while according to World Bank statistics the same nominal per capita GDP for the five most impoverished countries to which Slovak ODA flowed ranged from \$360 (Ethiopia) to \$1,420 (Sudan) with consideration for parity purchasing power. If we replace the Sudan with South Sudan, the total population number drops to 150 million but the distribution of nominal per capita GDP falls from \$360 in Ethiopia to \$670 in Haiti. I don't want to be pathetic, but I really want to scream out: "Just cut it out, brothers!"... and let's start thinking because these numbers and the absurdity they encapsulate are hard to ignore.



Source: Slovak Development Assistance in 2010, MVRO, September 2011.
 Available at <http://www.mvro.sk/sk/kniznica/category/2-publikacie>.

I'm not going to dive into a detailed analysis of the assistance provided by the Czech Development Agency but a short review of the topics and projects involved in such development cooperation supported by the agency²¹⁴ highlight the fact that countries such as Moldova, Mongolia, Serbia and Georgia also receive a similarly disproportionate and

213 Wikipedia was used as the source of this data: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_\(nominal\)_per_capita](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(nominal)_per_capita).

214 Reports and program documents can be found at <http://www.czda.cz/cra/kde-pomahame.htm>.

large share of financial assistance in comparison with the impoverished countries of Africa and Asia. Countries included as the program countries, or those that are considered priorities and where the largest portion of Czech ODA is directed, include Moldova, Mongolia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Afghanistan and Ethiopia with Kosovo, Serbia, Georgia, the Palestinian-held territories and Cambodia considered project countries; the group labelled others, or from which Czech development aid is slowly leaving, include Angola, Yemen, Vietnam and Zambia.

Czech ODA is gradually withdrawing from four lower middle income countries, which would seem to make some level of sense. Project level activity remains the same in three other countries in the same lower MIC category (Kosovo, Georgia and the Palestinian West Bank and Gaza), in one poor country (Cambodia) and in one upper middle income country (Serbia).²¹⁵ This is also understandable given Czech political interests in other post-Communist areas (Serbia, Kosovo and Georgia) but these activities, with the exception of Cambodia, are not in line with global efforts to combat extreme poverty and to achieve the MDGs. Finally, the highest priority is given to two poor countries, Afghanistan and Ethiopia, two countries with middle income (Moldova and Mongolia) and one with upper middle income (Bosnia and Herzegovina).

It would appear that we are seeing at least a bit more progress here as two of the five priority countries are actually poor. The sobering reality once again appears when we consider the populations of these five countries: both of the really impoverished countries have a combined population of nearly 110 million people while the other three much wealthier priority countries are home to 10 million (3.8 million in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 3.5 million in Moldova and 2.7 million in Mongolia). If Czech ODA was distributed between the five priority countries evenly, with 20% for each, then 40% would be shared by the 110 million people in the most impoverished countries. The remaining 60% would be shared by 10 million people in the Balkans and Mongolia.

Slovak politicians and ODA managers should take a serious look at these figures but it wouldn't hurt the Czechs to take a step back and reconsider them as well.

Weak support for development assistance from Slovak politicians and extreme disproportionality in the distribution of these funds that finally filter down to bilateral assistance are the result of a combination of two factors. The first of these is a lack of interest, which is to a large extent based on a lack of knowledge about developing countries and the lack of any "demand" among voters on this topic. The second is the low competency among people who made decisions about and manage development assistance. Even politicians who have had the opportunity to see the horrendous depth and scope of poverty in the countries of the bottom billion easily give up on efforts to bring about change after they return home. I'm reminded of one emotional appearance made by one of the more prominent MPs in Slovakia in the ruling political party at the time made during a conference held

²¹⁵ The economic level of these countries was classified using World Bank definitions: <http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications/country-and-lending-groups>.

at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic when she spoke about how her working visit to Ethiopia had shaken her to the core. As to the question of if she would propose increasing the amount dedicated for development assistance within negotiations for the proposed state budget, her answer was elusive. "You know the economic situation, the crisis..." Unfortunately waiting for the moment when there won't be a crisis is like waiting for Godot. If such an evasive response with a built in excuse was given by a ruling party MP who had the opportunity to see the situation in Ethiopia first hand, what could we expect from other MPs who equate Africa to no more than the beaches of Tunisia and Egypt?

"The struggle against stupidity, the only human struggle that is always in vain, but can never be relinquished," said Jan Werich, a wise man indeed. Likewise we should not give up making the argument in favour of increasing ODA budgets: let's remember that we promised ODA would reach 0.35% of GDP by 2015 when we were accepted into the OECD and the EU. If this was to happen, today's allocation in the state budget at a level around 0.09% of GDP would have to double twice. This may be unlikely but the fulfilment of an international obligation by only a quarter would too brazen a risk, even for Slovak politicians.

Even if the Slovak and Czech ODA budgets were multiplied they still would not mean much for Africa and the people of the bottom billion if the geographical distribution of these funds provided by Slovakia and the Czech Republic for development assistance is not changed and if the efficiency of their use is also not increased. This would be impossible without professional and competent officials managing this official development assistance at the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and in State Development Agencies. It is unlikely that the problems of developing countries is the area in which someone in the diplomatic corps in Slovakia or the Czech Republic would want to develop their career: the "in" destinations are the diplomatic missions in Europe, the United States, international organizations and perhaps Russia, in short in countries that can give us something and not the other way around. In line with the same logic, it's possible to predict that development agencies subordinate to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs are more "backwaters" for people than a fast track towards excellent professional and career growth. I wish I were mistaken and all due respect should be given to those who do their work with enthusiasm and the knowledge that they, more than anyone else in the Foreign Affairs Department, have the lives of people in their hands. Simply because it does involve human lives, it is apt to expect that these jobs will be performed by prepared and qualified people, just like on the operating table we expect a medical school graduate certified in surgery will operate on us and not a barber, butcher or seamstress from a factory.

In order to verify the qualifications held by the staff at the SlovakAid agency for work in developing countries, I began the process of determining the professional qualifications and experience of the agency's staff in the autumn of 2011. Using the Freedom of Information Act, I sent an email using the email address on the SlovakAid website to make my request:

Good day,

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, I hereby request the professional resumes of the professional staff at the Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation. I emphasize that I am not requesting private information on the individual staff members and all such protected personal data can be deleted from these resumes. ...

*Thank you for complying with my request,
MUDr. Juraj Mesík*

I didn't have to wait long for an answer from SlovakAid. It was brief and clear:

Good day,

Pursuant to Act No. 211/2002 Coll. on the Freedom of Information and pursuant to Section 9 (3) of the given Act, SAMRS is not obliged to provide the resumes of its employees.

*Gabriela Gašparovičová
Assistant
Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation
Drotárska cesta 46, 811 02 Bratislava, Slovak Republic
Web: www.slovakaid.sk*

After consulting with legal counsel from the Via Iuris organization, I requested, in the legally stipulated term, a “decision to withhold information” be provided along with reasons and arguments as to why this information was withheld. Ms Lucia Lacková, at that time charged with managing the agency, sent me a two page document with justification as to why the citizens of the Slovak Republic could not know if people paid using the public's tax money were professionally prepared and trained for their work activities.

Originally I wanted to include the text of the answer from the director of the agency in full as a prime example of the crushing bureaucracy that masks the endemic problems of over-politicization and the repeated loss of professionals among the ranks of the government's structures in Slovakia. I contemplated for a while and finally convinced myself that it would be such a waste of two pages in the book. Anyone who is interested in the text can find it on my personal website and draw their own conclusions.

SlovakAid, alias the Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation, is indeed a tiny organization. I would estimate they have around ten professionals, perhaps fewer. Every single one of them has a complete and professional resume and the director undoubtedly has these resumes at her disposal. Instead of simply deleting all of the personal data as I had requested and presented them as “Person No. 1 studied this and that at University of here and there and held these functions and worked at worksites A, B and C and Person No. 2

studied....”, she went through the incomparably more time consuming work of explaining why her and her colleagues professional qualifications had to be kept a secret from citizens.

I don't know about you, but my experience says that people only make such efforts when they have something to hide. The most likely reason for hiding this information on the professional competencies of the staff at SlovakAid for development work is the fact that these staff members probably do not have the experience needed for such development work and clearly a majority of them haven't worked or lived in a developing country and most likely don't even have the required educational qualifications for the given positions they hold. In short, I consider it highly likely that SlovakAid staff are (or were in 2011–2012) only partially competent to perform the work for which the state employed them and, perhaps, that lack the professional competencies to do the tasks they have been assigned.

If that is the case, it would be a severe blow to the reputation of the Slovak meritocracy ...

Making SlovakAid More Effective

What's hidden in Slovakia's bilateral development assistance. Comparisons to other donors. Do dwarfs have the right to live? Helping others as a matter of self-respect and cultural maturity. In order to meet our obligations, we've got to double or quadruple assistance. We need to compare—let's join the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Assistance for the Balkans and the Ukraine is not development assistance—it's pre-accession aid. (Czecho-) Slovak peace corps: let's send our teachers to Africa to teach and not provide scholarships. Competitive advantages of Slovakia and the V4: East Africa integration. Concentrating assistance in a single cross-border region to drive development and regional cooperation. Visegrád cooperation as inspiration for the EAC. Reasons to focus on the EAC and end work in South Sudan.

When taking a more in-depth look at global development programs and organizations it's easy to reach the conclusions that what Slovak or Czech ODA is accomplishing in Africa is more or less irrelevant. Examining the donor situation in Kenya, for instance, which is one of the truly impoverished countries in the world, we see that it is the largest target country for Slovak official development assistance. I pulled up an overview of Western donors in Kenya from the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) database. As mentioned previously, the ODA database does not include any activities of the Chinese and any other "unconventional" donors; just like that it doesn't include any grants or donations from foundations, non-governmental organizations and other private donors. Still, it does provide a useful framework for comparison.

Looking at the figures in the image, we can see that Kenya received on average \$579 million from the USA in 2009 and 2010 followed by an average of \$193 million from the World Bank (from the IDA) and \$125 million from Great Britain. The bottom of the table is the tenth largest donor to Kenya, Denmark, a country roughly the size of Slovakia which gave \$64 million to Kenya for development. Now, let's look back at the contribution from SlovakAid of €996,000, or around \$1.3 million.

Kenya – Top Ten Donors of gross ODA (2009 – 10 average) [USD m]		
1	United States	579
2	IDA	193
3	United Kingdom	125
4	Japan	112
5	IMF (Concessional Trust Funds)	105
6	France	104
7	EU Institutions	93
8	Germany	92
9	AfDF	61
10	Denmark	64

Kenya's income from Western development assistance from 2008 to 2010 is expressed in millions of dollars and as a percentage of the country's gross domestic product. The ten largest ODA donors for Kenya and the average amount they contributed annually to assistance in Kenya are shown for 2009 and 2010.

Source: OECD DAC Database <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/62/54/1877992.gif>

The situation is similar in Sudan. Even though it formally dissolved in two countries in the summer of 2011, the OECD at the time this book was published did not have any specific data on South Sudan, which was a target area for Slovak ODA. The data is still sufficient to accurately portray the miniscule role that Slovak development assistance plays in these countries. Let's remember that South Sudan is around 620,000 km², or twelve times the area of Slovakia, but has no roads or any other infrastructure.

Sudan – Top Ten Donors of gross ODA (2009 – 10 average) [USD m]		
1	United States	840
2	EU Institutions	255
3	United Kingdom	206
4	Japan	129
5	Canada	107
6	Norway	104
7	Netherlands	77
8	AFESD	73
9	Sweden	58
10	Germany	43

The figure contains the same data as shown in the figure above related to Kenya.

Source: OECD DAC Database <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/63/52/1878796.gif>

Germany, the tenth largest donor to Sudan, provided this African country with assistance totalling \$43 million in 2010, while 5-million strong Norway doubled that amount, providing \$104 million. Again let's note that Slovak assistance in the same period was €534,000, or around \$700,000. When considering that some portions of German and Norwegian assistance went to other areas of the Sudan including Darfur, there remains no doubt that South Sudan is indeed a dwarf in terms of development assistance from Slovakia.

The basic question then becomes do these dwarfs have a right to live? To they have any purpose other than ornamentation?

The answer is an unconditional yes. They do when they are capable of bringing something innovative, effective and important to the world of development assistance and when they are able to fill a heretofore unfulfilled yet important niche, in terms of either space or topic.

With such an optimistic outlook for the potential role of such dwarfs in the larger world, let's take a look at what Slovakia, its elites and its residents could and should do in order to become a relevant actor in efforts to foster development where humanity most needs it. This will help us grow up and out of the stage of an infantile nation which accepted assistance with an open palm for decades and which continues to ask for more and more generous assistance from others and into a mature nation, willing and capable of helping those in a situation much worse than our own. More precisely, those who are the worst off in the world.

This change in national self-respect would, of course, at the political level be manifested in willingness to take the promises made upon entry into the OECD and the EU seriously. It is truly disgraceful and improper, and even childish and embarrassing, when we simply take these obligations and sweep them under the carpet as if no one will notice.

It is just as embarrassing to use the economic crisis or a lack of funds as an excuse over and over in this year's and next year's budgets. Inexorably those funds will be missing from the budget in the year after that, just like the crisis. Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary at the same time are recipients of even more assistance from EU funds when compared to the amounts they themselves spend on assistance. We are recipients of huge amounts of assistance despite the fact that all the Visegrád countries are among the wealthiest in the world. And the countries from which they have received such generous funds over the past twenty years: Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and others, are facing the same economic crisis as the less wealthy countries of the EU they continue to stand behind and support. It is high time that we stop making excuses and dust off a promise to make development assistance equal to 0.35% of our gross domestic product by 2015. If all V4 countries did so, our ODA would triple or quadruple over three state budgets, i.e. 2013, 2014 and 2015. In Slovakia's case the total would jump from €56 million to €220 million.

We should also remember that financial development assistance is only one component of the package of seven development interventions that advanced countries can use to support development in the impoverished parts of the world and which are assessed by the Center for Global Development and the Commitment to Development Index (CDI).

No less important development-related interventions are policies related to open markets, accepting immigrants, contributions to security, transfer of technology, support for private investment in impoverished countries and environmental protection policy. Where do Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary stand in these areas today? We don't know. One of the tasks for our foreign policy should therefore be to become a member of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) within the OECD and to request our inclusion into the annual assessment of development commitment (CDI). Only after will the picture of where we stand in these activities be complete and we will open ourselves up to comparison and peer pressure. This is an important tool for improving governance in both impoverished and wealthy countries. If we remember, South Korea became a member of the OECD at the same time as most of the countries in the Visegrád Four and has been a DAC member for many years. Korean politicians and the public have known their CDI ranking for many years now.

The moment we begin to examine development assistance from a wider perspective we can see that increasing ODA funding to 0.35% of GDP may not necessarily be the most difficult part: it may be much more difficult to adopt decisions regarding immigrants from the countries of the bottom billion or to send our soldiers on peace-creating missions in dangerous and inhospitable tropical countries. Despite this, our development impact and participation in interventions may be, perhaps in the case of South Sudan, much more important than our “dwarf” support for individual development projects.

Another step in transforming Slovakia from a dwarf into a proper development player in the world is in the internal structure of how Slovak development assistance is allocated. This would mean the following for instance:

1. Remove all assistance for the Western Balkans and the “Eastern Partnership” from the development assistance budget and from the operating budget for SlovakAid. Support for Serbia and four other smaller countries in the Western Balkans chewed up more than €2 million in 2010 while similar support for the four countries in the Eastern Partnership, the Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Georgia, used more than €1.1 million. Together these moderately wealthy areas accounted for more than half of Slovakia's bilateral development assistance. The issue here is not if the Slovak Republic and other countries in the Visegrád Four should support their neighbours; rather it is just the opposite. It is necessary to openly define that what is recorded as “development assistance” is in reality *pre-accession aid* within the process of European integration in the Western Balkans and eventually Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. Funds dedicated for this assistance cannot be presented as development assistance and they must be separated from the development assistance agency. Exactly as in the case of EU PHARE funds which are not a component of EU development assistance. It would be more effective to create separate national mechanisms sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or a regional mechanism in a form similar to the Visegrád Fund in order to support these countries.

2. The second most important step in restructuring SlovakAid is to exclude its active support for scholarships to learn Slovak and expenses for refugees. These two line items accounted for more than €4 million of €15.2 million in the budget dedicated for bilateral development assistance in 2010. There is no problem having young people come from Africa and other continents to learn Slovak; rather, the problem is when their children also speak Slovak. And this is not uncommon. The MVRO assessment report from 2011 states that while there are no statistics monitoring how many scholarship recipients returned to their home country, *“experience tells us that most remain in Slovakia, meaning that this activity more contributes to the brain drain in developing countries”*. Such funds reported as development assistance actually produce development damage. The Ministry of Education in Slovakia announced 40 to 50 places for students and graduate students from developing countries every year.

For the two and a quarter million Euros that this program costs, Slovakia could create a program such as “Teachers for Africa” or the “Slovak Peace Corps”²¹⁶ and send hundreds of Slovak university and secondary school teachers on mid-term to long-term stays in poor developing countries. Such a program would increase the quality of instruction and thereby be a huge bonus to tens of thousands of students in Africa and, ultimately, students in Slovakia. Using the template of the American Peace Corps, every teacher could have a small financial grant at their disposal to support a specific project in the school or community where they are active. The influence of hundreds of Slovak and Czech teachers on education in target developing countries would undoubtedly be much higher than the doubtful and likely negative consequences, at least for African countries, of having a few dozen students come and study here.

Likewise, the €1.9 million spent on refugees is not development assistance; this expenditure is for our own security. They should be an integral part of the Ministry of Interior’s budget and should be recorded there. Otherwise this creative accounting only fools us and the outside world.

A simple change in the allocations for the previous two points would increase the funds available for assistance to those countries that actually need it, and therefore the countries of the bottom billion and Africa with this increase of around €7 million, meaning an increase to 8 or 9 million from the €1.6 million in 2010. If this entire amount was concentrated in a single country, for example Kenya, in which Slovakia’s development assistance has the deepest connection and in which the Slovak Republic maintains an embassy would represent development assistance of roughly 20% of the \$64 million provided in 2010 by Denmark to assist Kenya.

²¹⁶ Depending on future cooperation with the Czech Republic, it could be called the “Czecho-Slovak Peace Corps” or even the “Visegrád Peace Corps”. Central European countries could be inspired by the example set by the American Peace Corps during the creation of a similar program; the American Peace Corps was active in all of our countries during the final decade of the 20th century with hundreds and perhaps even thousands of volunteers young and old with diverse backgrounds participating.

\$12 million is nothing to sneeze at, but is only a drop in the ocean: Kenya covers 580,000 km² and has a population of 42 million (2012). In order to maximize development impact it is necessary to concentrate such assistance both geographically as well as thematically. At such a concentration, Slovakia should consider Collier's analysis of the development traps, including the traps common in landlocked countries with small local markets and problematic neighbours. This analysis makes it clear that Slovak development assistance can be concentrated into smaller but strategically selected sections of Kenya while incorporating topics and themes within the process that provide Slovakia and the V4 countries with competitive advantages.

Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi are involved in long-running efforts to enhance cooperation within the East Africa Communities (EAC). While Kenya and Tanzania have ocean coastlines, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi are landlocked and their development is highly dependent on the developments and infrastructure inside of Kenya and Tanzania. The process of East African integration has a long history of false starts and crash landings and its results, accordingly, have been miserable. One of the things that could complicate the integration of these five countries with a combined population of 130 million is fears that the less economically developed countries could become prey for the healthy business sector in Kenya. Another problem is the focus on a general concept with an absence of the smaller, baby steps actually needed to build the thick fibre of relationships between people and these countries in order to realize the overall dream. In this context, our experience in the process of progressive integration as a small and economically marginalized Slovakia into the European Union may be useful and even an inspiration for partners in all five EAC countries; likewise the details of cooperation between the four Visegrád countries, the operation and purpose of the Visegrád Fund and similar such experience may also be of value.

Perhaps you'd like to object on the previous page that I began talking about the need to concentrate limited resources and now I'm talking about five countries with 130 million people. Just where am I going? Towards a proposal to focus, using Collier's analytical approach, Slovakia's development assistance in East Africa to a more geographically narrow segment of the East Africa Communities, and more precisely to the core lands on this portion of the map in terms of the East African integration process.



Map of core lands in the East African integration process

This proposal is based on the definition of a smaller, more precisely defined area to support using SlovakAid funds in the border areas of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. This area sets the border between east and west in Kenya, encompassing the around south of the Mombasa—Nairobi—Eldoret road, the shores of Lake Victoria in Uganda around the Jinja—Kampala—Masaka road and in the area of Tanzania north of the line connecting the cities of Tanga—Arusha—Mwanza—Bukoba line from the ocean to the Tanzanian shore of Lake Victoria. This area, roughly in the shape of a chicken leg (or a tennis racquet for those vegetarians out there), includes the entire shore of Lake Victoria in addition to the Kenya—Tanzania border. The ability to support pilot activities and projects in nearby Rwanda and Burundi should also remain open.

The definition of space is key in the process of East African integration. From a practical perspective, the majority of this area is easily accessed, making it easier and cheaper to monitor from the embassies in Nairobi, in which all 5 EAC counties maintain diplomatic and operational capabilities. At the same time the area includes key urban centres in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda including East Africa's "Brussels", the city of Arusha which is home to the EAC authorities. This ultimately provides sufficient absorption space to support a huge number of small projects with massive local development impact.

Even the proposed and expanded €10 million a year Slovak development assistance budget concentrated in this area would not support large infrastructure projects along the lines of railroads, roads and bridges. However, this sum is sufficient to make an important contribution towards improving the transportation use of Lake Victoria. The massive potential of the lake remains largely untapped and existing infrastructure is in worse condition than during the British Empire.

I expect that NGOs and individuals involved in development assistance in South Sudan to be, and quite understandably, against this proposal. It is an undeniable fact, however, that Slovakia does not have the financial or human capacities to ensure that our development assistance spread over such a large, hard to access and conflict-riddled country could achieve any significant development effect. In South Sudan our doctors, teachers and agriculture experts have been able to improve living conditions for thousands and certainly have saved many lives. The cost of their work and to provide and monitor this development assistance to South Sudan is so high that it is obviously unsustainable given the capacities of an actor as small as Slovakia's ODA.

Slovakia, thankfully, does not have any experience with conflicts and post-conflict interventions, as opposed to integration processes; it simply lacks any comparative benefits for working in South Sudan when compared to countries that have built the human and technical capacities for such activities. Lifting South Sudan up out of its current situation, if at all realistic, will undoubtedly take an extended period of time. With the exception of plans to construct an oil pipeline through northern Kenya, there are definitely windows of opportunity of any repute where Slovak development assistance could serve as a catalyst or play an important role with any potential to drive the country forward. It's almost certain that South Sudan will spend many more years in a period of nearly permanent crisis, or in

which humanitarian aid is more apropos than development assistance. A special window, administered by the Slovak embassy in Nairobi, could be established using this assistance within a program to expand small grants.

Objectively, Slovak ODA has no chance of playing a major role with any added value in South Sudan, but our potential contribution to development is easy to access and highly urban Kenya-Tanzania-Uganda border triangle could be many times, and perhaps exponentially higher, and for the same amount of money. Cold hard mathematics must be employed to provide the only rational and responsible answer: for the same money we would spend to provide quality healthcare or education for 1,000 children in South Sudan, we can protect or better educate 5,000 children in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The contribution to stable development and to serve as a dampening effect on a possible escalation of ethnic and political conflict in Kenya is incomparably more important than anything we could even hypothetically achieve in South Sudan. Here we are talking about development effects on a completely different category and scale.

The post-Communist countries of central Europe that have undergone the transformation of their societies over the past decade are now presented with a unique opportunity to use the experience they gathered within development assistance. In Slovakia's case, this transformation was turbulent and the politicians in power find it convenient to quickly forget the fundamental role that many NGOs and other foundations supported by the West played in the historic turnaround and success of Slovakia. Today we could leverage the experience we gained to assist in development in Africa thanks to the support provided to our NGOs by these foreign donors, and private American foundations in particular. Slovak ODA could also be more efficiently utilized, for instance by increasing effectiveness through multi-year grants: the effects of €30,000 for a three-year program are generally much larger than the effects of a single year grant of the same amount. Tools such as "matching" and "challenge"²¹⁷ grants are another suitable way to stimulate actors including cities, schools and a wider range of civic organizations to contribute to development assistance, twinning cities and building the capacities of NGOs and foundations in East Africa.

The key aspect is this: an institutional memory of what happened in civil society in Slovakia in the 1990s was never, and today most definitely is not, embodied in the state apparatus, the political parties or the groups of oligarchs who hold key positions in the public sector. With rare exceptions, the state apparatus, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has a very unclear idea of the tools and practices used by civic organizations and foundations in Slovakia to mobilize and ultimately pave the way for transformational success in Slovakia only a few years ago, which is the very reason those who enjoy power today are even in power in the first place.

217 The principle behind these grants is the combination of "matching" contributions from grants with contributions from people or companies. "Challenge" grants are announced by a foundation when they want to stimulate donations in a specific sector. Such grants are announced in a fashion similar to: "If you collect €2,000 to support projects in Kenya, we'll add a matching amount to your €2,000". The "technology" behind such grants has been tested and perfected in central Europe.

Just as an aside, let's return to the problem of professional competency/incompetency within ODA, including SlovakAid. It is unlikely that the performance and effectiveness of Slovak development assistance can be improved without competent staff to manage such assistance. This will only be possible if the Ministry of Foreign Affairs changes its approach to development cooperation and staffs SlovakAid with people who have relevant education and, most importantly, real life and field work experience in the world's most impoverished developing countries. There are plenty of people in Slovakia with such experience and this means that such an improvement in the meritocracy and competency is completely realistic if the political will is there.

Finally, it is also necessary to properly define the thematic priorities for ODA and to improve preparation and training for those sent to Africa by development organizations with the support of SlovakAid grants. If Slovak and Czech development workers are to remain "competitive" in the field with their British, German, Dutch or Norwegian counterparts who have budgets available to them that are multiple times larger, they must become jacks of all trades, capable of both mastering their own specific work and a full range of other topics, development tools and techniques. Such skills and abilities must definitely include practical mastery of a basic set of appropriate technology that can serve as the foundation for the mission of every development worker, be they teachers, medical professionals or humanitarian assistance logistics specialists. Dispatching a group with finite areas of expertise and without a wider scope of focus is a luxury Slovakia simply cannot afford. In the environment of a specific village, school or organization in which a teacher or development worker finds themselves, they must feel they have the ability to teach mothers in the village to sterilize water for children using PET bottles and sunlight or the ability to establish a nursery of trees in the village to capture nitrogen, which may ultimately be a more lasting and important contribution to the future of the community and its inhabitants when compared to half a year teaching maths and English in a local school. Of course there are many other cultural, health and safety and other competencies that are required for field workers.

Finally, in the end, there is also the question of the thematic focus of SlovakAid assistance. In terms of the future of Africa and Africans, many of the key themes, barriers and challenges, such as food security, real life practical education, health protection and securing water supplies or adapting to climate change, have been laid out in the previous chapters and there is no need to repeat them. SlovakAid has proven the ability to properly respond to some of them, as is shown by the previously mentioned project to improve food security in schools beneath Mount Kenya led by Lukáš Zorad from *Človek v ohrození* (People at Risk). One of the themes that SlovakAid has so far avoided is the removal of ideology from the problem of population growth and pragmatic support for sexual and reproductive education, increasing access to contraceptives and improving the standing of women in African societies. If SlovakAid is to become an effective development agency, it will not be able to continue skirting these issues as these will be the key issues in the end that play a determining role in the future development of African societies.

A Few Words in Closing

This book was written from the summer of 2011 to the summer of 2012. Over that short period of time so many events related to the contents of the book took place on the African continent and in the neighboring Arab world. When I began writing, a famine was spreading through Somalia and neighbouring regions of Ethiopia, Kenya and Eritrea. When the book was finished, hunger was spreading along a wide swath of the Sahel from Senegal in the west to the Sudan in the east with 18 million people in danger of starving in May 2012. Civil war and the West's military intervention in Libya caused the Berbers and other ethnic groups to migrate into Niger and Mali, leading to a military coup and later the northern half of Mali being cut off by rebel forces. There was talk of the risk that a "West African Afghanistan" was forming in Mali. Libya itself is giving the impression that it is about to collapse into two or three separate sections. Nigeria almost experienced its own "jasmine revolution". Anti-Western and anti-British rhetoric in Uganda took on an uncommon dimension thanks to widespread support among Ugandans for laws to punish homosexuals for their sexual orientation, which came up against the Western concept of respect for human rights. The economic and social situation for inhabitants in the north of the continent slowly but surely continued to worsen and the Arab revolutions progressively led to simmering frustration, economic collapse, political stress and bloody protests in the streets. Millions went hungry in Yemen and Syria which have been fully engulfed in civil war and famine.

Developments across Africa like nowhere else in the world cannot be separated from the current events in other countries around the world. The world's food prices remained at record high levels the entire time I was writing this book. Oil prices records were also smashed. CO₂ emissions and concentrations in the atmosphere increased. The financial and economic crisis in Greece, Portugal, Spain and other countries continued in earnest, casting more doubt on economic growth around the world and hope for assistance provided to the poorest of countries.

The perspective of most central Europeans on the world at large has always been affected by our gaze to the West. We search for a framework for comparison purposes in the Czech Republic, Austria, Germany and beyond and we consider what we find there to be the real picture of the whole world. If this book has reminded you that the human world is much larger and diverse than the world of the wealthy billion, which Europeans are among, then it has fulfilled at least a portion of its objective. If it has motivated you to reconsider our share of responsibility for life and the perspectives of the most impoverished, about those who take and who should give and about our opportunities to act as individuals, communities and countries—then the book has fulfilled much more of its objective.

The conclusion of this book is the perfect place to express thanks to those who were involved in its creation. They include my colleagues at the World Bank's headquarters in Washington who helped me better understand events and the dynamics in Africa, in particular Dan Owen, Keith McLean, Steen Lau Jorgensen, Mungai N. Lenneiye, Paul Francis and Jacomina de Regt. From my African friends and colleagues I would like to express particular thanks to Amade Kamagenge from the Tanzanian TASAF, Christine Delpont from the Greater Rustenburg Community Foundation and Melanie Nicolau from the University of South Africa.

Dušan Ondrušek has been behind the book from the very beginning and who has long since encouraged me to liven the book up by incorporating more of my observations during years of work at the World Bank. I resisted for a long time because of the strong feeling I had that other people had long since said what needed to be said and had done a much better job than I could. When the challenge came from Nadácia Pontis (Pontis Foundation) to write a book about development aid and Dušan let me know about it, I decided to give it a go.

At Nadácia Pontis I must thank Ivana Raslavská and Michal Cenker in particular. I can say that I had no idea when I began cooperating with Pontis on this book of the massive mountain I had yet to climb, but without the climb I most certainly wouldn't have ever finished it. For Pontis, which is actively involved in human rights protection activities in Cuba, I do realize that the chapter in which I highlight another side of Cuba may be difficult to digest, but keeping quiet would be doing the readers at home as well as the Cuban doctors, teachers and soldiers active in Africa and around the world a disservice.

I'm also aware that some passages of the book may sour the mood for some of my friends of faith, in particular Catholics. Again, keeping quiet about the harm that religions and the Church do by demonizing contraceptives and condoms, supporting intolerance towards sexual minorities, preventing the global effort to eradicate polio or supporting the brutal practice of FGM, which mutilates entire generations of women, would put such silence on equal footing with these wrongs. I hope that the chapters and passages in the book will be the inspiration for contemplation and the search for the truth about life in all its complexity.

Others who have made important contributions to this book and who have my thanks are Tomáš Milěš, Pavel Nováček and Jirka Pánek from Palacky University in Olomouc,

Lukáš Zorád from the Človek v ohrození civic association and Eva Horváthová-Mitterpachová from St. Elizabeth College of Health and Social Work in Bratislava.

I will always be thankful for my aunt, MUDr. Sibyla Timova and of course my father Elemír Mesík for inspiring such a deep interest in me about the distant parts of the world.

To my wife Oľga Pietruchova, thank you for the photographs, technical support and most of all your patience when I was working on the book.

Juraj Mesík, Banská Bystrica — Bratislava, May 2012



Biographical note

Juraj Mesík (1962) graduated from the Tajovského Street High School in Banská Bystrica and received a degree in medicine from the University of Comenius Medical School in Martin. Since his high school years he has been active in environmental movement. During the revolution in 1989 he became a Member of Parliament in the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly, later becoming Director of the Department of Social Context and Special Adviser to the Minister in the Federal Ministry for Environment in Prague. After the breakup of the former Czechoslovakia he became director of the Ekopolis Foundation, the largest environmental grant foundation in Slovakia. From 2003 to 2008 he worked as a Senior Specialist for Social Development at the World Bank in Washington, where he later served as a consultant. He currently lectures and teaches on the subject of global issues at Palacky University in Olomouc and at Comenius University in Bratislava. He is the father of three sons.

Photos



Ingenuity helps in places where people do not have cars. Western Kenya, 2006



Sources of racial pride can vary and may also be imported from elsewhere. Tanzania, 2005



Will the Arab world be able to live off its deserts? Libya, 2006



Children, children, everywhere children. Kenya, 2006



Fishnets hanging out to dry. Lake Victoria



A man does not live by bread alone: a disco in Kisumu, Western Kenya.



The “culture of life” begets the economics of death. High birth and mortality rates make death a profitable business. It is becoming increasingly difficult for civil society organizations in South Africa to hold training sessions on weekends because so many people spend their weekends at funerals.



A typical fishing boat on Lake Victoria; motor boats are a luxury that surpasses the financial capacity of fishermen.



Decaying infrastructure: the only ferry on the Kenyan coast. Lake Victoria, 2007



Clay, straw and plastic: the interior of a Masai house. Tanzania, 2007



You can meet Masai warriors even in Zanzibar.



Dreams of five-star hotels confronted with reality. A Landrover that witnessed colonial times but still gets the job done. Mt. Kenya, 2006



The countryside beneath the peaks of Mt. Kenya at an altitude of 4200 m. Glaciers of Mt. Kenya are disappearing within the space of a single human generation.



One more face of Africa—the one that tourists know well...



Hundreds of millions of people still cook over a wood fire with three stones.



Cheap domestic production of ovens made from baked clay reduces the amount of timber that women must carry for kilometers by two thirds. Using wood as fuel for cooking contributes significantly to tree and forest grubbing. Photo: Tomáš Milěř



A new high school in Arusha, Tanzania. Notice the missing gutters; water flows away in the rainy season and then is lacking in the dry season. 2008



In the mid 19th century, Zanzibar was still the largest slave transshipment point in East Africa. This memorial stands today on the spot of the former market.



The People in Peril organization transformed a dilapidated school property into a garden with drip irrigation.
Photo: Lukáš Zorád

Giant and Dwarf

© All rights reserved

Published by the Pontis Foundation, Bratislava 2013
Edition no. 1

Illustrations:
Pavol Michalič

Editor:
Michal Cenker

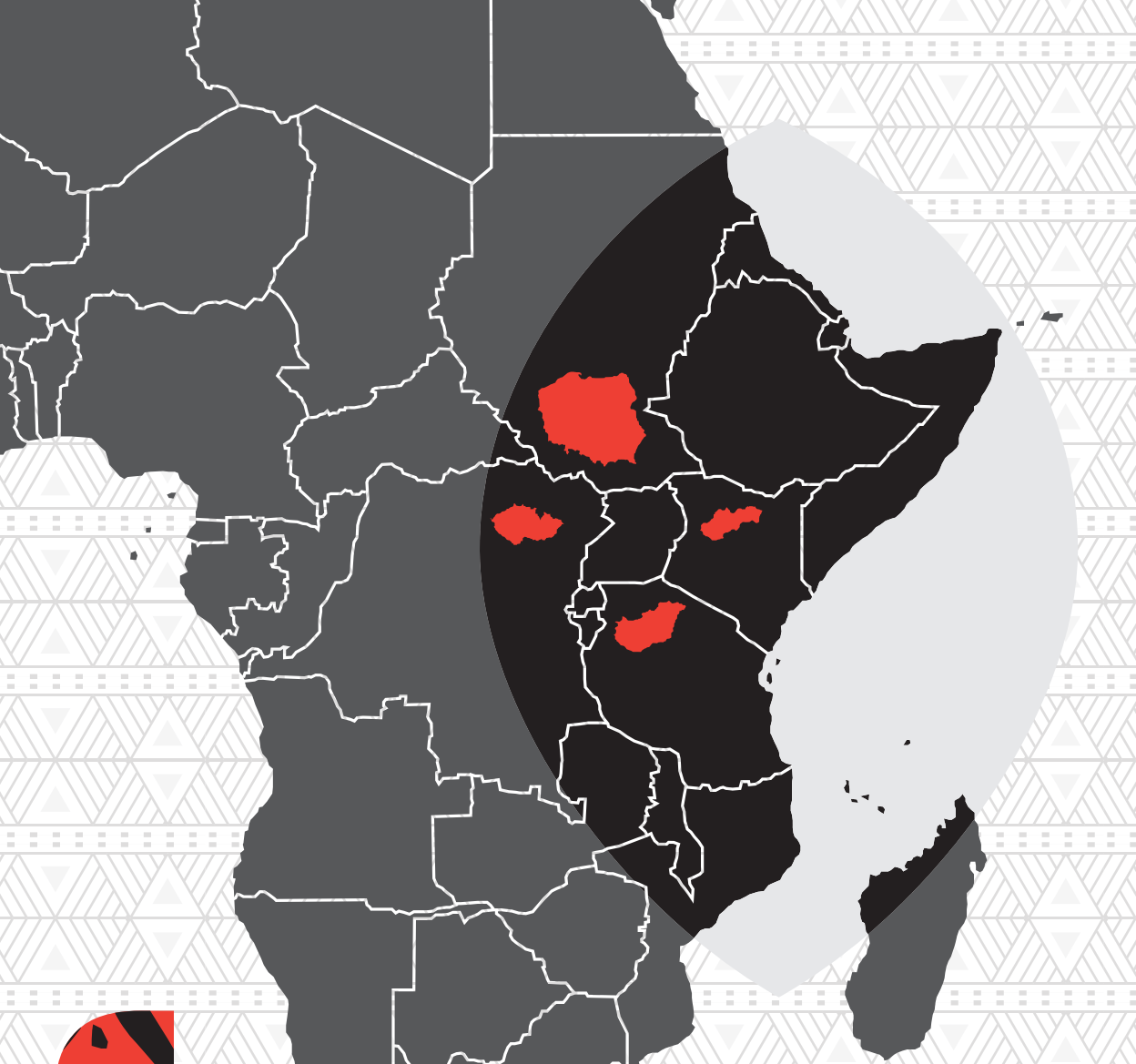
Typeset:
Michal Šandrej

ISBN 978-80-971310-0-5



The Pontis Foundation

is one of the largest grantmaking and operational foundations in Slovakia. It contributes to the development of civil society in non-democratic and transition countries around the world, and supports the development of foreign policy for Slovakia and the EU that are based on the values of democracy, respect for human rights and solidarity. It encourages and supports the development and long-term financial sustainability of Slovak non-profit organizations by providing grants, loans, and expert consultancy. It also supports the development of corporate philanthropy and corporate social responsibility.



Juraj Mesík demonstrates his rich professional experience gained through work in several African countries and has produced an engaging and thorough book. Its wide thematic scope responds to consequences of the food crisis, peak oil and population growth in Africa, colonialism, problems of corruption and incompetence of African elites and the current economic cooperation of Africa and China.

This book raises questions which should be on the mind of anybody who takes an interest in the fate of the African continent and who wants to know more about Czech and Slovak development cooperation activities on this continent.

