

Development Cooperation Sweden and Kenya

Development cooperation in changing times



SWEDEN HAS SUPPORTED KENYA'S DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS EVER SINCE THE COUNTRY'S INDEPENDENCE IN 1963. TODAY, SWEDEN IS COMMITTED TO SUPPORT THE REFORM PROCESS THAT IS SPECIFIED IN THE NATIONAL ACCORD AND RECONCILIATION ACT (NARA).

During the 1990s, democracy was strengthened in Kenya and a multi-party system was put in place, albeit deficient and vulnerable, which was clearly revealed in the 2007 general election and its aftermath. Despite challenges, the democratic space has widened, which has led to a vibrant civil society playing an important role as watchdog, together with the media and at times the private sector.

After two decades of poor economic performance, high inequality, inefficient, corrupt governance, lack of access to justice and increased human rights violations, Kenya, after the election in 2003, pursued policies of economic growth, poverty reduction and improved governance. Overall poverty levels declined and the country's credibility improved, resulting in growing investments.

Challenges remain

In spite of positive changes in a number of areas, challenges remain. Kenya's continued development is conditional on achieving a satisfactory solution to the historical obstacles to development that surfaced following the 2007 elections. Ending impunity for instigators and perpetrators of



Photo: Per-Ulf Nilsson

In West Kuria the villagers have formed a committee which is responsible for the road. They will report damage, and select maintenance workers when necessary.

the post-election violence is crucial to restore the credibility of the state.

The underlying causes of these unexpectedly strong and violent disturbances can be traced to the unresolved issues that have dogged Kenya since its independence. These causes include major disparities in levels of prosperity between and within regions due to a historically inequitable distribution of the most important productive resources, namely land. Other underline causes are weak institutions, a labour market unable to

absorb young people and an antiquated constitution under which winners of elections wield total power.

Though the democratic space in Kenya has grown and democratic institutions were strengthened after the 2002 election, the political system in Kenya is still organised around ethnic identities and solidarities, and bound up with the personal standing of individual leaders, a state of affairs which primarily serves the interests of the elite. Patron-client relations are a characteristic feature of the public

administration and contribute to corruption and inefficiency, undermining the government's position and hindering investments. Women are under-represented in political assemblies and the public administration. The judicial system still has serious deficiencies and human rights violations by the police, including extra-judicial killings, continue to be perpetrated. Although anti-corruption legislation has been strengthened and some progress has been made in terms of combating corruption, impunity from prosecution and punishment in large-scale corruption cases still prevails.

Economic gains

Despite healthy economic development and a significant reduction in material poverty, social divides and economic and other dimensions of poverty will continue to pose major challenges to the country's development. Since the early 2000s, export earnings have risen and growth was healthy and stable until 2007. The effects of the post-election crisis were compounded by increased food prices and several droughts and floods. These factors, and the effects of the international financial crisis, contributed to a slowing down of growth to around three per cent in 2008 and 2009.

Since 1997, economic poverty has fallen to 46 per cent in 2005/06. A number of social welfare indicators, such as HIV/AIDS prevalence, have improved. Some of the Millennium Development Goals, e.g. universal primary education, appear to be within reach. Inequality remains a challenge. Households with many children and those headed by women are poorer than the average.

New commitments

Fortunately there are positive commitments and movements towards reform and change. In 2007, the Kenyan Government presented its long-term vision - Vision 2030 – and the first of a series of five-year plans, the Medium Term Plan 2008–2012. The over-arching goal of Vision 2030 is to achieve a globally competitive prosperous nation with a high quality

of life by 2030.

Like Vision 2030, the Medium Term Plan 2008-2012 includes specific reforms related to the underlying causes of the violent outbreak that took place in early 2008. Both documents lay strong emphasis on growth as a necessary precondition of poverty reduction. Recent developments suggest that institutional reform, increased democratisation and equitable distribution of public resources must be given greater emphasis if Kenya is to achieve continued sustainable development.

In support of Kenya's development efforts 17 development partners, including Sweden, have agreed on a joint assistance strategy - KJAS. The strategy is based on the Paris and Accra agendas on aid effectiveness and on Kenya's Vision 2030.

Direction of Swedish cooperation

The overall goal of Swedish development cooperation with Kenya is "a Kenya in which all poor people have the opportunity to improve their living conditions, and where their human rights are realized."

Sweden's cooperation strategy emphasizes a rights-based approach and poor people as actors. This means that in all programmes, people's human and political, as well as social, economic and cultural rights need to be protected and enhanced and government's duty towards its citizens acknowledged. Through the Swedish support, people are empowered to claim their rights. At the same time, capacity in government institutions is built on how to become more accountable, transparent, participatory and counteract discrimination while promoting inclusiveness.

Consequently, an active participation by the poor in development programmes, the promotion of equality between men and women and the strengthening of civil society and community participation are important ingredients in all areas of Swedish support.

While emphasizing civil society participation and channeling approximately one third of funds through



Sarina Robi Muita and her husband Michael have six also horticulture products for the market.

CSOs, Sweden mainly provides government-to-government support. It is Sweden's opinion that a larger proportion of all donors' development resources should be channeled via Kenyan government systems when conditions so allow and control mechanisms for fiduciary risks are in place. A transition towards sector programme support in those sectors where Sweden is involved is also sought.

Kenya's long-term development will depend on its own institutions and systems and development partners need to strengthen these and increasingly utilize them. This will also improve accountability and transparency towards Kenya's citizens and its representatives.

Trends in Swedish cooperation

Swedish development cooperation with Kenya has gone through diffe-



Photo: Per-Uri Nilsson

children to fend for. With training from NALEP they have started cultivating passion fruit but

rent phases since the initiation of bilateral cooperation in the 1960s. Early on, the health and education sectors were important. In 2008 these sectors were phased out as a result of division of labour within the KJAS and other development partners stepping in.

Sweden intends to phase out support to the roads sector by 2011, as other actors are active in this area.

The level of Swedish aid has also varied over time. Aid amounts diminished during the worst years in the 1990s, and were at that time mainly implemented through civil society organizations. Funding has tripled since 2003, as opportunities for constructive cooperation in the sectors were identified. Total bilateral aid during the period 2004 - 2008 amounted to approximately 1.4 billion SEK.

Three priority sectors

Sweden's strategy for development cooperation with Kenya 2009–2013 defines three priority sectors: natural

resources, democratic governance and human rights as well as urban development. In broad terms, 60 per cent of aid goes to natural resources, 30 per cent to democratic governance and ten per cent to urban development.

In addition, Sweden contributes to the growing international humanitarian aid to Kenya, necessitated by persistent drought and climatic changes.

Natural resources

The objective for support in the area of natural resources and environment is: "Improved management of natural resource utilisation with a focus on sustainable growth that benefits poor people."

Based on a long and successful cooperation in the agricultural sector, Sweden has participated in the establishment of, and today funds, the National Agricultural and Livestock Extension Programme and the National Agriculture Sector Policy. The

programme is strengthening extension services through capacity building and uses a methodology that involves small-scale farmers in the identification of their needs and solutions to their problems. Emphasis is put on a move from subsistence to market production, through training and participation by civil society, financial institutions and the private sector.

In the water sector, Sweden supports institutional reforms intended to result in a more efficient management and use of the water resources, environmental protection and enhancement of poor people's access to safe water and sanitation. Participatory work through community-based organisations is an essential ingredient.

Likewise, Sweden funds an environmental programme which involves institutional reforms, policy development and environmental projects through civil society organisations.

Sweden also supports the evolving land reforms. When a land policy has been finalised, its implementation will include review of legislation, transitional frameworks, and development of a new land information system including improved registration of land.

Democracy and human rights

The objective for the cooperation in the area of democracy and human rights is: "A more efficient state that respects and promotes human rights and the rule of law".

Swedish support is focusing on the implementation of two reforms crucial to a democratic and efficient governance that counteracts corruption:

- institutional development and reform in the justice and legal sector, and
- improved public financial management.

Moreover, a key element in the Swedish cooperation strategy for Kenya is to support the agreement on how to address the underlying causes to the post election violence, the so called Agenda 4 issues. Support is given specifically to the general consolidation of the agreement through the African Union, development of a new constitution and to land reform. Reforms

for supporting the establishment of a truth, justice and reconciliation commission as well as implementation of police and electoral reforms are still being developed.

In addition Sweden supports an ambitious public sector reform program. Moreover, the social protection support includes a child protection program that has entailed the development of a cash assistance program for vulnerable children. Gender equality in governance and politics, and measures to counteract violence, are promoted through support to civil society organisations and through support to government policies and capacity building.

Urban development

The objective of the support to urban development is: "Improved urban planning which allows for the participation of poor residents."

The fast-growing urban slums have been ignored for too long, forcing poor people to live under inhuman conditions, thus creating an explosive social situation. The Kenyan government intends to strengthen urban policies, establish more efficient institutions and devote more resources to an up-grading of the urban slums. Swedish support will include contributions to the development of an urban policy and improved land-use planning.

Support will also be extended to government and civil society for actions providing greater access to affordable housing and social services. Sweden emphasizes the strengthened role of civil society in spurring demands for human rights and services as well building capacity of the government to better enforce human rights principles in its work.

Other areas of support

In 2011, Sweden is phasing out a successful support to the road sector, where Sweden has contributed to the improvements of rural roads in Western Kenya. Together with the Government, Sweden has promoted

labour-based methodologies and gender equality.

Sweden further supports efforts within civil society to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and mitigate its social and economic effects. This civil society support supplements the government's HIV/AIDS programme.

Dialogue issues

Sweden seeks an open and continuous dialogue with Kenyan partners and government. At the highest level, Sweden participates in the ongoing broad political dialogue maintained by the EU and exchanges views on the country's democratic development at political levels.

Generally the dialogue is closely linked to the sectors which Sweden supports. Among the issues Sweden emphasizes are:

- Economic growth
- Just and equitable distribution of resources and opportunities
- Inclusion of a human rights perspective in all activities related to the development and implementation of Kenyan government policies
- Implementation of the important reforms needed to address the underlying causes behind the political and humanitarian crisis that erupted at the beginning of 2008.

Particular attention is focused on a new constitution, a new electoral law and implementation of land reforms. The need to achieve reconciliation and nation-building is also addressed. The issue of corruption, including high level impunity, is also pursued, as is greater political participation of women. Climate change continues to occupy a prominent place on the dialogue agenda.

Civil society's role

The civil society has multiple roles. It acts as a watch dog, lobbies for change and provides services. Sweden supports all these roles, with an emphasis on the two former ones. In

the present democratic process, the civil society needs to strengthen its capacities to link activism with social mobilisation, lobbying, research and presenting constructive ideas. Links between civil society and the government need to be strengthened.

Through its support to civil society organisations, Sweden encourages such a dynamic dialogue between Kenyans and their government.

Sweden's civil society support for democratic governance has over the last few years been increasingly streamlined through the use of intermediary institutions. A Civil Society Democratic Governance Fund continues to handle support, while a more effective mechanism for support to civil society also in the natural resources sector is being explored. In the urban sector a new support has been designed that will channel funds through one organisation, which will function as a secretariat and manage proposals. Support to the land sector is channelled through a network of NGOs to a joint framework for funding.

The reform agenda is wide and it remains a challenge to see how CSO networks and grass root organisations can be supported both on current and long term issues.

For prevention and mitigation of HIV/AIDS, funds are channelled through an international NGO - AMREF - that funds more than 500 community based organisations. For environment projects funds are channelled through the Ministry of Planning to more than 30 CBOs. These organisations mainly carry out service delivery, which highlights the need for the new advocacy fund for CSOs.

For further information:

E-mail: ambassaden.nairobi@foreign.ministry.se

www: www.swedenabroad.se/nairobi