



Compass 2020

Germany in international relations
Aims, instruments, prospects



Sub-Saharan Africa **The Rediscovery of a Continent**

Ulrich Golaszinski

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The Compass 2020 project represents the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung's contribution to a debate on Germany's aims, role and strategies in international relations. Compass 2020 will organise events and issue publications in the course of 2007, the year in which German foreign policy will be very much in the limelight due to the country's presidency of the EU Council and the G 8. Some 30 articles written for this project will provide an overview of the topics and regions that are most important for German foreign relations. All the articles will be structured in the same way. Firstly, they will provide information about the most significant developments, the toughest challenges and the key players in the respective political fields and regions. The second section will analyse the role played hitherto by German / European foreign policy, the strategies it pursues and the way in which it is perceived. In the next section, plausible alternative scenarios will be mapped out illustrating the potential development of a political field or region over the next 15 years. The closing section will formulate possible points of departure for German and European policy.

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Sub-Saharan Africa

The Rediscovery of a Continent

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Abstract

In Africa, society and politics have experienced a remarkably profound change during the past fifteen years. Although only a few years ago Africa was considered the “continent of disasters” “written off” by many, the continent has recently regained some of its strategic importance.

The most conspicuous signs of change on the continent are the establishment of parliamentary democracies, the recognition of democratic principles and real expansion of political participation. Despite these obvious changes, however, most countries in Africa are now facing major challenges. It will take quite some time before democratic basic rights are guaranteed consistently and sustainably, before governments function pursuant to transparent democratic rules, and before democratically legitimized control makes sure that governments act in the interest of the population. Although the economies have returned to the path of growth, Africa remains the continent of poverty, struck by plagues, wars, disintegration of states and lawlessness.

For the future, two scenarios are conceivable, opening a corridor for potential development paths. In the first scenario Africa may succeed in freeing itself from the shackles of “relational logics”, i.e. social ties will no longer be the sole determinants of economic and political action. People will no longer exclusively “invest” in the maintenance, development and diversification of their social relations with members of their own social group, but increasingly they will focus their attention on the accumulation of capital. To a growing extent the economy will determine social processes, not the other way round. With the disappearance of relational logic the possibilities the state has to enforce economic reforms, are also increasing. The state has been able to create framework conditions that have resulted in production-oriented entrepreneurship independent of the state. Africa is less dependent and has liberated itself from marginalization.

In the second scenario, the relational logic of social interaction will still prevail in the economy. Action is focussed on minimizing risks, specifically by establishing and maintaining inter-personal relations. It is not profit maximization which is in the foreground, but maximizing the “capital” of social relations has priority. In the societies tensions have increased. These tensions are generally under control, but not always. A number of societies are walking a tightrope but risk slipping at any time. Africa continues to play a passive role. There is no development, but there are no disasters either.

Germany’s Africa policy is not only predominantly determined by the situation on the continent or by German interests in Africa, but by the international structures and networks in which Germany operates. German Africa policy is only a “by-product” of foreign policy reorientation since unification, and not an independent regional field of politics. This fact will not change in the mid-term, despite conceivable positive changes on the continent, creating a potential for new actions. Tangible approaches for German politics specifically reside in the areas of crisis prevention and securing peace, supporting Africa’s efforts to be integrated into the world economy and to be involved in energy security policy and the development of strategies for the adaptation to the climate change.

I. Africa at the beginning of the new millennium

In 2003 the Regional Concept of the German Foreign Office for Africa contained the following statement: "Within the past two decades a remarkable change which even reshaped Africa's self-image occurred in Africa, including a change of paradigms. This fact basically shifts the framework conditions for political, cultural, economic and social interaction with this continent."¹

Since the early nineties of last century, profound changes have occurred influencing the spheres of society and politics in particular. The most conspicuous signs of change on the continent are the establishment of parliamentary democracies and the real expansion of political participation.

I.1 The third wave of democratization

Whereas in 1990, there were only five formal multi-party democracies in sub-Saharan Africa, there are now 33, although even in those countries democracies are not always considered "the only game in town", and one third of them are deemed "unfree".² It cannot be said that consolidated democracy exists in any country (even in South Africa) but using notions like "African pseudo and façade democracies" is also out of place. Nowadays, in the minds of the population, political parties and their leaders, elections are the sole legitimate and accepted form of gaining power. Attempts by political leaders to extend their rule to disproportionately long periods of time or even for a lifetime, are increasingly meeting with resistance.

These positive changes are real but, as many examples show, they are not irreversible. The political transition in Africa is not a straightforward process. These changes did not come about at some "zero hour" either, and newly developed political systems tend to be hybrid systems rather, with traits of their old structures. Colonialism, realsocialist experiments, dictatorships, apartheid and civil wars are still shaping the functioning of democracy in Africa, just like the cultural and social constitution of those countries. Democracy in traditional, predominantly agrarian societies with a high rate of illiteracy, limited possibilities of social communication, and without working class or bourgeoisie worth mentioning, looks different from that in industrial societies. This assessment is not intended to back up a "cultural relativism" putting democracy, human and civil rights "into a context", until nothing remains of the original contents of all those concepts. However, contrasting ideal types with the concrete African reality, and subsequent condemnation of those countries is misleading and prevents the development of approaches for overcoming deficits of democracy.

Governments, however, increasingly accept not only basic democratic principles, but also freedom of the media and greater participation of the population. A self-confident civil society, although still highly fragile and focussed on urban centres, has developed in all those countries making important contributions to consolidating democracy and enforcing human, social and civil rights. At the same time politics has been demilitarized and the military, unlike in the sixties and seventies, has almost completely withdrawn from politics in most countries.

After replacing the "leaders" and "teachers" of the first generation after independence about fifty years ago, a new political class was established in many countries, whose

1] Foreign Office: Afrika – außenpolitische Strategie – Hektografie, Berlin, December 2003, p.2

2] Freedom House: Freedom in the World 2007, Washington, D.C., 2007

awareness is less and less characterized by the colonial past and the struggle for liberation and which did not necessarily see the problems of their countries exclusively caused by slavery, colonialism and apartheid. A new awareness and self-image were formed by which the African elites do not define themselves as victims, but rather recollect their own culture in self-confidence, prepared to find their "own solutions for their own problems". This recollection of one's own history which is more than colonial history also promoted the renaissance of the Pan-African efforts without which the foundation of the African Union (AU) in its present form, or efforts to consolidate regional integration, would be inconceivable. Pan-Africanism, however, was given a new appearance. The principle of non-intervention in internal affairs of other states, sacrosanct and fundamental element of Pan-Africanism in the past, was increasingly put to the test. On paper at least, the sovereignty of the AU member states finds its limits where human rights are seriously violated by governments. The institutional and material capacities of the AU, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and their member states, are still too limited to make actions follow declarations of intent. Nevertheless, peace-keeping missions of the AU and the African Peer Review Process show that there is a willingness to take action.

Despite these obvious positive changes, most democracies in Africa are facing major challenges at present. Most countries are struggling hard with the new order which represents a radical break with the practice of the past. It will still take quite a while before we can really talk of political systems that can permanently guarantee basic democratic rights, functioning along the lines of transparent democratic rules, where democratically legitimized control makes sure that the governments act in the interest of the people.³ In the majority of African states there is still a lack of responsible governance, an independent legal system with constitutionality and a functional division of power, and especially a culture of pluralism and political tolerance. Corruption, clientelism and patronage, still part of normal everyday political life in the African countries, undermine the legitimacy of the state and democratic institutions and jeopardize the economic development of those countries, and will continue to do so.

1.2 Growth without development

In recent years average economic growth has amounted to about 5% per year. However, in order to reduce the share of people living in absolute poverty and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the year 2015, 7 to 8% would be necessary. These rates are consistently reached by only four countries.⁴

Even regional integration efforts within the scope of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) has not led to enhanced growth dynamics. The RECs are mainly focussing on political integration neglecting to match it with economic integration.

The investment quotas have only risen in a few countries. The savings quotas are low, and the accumulation of capital has hardly begun. On average, the savings quotas are still below 20% of the gross domestic product (GDP), and thus far below the figures in Asia (35%), Latin America (21%) and North Africa (26%). As a consequence of this and enhanced by the limited influx of private investments from abroad, the investment quotas amount to roughly 18% of the GDP, compared to 31% in East Asia.

The economies are still dominated by agricultural production and exclaves mainly pro-

3] Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development: Neue politische Dynamik in Afrika, Bonn 2004

4] Economic Commission for Africa: Economic Report on Africa 2007, Addis Ababa 2007

ducing mineral products and agricultural produce for export purposes. Hence, most countries have a one-sided foreign trade structure that is highly susceptible to shocks. The local production industry cannot keep pace with cheap imports, mainly from Asia, and is therefore eking out a niche existence partly due to the fact that indigenous demand based on purchasing power is too low to stimulate impulses for production. Only the South African companies are the exception to the rule, acting in many African countries as the largest foreign investors, mainly in telecommunication, retail business and in the banking sector.

All in all, the countries have remained "pension" economies, using the surplus revenues from export production, enriched by the influx of development aid money to import goods and services. Despite the trend towards softer Terms of Trade, it seems that most countries are not questioning this economic model on which their wealth was based in the past. In the light of increasing raw material prices, a change seems rather improbable.

The socio-economic field is still dominated by negative reports.⁵ Out of the 51 least developed countries of the world, 42 are located in Africa. The average per capita income, excluding South Africa and Nigeria, still amounts to just about 400 USD per year, with major regional disparities and an extremely unbalanced distribution of income. About half the people live in extreme poverty, and roughly a quarter of Africa's countries south of the Sahara are experiencing fragile conflict or post-conflict situations, while only half of the children have a chance to go to school and finish their schooling with a qualification.

The population growth has leveled out at around 2% per year. About a third of the population already lives in cities (ten times more than in the year 1950), but the population in the countryside is not shrinking. On average, nearly 50% of the people fit for work are unemployed or underemployed. The average life expectancy, mainly due to AIDS/HIV, has fallen to 44 years. Three quarters of all people infected with HIV worldwide live in Africa, all in all almost 30 million. Already more than 20 million Africans have died of this disease, leaving behind 12 million orphans.

1.3 Africa: the continent of conflicts

Social misery, economic stagnation and decline, lawlessness and political decay have led to an explosive mixture of civil war, disintegration of states and genocide in some regions of the continent around the Great Lakes, in parts of West Africa and at the Horn of Africa.⁶ At the beginning of the millennium, more than half the countries were affected by conflicts and wars. Meanwhile, numerous conflicts have been solved such as in Angola, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Burundi. In the year 2006 six wars and another six armed conflicts were still going on.⁷ The Sudan war in the Darfur region continues as the conflict with the most severe humanitarian impact worldwide. According to estimates, the number of people killed is said to range between 200 000 and 500 000. The world's public is virtually unaware that about 4 million people have been killed in the conflict in East Congo since 1998. The number of people in Africa expelled from their villages and towns due to wars exceeds 10 million, plus another 2,5 mio. who fled to neighbouring countries⁸.

5] The World Bank: Africa Development Indicators 2006, Washington, D.C., 2006

6] see Stefan Mair: Partnerschaft mit Afrika, SWP, Diskussionspapier der FG 6, Berlin, November 2005

7] comp. Hamburg University, Arbeitsgemeinschaft Kriegsursachenforschung, www.akuf.de, December 2006

8] UNHCR: Refugees by Numbers, 2005; International Displacement Monitoring Centre: www.internal-displacement.org, 2006

Although most conflicts are limited to within national borders they have immediate impact on the region. For example, eight countries are involved in the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. At the same time, a new type of conflict has developed ("new warfare"), a combination of conventional types of warfare, ethnic conflicts and civil wars. This makes it more difficult to solve conflicts.

Against this background, immediately after the foundation of the African Union (AU), the organization of Africa's own security architecture was initiated. Core elements of it are the creation of an AU Security Council and the establishment of regional Task Forces and an Early Warning System. Furthermore, a panel of high-ranking personalities was created to act as mediators in the early stages of conflicts. Although the security system is expected to be installed and become fully functional as of 2010, the AU is already taking part in seven peace missions in Africa.⁹ However, Africa still depends on support rendered by other UN member states, specifically regarding funding and equipment for the missions. At present, 55 000 soldiers and police officers are deployed on the continent within the scope of UN peace-keeping missions, 18 000 of them contributed by African states. The main burden is being shouldered by South Africa and Nigeria already reaching their capacity limits, while other states are participating with more symbolic contingents. This situation will not change significantly, even after 2010, and the AU will have to try and establish security partnerships with other regional communities of states and individual countries.

I.4 Old and new actors

In recent years, Africa has gained strategic significance. The USA rediscovered Africa, partly because of China's growing role on the continent. Africa is already supplying 15% of the United States' crude oil imports, with the expectation that this share will rise to 25% by the year 2020. China considers Africa not only a crucial source of its growing raw material demands, but also an open, easily accessible sales market for its generally cheap products which are thus affordable to the poor masses on the continent. Africa also plays a central role in the fight against terrorism. After 9/11, various anti-terrorism programmes were initiated, especially in the highly terrorism prone Sahel region and in East Africa.

The European Union, too, with its Africa strategy adopted end of 2005, so far earmarked for the Lomé and Cotonou processes, tries to establish a security and development related framework in which even the French and British interests in Africa can be incorporated.

Economic and security-related interests of the international actors themselves certainly play a crucial role in this process of discovery and rediscovery of Africa, despite all rhetoric about "development partnerships", "neighbouring continents" and "friendships between nations". Africa also seems to become an arena for the clash of different interests and rivalries, with an apparent attempt to stake out claims for spheres of influence.

Against this backdrop, the growing role of Africa on the global scene and in international and multilateral bodies is also becoming more and more apparent. Since each country has one vote in all multilateral organizations, Africa's weight is felt in the attempt to shape globalization in international economic and trade policy, in finance, environment, climate and security policies. However, until recently the African states were not able to settle their differences and to consolidate their different interests in one uniform position. Therefore the active enforcement of (non-existent) common positions was not in

9] www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko

the focus but, at best, the prevention and obstruction of processes seemingly directed against African interests. Obviously, however, many seem to have the hope (or the suspicion) that the African countries might speak with one voice because of the AU, the Regional Economic Communities and the changed mechanisms of interaction amongst the states on the continent. This, however, would be a highly optimistic assessment, completely disregarding the real discussion process amongst those countries, their historically developed roles, spheres of influence and rivalries.

II. German Africa policy

In the past, the German Africa policy was mainly perceived as development policy (and thus, in the public perception, predominantly substantiated by humanitarian reasons) whereas since unification Africa policy has been based on Germany's "foreign policy localization". In addition of this (for various reasons, to be discussed later), no consistent Africa strategy was developed, Africa policy is only a "by-product" of this political re-orientation, instead of being an independent regional field of politics.¹⁰ Africa policy can therefore only be understood and conveyed in a wider, dynamically developing context of German foreign policy and international politics.

Starting from this thesis the German Africa policy is not exclusively (and probably not even predominantly) determined by the situation on the continent or Germany's own interests in Africa, but mainly by the international structures and networks in which Germany operates.

Therefore the attempt to draft a "grand design" of Africa policy, even as a specific regional approach was certain to fail. Regarding individual political fields, like security or development policy, this does not mean, however, that well-conceived concepts and strategies were not developed and adopted in the national context or within the scope of multilateral institutions. All in all, however, German Africa policy still is a regional political field (in contrast to a specific regional policy), and has therefore been a mere by-product of Germany's new foreign policy localization since the nineties.¹¹

Three elements are shaping German Africa policy:

II.1 Security policy as part of Africa policy

The assault on the World Trade Centre in New York on September 11, 2001, also represented a rupture for Germany's Africa policy. In the spring of the same year the cross-sectional "Action Programme 2015" was adopted in which Germany committed itself to take part in the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. The four strategic goals mentioned in the programme (anchoring the fight against poverty as a central task, establishing coherence between multilateral and domestic political fields, forming new alliances for development and impact orientation of development cooperation) were still closely linked to the traditional logic of development cooperation. However, after 9/11, the wording changed: "Development policy, as global structural policy, is the core element of non-military preventive security policy" (Federal Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul). This new orientation was phrased in the Action Plan "Civil crisis prevention, conflict solution and consolidation of peace" of 2004. Thus physical security was given the same standing as development. The phrase, "without security no development, without

¹⁰] see Ulf Engel: Deutschland, Afrika und die Entstehung gemeinsamer Interessen, ApuZ, 4/2005, p.17

¹¹] *ibid.*

development no security", became the core element of the policy of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Security policy thus became part of German Africa policy, characterized by German political interests and by development policy and has remained so.¹²

II.2 Then as now: Africa policy as development policy

Until the middle of the nineteen seventies, German Africa policy was characterized by the East West conflict and the rivalry of the two German states. It was only due to the gradual softening of the Hallstein doctrine since the end of the sixties and the membership of both German states in the United Nations from September 1973, that at least the typical German instrumentalization of the Africa policy was weakened. As early as the sixties Germany's own economic interests had been relegated to the background in view of Africa's dwindling importance in foreign trade.¹³

The last strategic interests in Africa disappeared with the end of the Cold War and the abolition of apartheid. Since then Africa policy has been predominantly characterized and determined by development policy.

After unification and a rapid loss of importance of Africa for German politics, the Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ) also took the conceptual and political lead in the Africa policy.

As early as in autumn 1991, the BMZ presented five criteria for the assessment of partner countries and the aid they were to be provided: (1) respect of human rights; (2) participation of the population; (3) constitutionality and the guarantee of legal security; (4) creation of a market and a socially oriented-economic order; (5) development orientation of state action.¹⁴ These criteria, to be applied to all partner countries worldwide and thus not representing a substitute for an Africa concept, form the foundation for the reorientation of Germany's relations with Africa. The "value-oriented Africa policy" was born.

Two years later, the German Foreign Office extended the catalogue of criteria established by the BMZ by adding some more important aspects. In the "guidelines of Accra", adopted at an ambassadors' conference in Ghana's capital, the Foreign Office demanded differentiation of bilateral relations more in terms of performance, professing democratization, human rights and constitutionality, conflict solving, overcoming war outcomes, continued economic relations and development cooperation. The individual indicators juxtaposed to each other at random were not comprised in a comprehensive foreign policy concept or strategy.

The criteria catalogues of the BMZ and the Foreign Office - as cornerstones of the German Africa policy - continued to exist after the coalition of socialists and greens came to power in autumn 1998. The government tried to sharpen its Africa profile which became apparent in increased travelling diplomacy to Africa. Focal themes of Africa policy were democratization, debt relief and crisis prevention. Apart from the debt relief initiative where Germany played a specific role, approaches in the two other areas were generally perceived as symbolic acts.¹⁵

12] As of 2002, already, the Federal Navy took part in the "Anti-Terror" mission "Enduring Freedom", headed by the USA at the Horn of Africa, the largest mission since its existence. In the following, the Federal Army took part in the "Operation Artemis" in the north-east of the DC Congo. In May 2006, finally, the Federal Cabinet decided to provide 780 German soldiers for the EU mission "EUFOR RD CONGO" to "avoid disturbances of the election process."

13] Ulf Engel: Deutschland, Afrika und die Entstehung gemeinsamer Interessen, ApuZ 4/2005, p.13

14] Andreas Mehler: Neuere deutsche Afrikapolitik, www.bdp.de/veranstaltungen/230941.html, p.2

15] Grimm op.cit., p.14

In May 2000 the BMZ defined “focus countries”, hence focussing development exclusively on a few partner countries.¹⁶ Originally 16 countries in Africa were listed in this category. Pursuant to this, development cooperation focussed on three areas. In each partner country (only nine of them left in Africa) only one focal area was to be promoted. South Africa and Nigeria were raised to the status of strategic “anchor countries”, supposed to pull along the other countries of their respective regions in economic development, cooperation and democratization. South Africa then enjoyed a “priority partnership”.

With this reorientation of development cooperation and the attempted departure from the “watering-can principle”,¹⁷ the Germany-orientated Africa policy was ended for good. This contrasted with the Cold War when the intention had been to prevent the international recognition of the GDR, by “tying” as many countries as possible “to Germany”.

However, something that at first glance looked like a strategic decision with clear ideas regarding Germany’s intentions in Africa, finally appeared to be only the recognition and insight that not all countries can be “developed” by the tools of development cooperation, and that “decay processes of numerous ‘partners’ had left them weak, inefficient and unable to cooperate.”¹⁸

Between 2002 and 2004, the Foreign Office developed Regional Concepts for Africa and the sub-regions of West, Southern, East and Central Africa. It was considered a marked progress that this recognized Africa’s heterogeneity and the different problems on the continent. However, up to this time analysis of the regional situations has not been followed by a comprehensive definition of areas of intervention and measures. All in all, the suggested “concepts” can neither be used nor implemented, and they are of no use for the development of concrete strategies.

In this situation, the proposals for a new partnership made by some reform-oriented governments on the African continent fell on fertile ground. Henceforth (despite a large number of sceptical comments, especially from the Foreign Office) “The New Partnership for Africa’s Development” (NEPAD) was considered to be a long sought-after response to terrorism and disintegration of states, a chance for more effective development cooperation.¹⁹ NEPAD and in particular its political element, the African Peer Review Mechanism, now became the most important perspective for German Africa policy, both in the bilateral context and in the concert of the G8 states and the European Union.

II.3 Africa policy in multilateral organizations

As early as in the seventies, the German Africa policy was shaped by a role concept, described as concept of a civil power, “in terms of a foreign policy culture, characterized by partial transfer of sovereignty to labour-dividing organizations of international politics, participation in regime formation, a trend towards legal frameworks and the expansion of institutionalized cooperation, furthermore by the combination of interests and universal values, as well as the formation of specific patterns for action.”²⁰

16] see *entwicklung und zusammenarbeit (E+Z)*, 41(2000) 9, p.248

17] At present, the *Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)* is represented in 31 countries south of the Sahara. Thus the question, whether the “watering can principle” was really abandoned, remains open.

18] Andreas Mehler, *op.cit.*, p.2

19] see Ulf Engel, *op.cit.*, p.15

20] *ibid.*, p.13

This role concept as civil power was reflected in a stronger focus (which still exists) on the European Community/European Union, the United Nations and other institutions of global governance. In addition, one guideline for action in politics was the role expectation of important bilateral partners, especially France.²¹ However, a special “German influence” can neither be seen in the EU-Africa strategy nor in the G8-Africa Action Plan (going back to an initiative of the British government). Multilateralism, however, cannot mean that only authority and responsibility are handed over to multilateral institutions, without at least making the attempt to influence the policy of these institutions pursuant to one’s own interests and values.²² This applies all the more since other actors within the multilateral institutions and other countries such as China and the USA also adamantly pursue their own traditional interests of Realpolitik, frequently not in accord with the values of German foreign policy.

III. Africa in the year 2020 – two scenarios

The intention in sketching the two scenarios was not to derive potential general developments in Africa up to the year 2020 but, only those factors were considered which seemed to be relevant for the development of Germany’s Africa policy up to 2020: (a) the development of global government structures and multilateral institutions, (b) the strategic interests of the USA, China, India, France and the United Kingdom in Africa; (c) Africa’s economic development; (d) the democratic consolidation of African states; (e) the capability of African states to exercise their state functions; (f) Africa’s increasing heterogeneity; (g) the autonomy of African states; and (h) continent-wide and sub-regional integration.

III.1 Scenario: new opportunities

On average, Africa enjoys high growth rates in its countries. The accumulation of capital has finally begun. A new generation of entrepreneurs has developed. Investments, both local and by foreign companies, are increasing. Africa is gradually being integrated in the world economy, but not only through exports of agrarian and mineral raw materials. A production industry has come into being, mainly supplying the indigenous markets but also becoming more and more competitive on the world markets. The relational logic of social interactions is decreasing: to an increasing extent the economy determines social processes, and not the other way round. The new values, however, are no longer considered “Western”, but part of a universal culture. And yet, other traditional values contributing to the functioning of the economy and politics are still upheld. A differentiation between the individual and the group is rejected.

With the disappearance of relational logic, the opportunities of the state increase regarding the enforcement of economic reforms. The state has successfully created framework conditions enabling producing entrepreneurship independent of the state. State earnings, increasing because of high and sustained economic growth, enable investments in the social realm without support rendered from abroad. New jobs are created in the formal scope of the economy, official and hidden unemployment are decreasing. However, large parts of the population are still excluded from development, staying outside the process of modernization. Social tensions keep increasing.

21] *ibid.*

22] comp. Andreas Mehler: Die neue deutsche Afrikapolitik, in: Mir Ferdowski (publisher): Afrika – ein verlorener Kontinent?, 2004

However, not only the societies have become more different. Africa itself has become more heterogeneous. There is still a large number of poor countries that were “disconnected” from development. Since they were abandoned by the rich countries as “hopeless” cases (only receiving humanitarian aid), they became increasingly dependent on the support and goodwill of rich neighbours on the continent. In return, the latter receive political support for their ambitions on the continent and in global government structures.

This new set of relations between the African states also has an impact on the functioning of the African Union (AU) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and their capacity to act. The political weight of the poor countries is decreasing. The principle of unanimity is still upheld but the poor countries are no longer in a position to obstruct decisions. Whilst the AU remains the supreme body on the continent, the RECs, driven by the “growth poles”, are focussing on economic issues of integration. By reversing the old paradigm, economic integration has become the driving force for progressive political integration. In all regions on the continent, structures are developed which copy the example of the European Union. Regional parliaments have come into being that have a say in almost all decisions.

Africa has gained further importance for the international community. After the conflict-prone structures at the beginning of the century, when the supply of raw materials was at the forefront of the international actors’ strategic interests, later on new cooperative conditions developed even incorporating the leading African states. Africa learned from its past and no longer subjected itself to the new “masters”.

III.2 Scenario: standstill

In most African countries, the economy does not reach the level of the population growth, although there are enclaves of progress and growth. Africa remains marginalized, uncoupled from globalization, although it has become a major supplier of raw materials and crude oil. Africa has fallen behind the rest of the world even more. And the world has changed rapidly in the past 15 years.

The relational logic of social interactions still determines the economy, and action is focussed on risk minimization, mainly by establishing and maintaining inter-personal relations. It is not profit maximization which is in the foreground, but maximization of the “capital” of social relations. There are exceptions though, and for some the logic of economy has become the decisive guideline for action. However they remain exceptions, unable to genuinely influence the traditional social patterns of action.

Even governments and the state are still subject to these traditional patterns of action. Priority is not given to creating favourable framework conditions for a positive economic development since pressure is not exercised “from the grassroots” to demand a re-orientation of politics and more determination to bring about reforms. As in the past, economy and society are based on the “pension” economy. The state controls the collection of pensions and their distribution. Although this practice has been criticized, time and again, most citizens have given up and adapt themselves to the existing conditions. The political authorities are “cultivating” their clientele, most of them with an “agrarian” background, although urbanization keeps progressing.

Tensions have increased in the societies. These tensions are generally kept under control, but not always. A number of societies are walking a tightrope, but risk falling at any time. The number of authoritarian states is growing. Their democratic institutions are main-

tained but they have been undermined, little more than facades remain. Elections are held regularly, but they do not bring a change of power. The ruling political parties that dominated in the past are able to maintain their strong positions. Political alternatives do not have a chance to develop in organizational terms, since the membership card of the ruling party has become the "entrance ticket" to all important positions in society, business or academia.

Democratic development is stagnating, just like regional efforts for integration on the continent. In most countries neither of these processes has accelerated development because economic reforms to adapt to the new conditions of the world economy were undertaken only very hesitantly. The 'Regional Economic Communities' (RECs) remain paralyzed like the AU. The states which have achieved integration into the world economy leave their membership at a symbolic level and join other global initiatives where they try to represent their interests.

Africa is once more the location where foreign powers wage their conflicts of interests. The actors use all possible means to reach and safeguard their "place in the sun". Africa is playing a passive role, after playing off the various actors against each other for a short while. The continent is in debt again and dominated by others. Africa has subjected itself to the political and economic conditions of the world. The states are still able to mobilize humanitarian aid when crises occur. The number of conflicts is decreasing under the influence of strong foreign powers. There is no development, but there are no disasters either.

IV. Interests and opportunities

In the introduction to this paper I stated that German Africa policy is only a "by-product" of Germany's foreign policy reorientation since unification, and not an independent regional field of politics. This statement will still be true in the mid-term, despite potential positive changes on the continent which would open new opportunities for action.

IV.1 Realpolitik and own interests

Even in the future there will hardly be any "realpolitical" German interests in Africa south of the Sahara. If we take the economic relations and the military potential (of threat) as a yardstick for state interests in a region, Africa remains negligible for Germany.²³

Africa's share in German foreign trade and in foreign investment has constantly remained below 2% for a long time. 80% of trade and investment are realized with only two countries, South Africa and Nigeria. This figure will not grow considerably in the next decade, despite high economic growth and the potential expansion of industrial production in some parts of Africa. It is highly improbable in the near future that German entrepreneurs will actually make the leap to the continent, despite enhanced protection such as that from state guarantees and risk coverage.

In addition Africa does not have a monopoly of strategic raw materials either, which could define a specific German economic relationship of dependence. For the next five

23] comp. Sven Grimm: Deutsche Sicherheitsinteressen in Afrika. Eine Analyse. Reader Sicherheitspolitik, Ergänzungslieferung 06/05, p.26 foll.; comp. Stefan Mair: Deutsche Afrikapolitik, in: Stephan Klingebiel/Stefan Mair/Andreas Mehler: Deutsche Afrikapolitik – Prämissen, Konzepte und Instrumente, SWP, Diskussionspapier der FG 6, 2003/01, Berlin 2003, p.6 foll.; comp. Ulf Engel et al.: Memorandum zur Neubegründung der deutschen Afrikapolitik. Frieden und Entwicklung durch strukturelle Stabilität, Berlin 2000, p.3 foll.

years the expectation is that 20% of the global crude oil (and natural gas) production will come from Africa, mainly from the Gulf of Guinea, however, this will affect Germany only indirectly through greater security of supply and better prices. According to estimates, more than 33 billion US dollars will be invested in this sector by 2010, and the United States alone will contribute 40% of this sum. These figures by themselves, plus the fact that Germany does not have companies in this sector comparable to those of the USA, Great Britain or China, illustrate that energy security policy in its direct sense will not be the dominant subject of German relations with Africa. When it comes to renewable sources of energy, however, this thesis has to be put in relative terms.

Neither is any of the African states an immediate threat to Germany's security, and nothing indicates that this will change. The assault on the World Trade Centre, however, shows that state security and the security of citizens cannot be guaranteed solely by military policy. To an increasing extent, threats are initiated by non-state actors and also by regimes that do no longer want to abide by international norms and rules.

In summary one can say that the importance of Africa for Germany as measured with the yardstick of our own interests, is low. Against this backdrop it is conceivable that the value orientation of German Africa policy will repeatedly be put in the foreground. This value orientation, however, is not suggesting a naïve view of politics, but instead represents an enlightened modern concept of one's own interests that reaches beyond simple interests of survival and social welfare.²⁴ These values, representing Germany's interests to the outside world, include human rights, democracy, social justice, constitutionality, market economy and peace-keeping.

Together with value orientation, multilateralism will be the second pillar of Germany's Africa policy. "Since Germany is a medium-sized power with limited resources but important (trade) relations with partners in many regions of the world, the German commitment needs multi-lateral integration to gain international credibility. Multilateralism and European integration represent supreme German interests ... Therefore, even regarding minor immediate interests, Germany cannot afford to ignore problems of the neighbouring continent, all the more as Germany wants to play a more important role on the global level..."²⁵

As described before, is Germany increasingly following international and regional initiatives but without developing its own profile in doing so. A realistic assessment of Africa could initiate the development of Germany's own approaches. Africa remains an almost unknown field for German politics. Even problem analysis is subjected to controversial discussion. On the one hand, the existence of important development potentials in Africa is mentioned repeatedly, while on the other reference is made to countries suffering from setbacks. Depending on the perception of African reality, initiatives and "policy frameworks" of the governments on the continent, produced in large numbers, are taken at "face value" and immediately translated into Germany's own strategy, or else they are dismissed as being unrealistic. However, the characteristic features of African structural problems and opportunities are not really perceived by either side. Once again, a broadly based discussion process among experts is needed, like the one triggered by the "Memorandum on Africa Policy".

24] comp. Sven Grimm, op.cit., p.28

25] ibid., p.30

IV.2 Tangible approaches for German politics

Within the scope of bilateral development cooperation and on the level of multilateral organizations, initiatives and programmes, Germany is already working on numerous crucial fields of problems not discussed within the framework of this article (e.g. AIDS/HIV, water supply and migration). Below only those subjects are listed that require more commitment and reorientation or a different focus. However, this list cannot be exhaustive.

Crisis prevention: underdevelopment, poverty, social injustice, exploitation and hopelessness are fertile ground for terrorism, even if these factors alone cannot explain the development of this phenomenon. In the years to come Africa will become more multifaceted, and there will still be states not fulfilling their state functions, not even offering their citizens a minimum of "human" and physical security. However, once states have "failed" and do not have an effective central power, they easily become refuges for international criminal and terrorist groups. Therefore, crisis prevention must stay in the focus of German Africa policy. The instrumental core element of this type of crisis prevention is still development cooperation, be it bilateral or multilateral.²⁶

Partnerships for peace-keeping: "anchor countries" will increasingly play a stabilizing role in their regions although they will not be able to play the role of international development cooperation for quite some time. In addition, the most severe conflicts occur precisely in those regions of the continent where there is no undisputed regional power, like in Central and East Africa. Regional powers will play a greater role, even by military intervention, when states have already "failed", for the sole reason that after the disaster in Somalia international actors are reluctant to take direct action themselves. Therefore, an important area of German Africa policy, both bilaterally and within international institutions, must be empowerment and material support of those countries for such missions. Training activities play an important role but not the decisive one. Supplying military equipment is crucial, just like providing reliable funds for interventions. The same applies to peace-keeping missions on the continent within the scope of UN mandates.

Promoting Africa's integration into the world economy: development aid by itself will not resolve the socio-economic problems on the continent. Abolishing European and American barriers to agricultural exports from Africa could alleviate rural poverty in most countries. Primarily in WTO negotiations in the first place, but also in the EU, Germany should play a pioneering role in reducing subsidies for agriculture.

Safeguarding crude oil and natural gas production in Africa: the crude oil policy on the continent should not be left exclusively to the USA and China. To promote regional cooperation, an EU-Africa Energy Forum could be established on higher government level to discuss issues of security, transparency and marketing. Cooperation programmes to promote maritime security should also be developed, especially in the Gulf of Guinea.

Fight against terrorism: even this area should not be left exclusively to the USA. Politics and society in Africa, especially after the second Iraq war, are sceptical regarding the "war on terror", partly because many people in leading positions during the fight for independence and against apartheid were called terrorists.

Bilaterally and on the EU level, a dialogue with the African states must be initiated, not

26] The question is, however, whether the development cooperation with its focal themes and priorities can live up to this ambition, or whether precisely those countries "fall out" which need assistance most. This problem is enhanced by the fact that other donor countries and institutions are working with similar country and priority lists, with a focus on a few countries and areas. A better coordination with other donor countries could compensate the reduced commitment in specific regions.

only to discuss common security interests, but also to safeguard human and civil rights. In addition, cooperation with the secret services should be promoted in countries considered “refuges” for terrorists.

Meeting the Chinese challenge: China’s commitment on the continent should neither be considered a threat nor should China be ignored. For most African countries, China represents a model for their own development. Germany and the EU should develop public-private partnership models, enabling German companies to become competitive in bidding for infrastructure projects and other activities. Germany and the EU should also initiate a dialogue with China about the “rules of the road” in Africa. Efforts for cooperation with China should be undertaken in those areas of development cooperation where both countries are active.

Climate change: Africa is particularly affected by direct and indirect impacts of the climate change. Estimates by the “Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change” foresee a 50% decline in agricultural production by 2020. In the very same year, 75 to 200 million Africans will be affected by water shortages. Africa is ill prepared for these changes. Germany, as one of the main contributors to the climate change, should undertake and support initiatives to develop and finance adaptation strategies in the EU and the world finance institutions (especially the World Bank).

Political dialogue, not only inter-governmental negotiations: instead of only others talking about Africa, the continent itself should be a party to the dialogue. Relations based on partnership, both bilaterally and within the scope of multinational institutions, need a dialogue. Such a dialogue, however, must not be reduced to an exchange during inter-governmental negotiations or summits. It would be crucial to establish a political dialogue with African politicians, representatives of civil society, business and the media, not to talk solely about “policies” but mainly about “politics”.

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