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**The Case of the Partnership Between the  
Tanzanian Government and the Nordic  
Countries**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BIS	-	Basic Industrial Strategy
CDR	-	Centre for Development Research
DANIDA	-	Danish International Development Assistance
EU	-	European Union
FINNIDA	-	Finnish International Development Agency
IDA	-	International Development Agency
IDM	-	Institute of Development Management
IFJ	-	International Financial Institutions
IMF	-	International Monetary Fund
NESP	-	National Economic Survival Programme
NEX	-	National Execution of Projects/Programmes
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization
NORAD	-	Norwegian Agency for Development
ODA	-	Official Development Assistance
ODI	-	<i>Overseas Development</i>
OECD	-	Organization for Economic and Cooperation Development
OGL	-	Open General Licence
PFP	-	Policy Framework Paper
SAP	-	Structural Adjustment Programme
SIAS	-	Scandinavian Institute for African Studies/ <i>Nordiskafrika</i> Institute)
Sida	-	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SSA	-	Sub Saharan African
TAP	-	Technical Assistance Personnel
TPH	-	Tanzania Publishing House
UN	-	United Nations
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
WB	-	World Bank

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## **1.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

### **1.1 An Overview**

During the first five post-independence years (1961-1966) foreign and local private investments were expected to bring about the planned growth and development. When the expected foreign finance was not realized, the Arusha Declaration (1967) was charted out with emphasis being placed on self-reliance. It was envisaged that foreign aid would be mobilized and utilized to build the capacity for self-reliance. This can be regarded as the first attempt to redefine the perception on aid and to cultivate a partnership which would ultimately help to build the capacity for self-reliance.

Since then, Tanzania has been one of the foremost recipients of bilateral aid in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) during the 1970s and 1980s. Both bilateral and multilateral assistance to Tanzania increased in large proportions in the late 1960s and during the 1970s. The willingness of donors to extend substantial amounts of aid to Tanzania during the 1960s and the 1970s can be explained from two perspectives. First, the development policies pursued by Tanzania during that time were fairly congruent to the dominant views of the social democrats in the North. Second, Tanzania was considered to be strategically important in terms of foreign policy considerations.

According to the Organization for Economic and Cooperation Development (OECD) data, the volume of Official Development Assistance (ODA), is estimated to account for over 80% of the net total inflows of external capital, suggesting that private capital inflows have been negligible. The annual disbursement of ODA rose from US\$51 million in 1970 to a peak of US\$1,080 million in 1992. Since then, the volume of aid has declined gradually, reaching US\$814 million in 1995.

### **1.2 Aid Effectiveness, Disappointments and Responses**

Aid in the 1970s was largely project aid geared towards filling both the widening investment-saving gap and the related foreign exchange gap which were propelled by an ambitious investment programme -- the Basic Industrial Strategy (BIS) of 1974. The earlier concentration of aid in investment projects was consistent with the requirements of such an ambitious investment programme. The role played by aid at the time was in line with the development economics doctrine which postulated that foreign capital had an important role to play in promoting growth in countries with capital shortage (such as Tanzania). Buttressed by a Harrod-Domar type of model, the injection of capital in the form of project aid was expected to promote growth and development.

Towards the end of the 1970s and early 1980s it increasingly became clear that value-added from new investments was limited because of the declining capacity to import the needed intermediate inputs and to meet other recurrent expenditure requirements at a time when both the balance of payments and budgetary deficits were growing to alarming proportions.

In response to this situation, two major changes were initiated in the donor programmes. First, there was a shift in emphasis from project to programme aid. This shift was prompted partly by growing problems with regard to the balance of payments and the declining utilization of capacity in the industrial and other sectors to a level as low as between 10% and 20%. This was during the

the early 1980s. These developments were perceived as a manifestation of the unsatisfactory performance of project assistance; and the realization that import support would be critically needed to raise the level of output. Increased output would originate from the enhancement of the capacity to import intermediate inputs which would raise the level of utilization of capacities many of which had been created through project aid. The second change involved a shift towards financing in the form of recurrent budgetary support (e.g. DANIDA's Essential Drugs Programme; SIDA's support for school textbooks' production and NORAD's maintenance support to the Institute of Development Management (IDM) at Mzumbe. This shift was a response to the growing awareness that insufficient allocations to recurrent expenditure in the government budget had persistently constrained the output and the delivery of other services than allocations to the development budget. It is in this context that bilateral donors have also been shifting from financing new capital projects to the rehabilitation of existing projects and the institution of mechanisms to ease maintenance problems. In both cases, the Nordic countries were in the forefront in making these shifts with a view towards enhancing the effectiveness of aid.

For quite some time in the early 1980s the Nordic countries continued to support Tanzania on the expectation that these shifts in the form of aid would turn around the declining aid performance. However, by the mid-1980s the improvement expected from the shift towards the rehabilitation of existing capacities and the provision of import (or balance of payments) support was hardly visible. By that time, various donors were supporting macroeconomic policy changes as proposed by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs).

By 1984 it was clear that the Nordic countries were supporting the adoption of economic policy reforms as a way of improving the environment under which aid was being administered. During a Nordic/Tanzania seminar in 1984 the Nordic countries levelled strong criticism upon Tanzania's economic policies. And so it was that by 1985 the Nordic countries were quite explicit in urging Tanzania to adopt the economic policy reform programme being proposed by the IMF. The Nordic countries were the last group of donors to join the (other) donors groups that were advocating macroeconomic policy changes.

## **2.0 POLICY REFORMS AND THE RESUMPTION OF DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE**

Following agreement between Tanzania and the IFIs in 1986, aid flows resumed increasing from a low level of US\$477 million in 1985 to a peak of US\$1,080 million in 1992. This resumption of aid flows is a reflection of the confidence (among donors), that the policy environment had improved. It was perceived that aid effectiveness would rise with improvement in the macroeconomic policy environment. The rise in aid flows, however, is likely to face limits in the future; indeed, from 1993 the level of aid has been declining. By 1995 the level of aid stood at US\$814 million.

It should be pointed out that the resumption of aid flows from 1986 occurred at a time when aid relations had been influenced by the period of strained negotiations in the first half of the 1980s. Having tried to formulate and implement two earlier programmes (NESP 1981-1982 and SAP 1982 - 1985) without success or adequate donor support, Tanzania has (especially since 1985), tended to accommodate the influence of the World Bank/IMF and the positions of other donors in her economic policy. This tendency was sustained by the perception that disagreement with the World Bank/IMF would result not only in the withdrawal of the support of IFIs, but also of other donors. As will be shown in this study, this perception has tended to influence relations between Tanzania and the donors; with Tanzania "shying away" from effective participation in the design and operation of aid projects and programmes, a situation which has not facilitated progress towards the ownership of her development programmes. Consequently, this situation has contributed to the erosion of local ownership of the development agenda.

Development assistance was therefore resumed in the mid-1980s in the context of a very low level of ownership with regard to the development agenda.

### 3.0 NEW CONCERNS OVER DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: THE MAIN ISSUES

The background to the crisis in aid relations and its origin have been associated with government failure to collect counterpart funds from import-support programmes, a disappointing fiscal performance and increasing concern about the effectiveness of aid. This background was aggravated by the need for greater transparency and information disclosure on tax performance and tax evasion, while perceptions of corruption led to strained aid relationships.

#### 3.1 Concerns about Aid Effectiveness

During the late 1970s and the 1980s, aid became increasingly exposed to criticism from both the political right and left for various and often different reasons (Riddell, 1987). One response of bilateral and multilateral aid agencies was to give added emphasis to the need for project evaluation. During this period, the evaluation function became institutionalized, and most aid agencies established evaluation units within their administrative structures (Berlage, L. and O. Stokke, 1992). In a recent comparative study on aid effectiveness in Africa (co-ordinated by the Overseas Development Council/ODC), the findings from seven countries which were covered in that study show growing concern over the fact that aid effectiveness had fallen below expectations. As regards the perception of the effectiveness of aid, a recent opinion poll in Europe revealed limited confidence in the EU's role with regard to the allocation and management of aid (EU Newsletter, 1996). In this context, about 40% of those questioned thought that aid management should be handed over to UN agencies in comparison to a four percent who favoured the continued direct role of the EU in the management of aid.

In the specific context of Tanzania, these concerns about aid effectiveness led to several aid evaluation reports in the late 1980s and the first half of the 1990s. The evaluation reports of Norwegian Aid (1988), Swedish and Finnish Aid (1995) as well as Danish Aid (1995, 1997) all indicate that the level of aid effectiveness has fallen below expectations. One common thread which runs through all these reports is concern about the low level of sustainability and limited local ownership of the development programmes. The findings of several recent aid evaluation reports are consistent with the observation that both the donors and the Government of Tanzania have contributed to the problem of limited local ownership of development projects/programmes.

Various recent evaluation reports have expressed concern over this issue. In recent years, for instance, the Swedish aid policy is reported to have aimed at increasing the role of the recipient country. However, according to a recent aid evaluation report, this has been difficult to achieve due to the Tanzania's weak economical and institutional capacity (Adam *et al*, 1994). As a result, many of the projects/programmes funded by Sweden have been donor-driven particularly with regard to financing and personnel. Consequently, responsibility for implementation has increasingly been taken away from the government of Tanzania. FINNIDA's Aid Evaluation Report also admits to a low local ownership of its aid assistance to Tanzania in the past. On one hand the Report states that:

*"In principle, Tanzania is involved in all phases of the project cycle. All the requests come from the Tanzanian side etc. All the missions are carried out by joint teams, as well as the selection of implementing agencies of projects"*

#### FINNIDA Aid Evaluation Report.

On the other hand, (as the report on Finnish aid proceeds to observe), the practice is different with many difficulties arise at the implementation phase. The report concludes that the fact that implementation takes place within local structures does not necessarily mean that implementation is not 'donor-driven'. The report observes that there are reported cases where intrusive donor conditionality was imposed even at the level of implementation (FINNIDA, 1994). The findings of these aid evaluation reports are applicable to most donor-Tanzania relations.

The importance of "owning" development projects and programmes at national level, however great their external inputs, derives from the inherent appropriateness and efficacy of this approach. This fact is emphasised in the Helleiner report (1995) as well as the evaluation reports of various donor agencies. According to these findings, projects and programmes that are locally owned by those who implement them have proved more likely to work and be sustained. These observations are very valid and warrant that high priority to be accorded to issues of enhancing local ownership of development policies and programmes.

As the Helleiner report (1995) indicates, many initiatives originate from the donors, with only limited policy guidance from the Government of Tanzania. An example is given of a key policy document, the Policy Framework Paper (PFP) of 1994 which the report says appears to be a collaborative effort while in fact, (local) ownership was dampened by two factors. First, the original draft was prepared in Washington. Second, after it was agreed upon, the World Bank introduced new conditionalities during the negotiation for a new structural adjustment credit (Helleiner *et. al.*, 1995).

### **3.2 Crisis in Aid Relations**

The Helleiner Report (1995) was the result of the work of a group of Independent Advisors set up by the Danish government in its concern over the deteriorating relations and to examine and advise on development cooperation issues between Tanzania and its aid donors. The work of this group produced a report popularly referred to as the Helleiner Report (1995). According to the Helleiner Report (1995) the crisis in aid relations was seen by many to originate with the long-standing failure on the part of the Government of Tanzania to collect, as agreed, all of counterpart funds resulting from donors' import support programmes. These arrears, which generated suspicions of corruption and have still not been fully dealt with, have been an important and continuing irritant to donors. Following the disappointing fiscal performance in the 1993/94 fiscal year, which led to setting up of an IMF "shadow" programme in the first half of 1994, there was a marked deterioration in Tanzania's aid relationships. The situation was aggravated at a tense meeting between donors and Tanzania's Finance Minister in March 1994. Donors expressed their longer-term disillusionment, and the crisis resulted in the suspension of aid to Tanzania from 1994.

Increasing concern over the effectiveness of aid to Tanzania was manifested in a series of substantial evaluations by the Nordic countries (and the Netherlands) of aid programmes to Tanzania, which were initiated and completed in 1994 and discussed at a major conference in Dar es Salaam in January 1995. The following are some of the issues which were raised at that conference:

- commodity import support may have alleviated shortages but did not deal with inefficiency in industries;
- limited fungibility of foreign aid and insufficient counterpart resources had contributed to a reduction in aid effectiveness;
- the problems of aid dependence had become more serious and the sustainability of aid projects was not realized;
- domestic resource mobilization was not being pursued aggressively enough.

As indicated above, this perception by donors had culminated in the suspension of aid in 1994 to be resumed when Tanzania would have demonstrated concrete tax revenue collection efforts.

Each side had its own views of the situation which the Helleiner Report (1995) identified. The report indicates that the Government of Tanzania was to blame for the weak performance, corruption and the lack of commitment. The report also indicates that donors were to blame for making unrealistic and excessive demands on Tanzania, exerting too much influence on its development programmes and policies, not sharing information sufficiently, for their lack of trust and for exerting too much pressure and demand for the time of senior economic managers. In addition, like other recent evaluation reports, the Report placed emphasis on institutional development as an area of concern for aid effectiveness. Capacity building in a whole range of institutions -- public sector agencies, financial institutions, educational systems and regional and local administration -- would be necessary.

## **4.0 NEW PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN THE TANZANIA GOVERNMENT AND THE NORDIC COUNTRIES**

### **4.1 Background**

In response to the perception of the existence of a crisis in aid relations and to concerns over the decline in the level of ownership of the development agenda (on the part of Tanzania), several initiatives were taken by donors in an attempt to address this situation. For instance, in July/August 1996 a retreat organized by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was held in Bagamoyo to discuss the modalities of ensuring effectiveness of the national execution of projects/programmes (NEX) under the United Nations (UN) system. The main issue was to deliberate on how Tanzania could be at the driving seat in the management of such programmes -- in other words, how to build the government's capacity to manage assistance from the UN.

Partly reflecting the close development cooperation that had persisted for the past three decades between Tanzania and the Nordic countries and partly because most of the recent major evaluation reports had been carried out by the Nordic countries, a high level meeting on a New Nordic-Tanzania Development Partnership was held in September 1996. Representatives of the governments of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden met with representatives of the Government of Tanzania and agreed on the establishment of a new Nordic -Tanzania development partnership.

### **4.2 Contents of the Agreement**

The new partnership envisaged between Tanzania and the Nordic countries contained the following:

- future cooperation would aim at the eradication of poverty and the enhancement of peace and stability in Tanzania;
- the new partnership would be based on continued policy reform, democratization, fighting corruption, sustaining good governance, ensuring stability, increasing domestic resource mobilization and reassessing the role of the government;
- concerted efforts towards the substantial reduction (or removal) of the debt burden and the promotion of sustainable production-induced growth;
- While sustaining assistance levels in the short and medium term, the partnership should aim at gradual replacement of "development assistance" with other forms of bilateral cooperation in the long run;
- the partners should aim at establishing and maintaining transparent systems of dialogue and should be willing to make long-term financial commitments;
- the partners should support mutually beneficial activities that have been given priority by Tanzania mainly through budget support; and
- emphasis was to be placed on enhancing Tanzania's institutional and human capacity to own the development agenda as it takes full responsibility of and becomes accountable for the resources and the programmes provided.

Most these points were incorporated in the agreement reached during a meeting between Tanzania-and the donor which followed in January 1997.

## **5.0 EVALUATION AND PROSPECTS FOR A TRUE NEW RELATIONSHIP**

Implementation of the partnership will require action from the side of Tanzania and the side of the donors.

### **5.1 Tanzania Owning the Development Agenda**

The Government of Tanzania needs to mobilize its capacities in central and sectoral ministries as well as key policy institutions (such as the Bank of Tanzania and other capacities outside the government), to contribute significantly key policy documents. The existing capacities which are rather limited need to be mobilized, coordinated and utilized more fully.

The effectiveness of local capacities would be enhanced further if ample time was set apart for the preparation of important policy documents rather than preparing these in a rush to meet very short deadlines as has often been the practice in recent years. Ideally, this task should be undertaken regularly within the Government's economic management system and should not be regarded as a process to be resorted to when there is an emergency. This implies that an institutional machinery for this process will need to be put in place. An interministerial team of experts which would have the mandate to mobilize technical support from elsewhere within or outside the government as the need arises, should be set up for this task.

Initiatives to enhance local ownership should cover all levels of development management. Local levels in particular will need to be given special attention. Strengthening of the prioritization process should be based on consensus through the empowerment of grass root institutions to enable them plan and implement their own development agenda.

### **5.2 Joint Ownership of Country Programmes**

The process of preparing aid policies and strategies as well as country programmes by donors, should be done in collaboration with the recipient countries. The Helleiner Report (1995) suggests that this process should take into account the goals and priorities of the recipient as well as the donors. Also of importance is the participation of partners in recipient country administrations and civil society in the design of country programmes by virtue of their being prospective implementors of the programmes.

### **5.3 Capacity Building**

Capacity building initiatives should address at least four concerns: improving conditions for capacity development, shifting gradually from aid to trade relations, relating technical assistance to local capacity building and enhancing the capacity to manage development projects and programmes.

Capacity building efforts should be directed towards enhancing the government's leadership role in the economic management of the various sectors by way of improving policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation. Planning, budgeting and accountancy management will also need

to be strengthened as a prerequisite for greater accountability and the local ownership of aid efforts. Furthermore, capacity building should also include the strengthening of local governments, regional and district administrations, community-based organizations, and NGOs for the purpose of promoting society's actual involvement and participation in development at all levels.

Capacity requirements are dynamic; changing with the challenges of economic management. As such, the government should develop a framework for reviewing its capacity to manage the economy in a changing environment (i.e., in a continuous manner).

#### **5.4 Complete Resource Budgeting, Budgetary Reform and Economic Management**

The process of planning and programming development projects and programmes is riddled with uncertainties of resource commitments (especially from the donors). This apparent lack of transparency is noted as one of the contributing factors to the practice, on the part of some donors, of directing funds to their own projects (without integrating them into the programmes and budgets of the Government of Tanzania) or, as happens in many cases, their failure to provide the budgetary authorities with accurate and timely information about the projects. Donors could redress this situation by providing full information on resource commitments, say over a 3-5 year period, including making estimates of direct funds that would allow a higher degree of confidence in the planning and programming of these projects.

It is noted that the need to meet the terms of policy conditionality i.e., a budget frame acceptable to the World Bank/IMF contributes to the excessive underbudgeting. The demand to abide to present budget ceilings is incompatible with realistic budgeting. The Helleiner Report (1995) recommended that immediate action be taken to strengthen the Ministry of Finance to enable it prepare realistic budgets, make better revenue projections, impose strict financial control on accounting officers, and improve the accounting of government expenditure. The authority of the Treasury in budgetary matters must be respected and protected by the highest level of national political leadership. These recommendations are still valid and should be implemented.

#### **5.5 Dealing with Corruption**

It is important for the government to be serious in fighting/combating corruption. There is a widespread perception that corruption is on the increase at the highest echelons of the government both among the donors and within the Tanzanian public. The huge amounts of balance of payments support that had earlier on been provided to particular firms in the form of commodity imports and Open General Licence (OGL) funds (which remain unresolved), as well as widespread tax evasions are issues that persist and which have undermined the credibility of the Tanzanian Government.

Subsequently, towards the end of last year the President set up a special task force to look into the incidence of corruption, identify major sectors in which it occurs and come up with recommendations on how best to curb it. The resulting report (the Warioba Report) is out and has been made public. What is being awaited is the implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force in order to restore the government's credibility in the eyes of the citizenry and the taxpayers in donor countries.

## **5.6 Accountability and Transparency**

The definition of aid accountability and transparency should be broadened to include the donor. Accountability and transparency in the management and control of aid should be a two-way process. In other words, the aid recipient should be accountable to the donor; at the same time the donor should also be accountable to the recipient (if greater effectiveness of aid is to be achieved). The two parties should agree on goals and targets and on the conditions for their achievement. These conditions should form the basis of conditionality and accountability.

## **5.7 Coordination**

Effective aid coordination can be achieved through the formulation of a clear national aid strategy. Some of the key elements of a national aid strategy would include: the national objectives, strategies and priorities; an articulation of the roles of the recipient, donors and implementing agencies; a stipulation of modes of disbursement and accountability; and areas of focus concentration. This, however, pre-supposes that arrangements which facilitate co-ordination among all donors involved in a specific sector are in place. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that aid coordination, however, remains primarily the responsibility of the recipient.

## **5.8 Policy Direction**

Recent initiatives have been taken locally to prepare various sectoral policies (e.g. the agricultural policy, the industrial policy, the mining policy, and the education and training policy). These are encouraging steps in the right direction. Developments in crafting a long term development vision for Tanzania which is currently in progress under the overall co-ordination of the Planning Commission are promising and should form the basis for preparing medium and long-term development strategies.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

This paper has indicated that the concerns about aid effectiveness and the consequences on aid relationships became explicit from the early 1980s. By shifting aid composition from project aid to import support in the early 1980s did not succeed to reverse the rising concerns about aid effectiveness and deteriorating aid relations. This dissatisfaction led to the suspension of substantial amounts of aid until a programme was signed between Tanzania and the IMF in 1986. Development assistance was resumed but this time in the context of more unequal aid relations with Tanzania as the minor partner having lost control and ownership of its development agenda. In the early 1990s a series of aid evaluation reports continued to cast doubts on the effectiveness of aid and expressed concern over the low degree of sustainability of most aid projects and programmes. Concern was also expressed over the low level of ownership of the development programmes by Tanzania.

Initiatives towards new partnerships and donors occurred against this background and the case of Tanzania-Nordic countries is used to illustrate the concerns. The agreements which were reached in the Tanzania-Nordic meeting of 1996 were basically agreed in a subsequent Tanzania-donor meeting of January 1997. These agreements have placed emphasis on improving and effectiveness, redressing imbalances in aid relationships and enhancing Tanzania's ownership of the development agenda. The challenge now is in the implementation a situation where both parties, Tanzania and donors, will be expected to play their role. The most challenging task is for both parties to have to revisit and sometimes change substantially some of the procedures and practices they had been used to in the aid relations which have prevailed in the past one or two decades.

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