

A STRATEGY FOR AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH AFRICA

Advisory Group on Australia-Africa Relations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2015, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, The Hon. Julie Bishop MP, established the Advisory Group on Australian African Relations (AGAAR) with the aim of providing the Commonwealth Government with advice on advancing and diversifying Australia's growing relationship with Africa. Members of the Group were chosen from across the spectrum of the relationship – business, academia, government and the community.

Africa continues to grow in economic and strategic importance, attracting investment and increased attention from global powers, countries with colonial links and from the emerging nations. Australia cannot afford to be an onlooker as Africa's influence accelerates and what happens in the continent has an increasing regional and world-wide impact.

To this end, AGAAR recommends that Australia adopts a strategic approach to Africa based on a renewed vision whereby the Government prioritise activities that:

- Create long term and sustainable relationships across the entire continent;
- Realise significant mutual benefits; and
- Focus on areas where Australia is recognised as having a specialised offering in the following areas of strategic focus:
 - a. Expanding trade and investment ties;
 - b. Building a sustainable partnership on development;
 - c. Strengthening security;
 - d. Cooperating on global issues;
 - e. Strengthening the position of women;
 - f. Developing closer people-to-people ties.

In order for the Australian Government to maintain a relevant and contemporary Australia Africa Strategy in line with national interests and opportunities, regular reviews and advice through the work of an ongoing advisory body is recommended.

The Australia Africa Week (AAW) initiative in Perth, which is being pioneered in 2016 is a key initiative that AGAAR has promoted. AAW is building on the annual Africa Down Under Conference to expand into a broader series of events and promoting new multi-sector opportunities. By playing a more direct role, the Australian Government would bring greater attention to the extensive business, academic, cultural and people to people links between Australia and Africa.

AGAAR suggests the Government consider the public release of a version of this AGAAR paper to facilitate public discussion in order to advance and diversify Australia's growing relationship with Africa. AGAAR stands ready to engage with broader government (state and federal), community and other stakeholders to contribute to this discussion.

Beyond the discussion paper, a summary of AGAAR's specific and practical recommendations is attached at the end of the paper.

Why Africa matters

Whilst there has always been a degree of recognition of Africa's importance, by virtue of its geographical size, population, natural resources and the number of its component states, historically Australian governments have not allocated a strong strategic priority to the continent. It appears that at least part of the reason why relations with Africa have not been a focus is a view, held in Government, in the policy community and in the general Australian society, that Africa is not an area where Australia has key interests.

The increasing strategic and economic importance of Africa to Australia in 2016, however, cannot be ignored.

Africa has a population of 1.1 billion, including a sizeable and rapidly growing middle class, and increasing economic significance. The United Nations estimates the working age population will triple to 1.3 billion by 2050 in sub-Saharan Africa; with North Africa this figure is expected to be more than 1.5 billion.

GDP growth in sub-Saharan African countries in the past two years has exceeded the average of emerging market and developing countries. This is set to continue to beyond 2020. In 2016 sub-Saharan Africa is forecast to grow by 4 percent second only to Asia. In 2017 this is projected to rise to 4.7 percent.

In 2014 global greenfield foreign direct investment market grew by just 1 percent, but Africa saw a 65 percent increase in capital investment. Africa was also the second largest destination for FDI inflow in 2014. Africa's combined consumer spending was USD 680 billion in 2008 and is projected to be USD 2.2 trillion by 2030.

Africa has abundant and largely under-exploited natural resources, including an estimated 10 per cent of the global reserves of oil, 40 per cent of gold and 80-90 per cent of chromium/platinum group metals. Africa has around 24 per cent of the world's arable land.

Events in Africa can have significant impact globally, whether they are of a strategic/military, human security or environmental nature. In recent history the conflicts in Libya, in the Great Lakes areas and in the Horn of Africa have all had broad and varied impacts that have gone beyond the continent. These impacts take the form of refugee outflows, wider counter-terrorism efforts or interruptions to global trade/economic arrangements (for example around 20 per cent of global trade passes through Bab el-Mandeb in the Horn of Africa region). The Ebola virus epidemic of 2014/15 demonstrated this effect in a dramatic way.

Africa's global political influence is significant, with 54 member states of the United Nations, it has an ability to impact international issues by the number of votes it has. Africa's support was critical in Australia's successful bid to join the UN Security Council in the period from 2013-2014.

The world is engaging more closely with Africa

Given the continent's growing economic and strategic importance, Africa continues to attract the attention of the international community. Beyond global powers, such as the US, China and Russia, and former colonial powers with enduring links such France, the United Kingdom and Portugal, there has been a growing presence in Africa of "emerging" countries including India, Turkey, the UAE and South Korea. The governments of these countries have determined that opportunities in Africa are sufficiently strong to invest significantly in building and strengthening long-term relations with the continent.

Australia's current state of play

Whilst it could be argued that successive Australian governments have not had a well-defined policy on Africa, it is clear, however, Australia's relations with Africa have advanced in recent years.

Australian investment in Africa is estimated to be worth around \$30 billion, which is equivalent to the combined total of our investment in Korea, India and Thailand. The majority is in mining, with more than 200 ASX-listed companies operating more than 700 projects in 35 countries. Africa is the single biggest market for Australian Mining, Equipment, Technology and Services (METS) companies outside of Australia. Other sectors which are showing growth including agriculture, education, professional services and retail.

Our trade with the continent has nearly doubled over the past decade from \$6.1 billion in 2004 to \$10.3 billion in 2014 - although due to a decline in world commodity prices, in 2015 the value of two way trade decreased to \$8.5 billion.

Australia is an increasingly important destination for African students, with 4,800 African students commencing studies in 2015 while there are over 5,000 Australia Awards alumni in Africa.

In the area of development assistance, the significant reduction in Australia's contribution to Africa has damaged Australia's image in the continent. We, however, remain a substantial provider of aid and security assistance, with annual aid flows and peacekeeping funding to Africa totaling close to \$500 million.

Australian NGOs, working with Australian Government funding or with funds raised from the Australian public, have had a long history in Africa. The work of these NGOs have played a significant role in contributing to Australia's relations with Africa.

Australian support for peacekeeping and anti-piracy in Africa has demonstrated our commitment to the continent's security. In more recent times Australian troops have been active in South Sudan and a Royal Australian Navy ship involved in anti-piracy operations off Somalia.

Australia is also home to an increasingly influential African diaspora – more than 330,000 Australians were born in sub-Saharan Africa and another 51,450 from North Africa. The diaspora's continuing engagement with Africa including through significant remittances; participation in peace building and reconciliation processes; and investment in economic and human development has made this group a key element in building the relationship between Australia and Africa.

The Indian Ocean provides a physical nexus between Western Australia to East Africa. This geography creates opportunities and at times shared responsibilities.

To support the relationship, Australia has diplomatic posts in eight African countries: Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

A more strategic approach

The above summary demonstrates there are clear national interests for Australia to take a much more strategic approach to developing relations with Africa. Resources, however, are limited. It will be difficult for Australia to match the efforts of many other countries in Africa and as such we need to remain focused on priorities, which have a high impact, and importantly where Australia can differentiate itself.

In making its recommendations, AGAAR has considered these limitations; the group, however, is proposing an **ambitious approach** to reflect the substantive national interests Australia has in Africa both today and in the future.

A New Vision

AGAAR recommends that Australia's strategic approach to Africa be based on a renewed vision whereby the Government should prioritise activities that:

- create long term and sustainable relationships across the entire continent;
- realise significant mutual benefits; and
- are focused on areas where Australia is recognised as having a specialised offering.

With this vision and criteria in mind, AGAAR has identified the following areas of strategic focus.

1. Expanding trade and investment ties
2. Building a renewed partnership on development
3. Strengthening security
4. Cooperating on global issues
5. Strengthening the position of women
6. Closer people-to-people ties

It is recommended that this advisory paper be considered by the Government as it develops its strategy for strengthening relations with Africa. It is also recommended that a version of this AGAAR paper be released as a public document to facilitate public discussion about Australia-Africa relations.

1. Expanding trade and investment ties

At the heart of Australia's relationship with Africa is growing economic engagement with a continent, which has been among the world leaders in economic and population growth in recent years.

It is important the Australian Government continues to explore ways to consolidate and grow our role in the sectors that have been at the forefront of trade and investment activities namely: mineral and oil/gas exploration and production; Mining Equipment, Technology and Services (METS); and education services. Africa should be a priority region for the Government's extractives development and business partnerships initiative.

At the same time, the Government should be looking at actively promoting new and growing opportunities. While AGAAR does not wish to be prescriptive, there are a number of areas that the group view as worth considering as priorities including: agricultural trade, technology and services; infrastructure development especially in relation to long haul freight rail pit to port capability; Information Technology and services capability especially around drawing on Africa's significant mobile internet population; urban sustainability in energy, transportation and water; and the "blue economy".

The support provided by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and Austrade, especially through the advocacy and economic diplomacy carried out by African Posts, provides strong on the ground support for Australian commercial interests. Consideration should be given as to how this support can be improved, coverage increased, co-ordination and consistency achieved across potential markets in Africa.

The support, including Ministerial attendance, provided by the Government to bring together Australian companies and African stakeholders (including governments and commercial partners) at events such as Africa Down Under Mining Conference and Mining Indaba has been valuable and should also be reinforced.

There could be more such events in other areas of economic areas identified above where the Government could play a similar role.

More needs to be done to build the broader opportunities beyond the extractives sector. Australia has had very few Minister-led trade missions to Africa, this compares unfavorably with most other countries that are actively developing commercial opportunities. Ministerial led official trade missions have a strong impact in Africa and AGAAR recommends the Government consider regular targeted trade missions led at senior - and preferably ministerial - level. Opportunities should also be explored with State and Territory governments to expand Australia's commercial outreach to Africa; the Western Australian Government's agreement with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) provides an example, which could be reinforced.

In order to add impetus to overall commercial engagement it is recommended that the Government undertake practical new research focused on identifying new and innovative areas for increasing two-way trade and investment with Africa. As part of the research it would be worthwhile benchmarking what Africa's other active commercial partners are doing to develop two way trade opportunities.

2. Building a renewed partnership on development

While Australia's relations with Africa should not be defined by development assistance, it is clear that development assistance has an important role to play in a continent that has many development needs. Investment in programmes that lead to improved outcomes in areas such as the status of women, education levels and subsequent participation in the workforce, the strengthening of civil society and enhanced security can provide long term returns that otherwise would be difficult to achieve.

It is important to acknowledge that the significant cuts made to Australian development assistance to Africa in recent years have left a negative perception, among many African stakeholders, of Australia's level of commitment to the continent. The fact that the cuts were made following the conclusion of Australia's term on the UN Security Council – Australia's election to the UNSC had been supported by many African countries – contributed significantly to that negative perception.

In construing a renewed partnership for development it is important that Australia demonstrate an interest in supporting African countries address their genuine needs. Levels of poverty and inequality remain a handbrake on growth for a majority of countries in Africa.

The region has overtaken South Asia in now having the highest number of people living in extreme poverty (less than \$1.90 per day). Australia's aid program in Africa has supported ideas, policies and programs that accelerated growth, development and poverty reduction. It has placed Australian experts in positions of extraordinary trust and influence with Governments and communities. Where there has been long and deep engagement, unique networks of support and friendship have been created. The aid program helps to provide breadth and depth to Australia's foreign policy, creating a broader set of relationships, interactions and partnerships with more substance. This better serves the long term interests of Australia. It is also notable that the Australian public is responsive to poverty issues and natural disasters in Africa and continue to be generous in responding to appeals and fundraising efforts for Africa by Australian NGOs.

Aid to Africa must be provided with greater consistency – rapid changes damage relationships and lead to ineffective programs. It is recommended that bilateral aid to Africa return to its long-term levels of \$100m per year and thereafter be retained at a constant percentage of the total aid budget, with additional funding for humanitarian responses. The focus of the aid program should be Southern and Eastern Africa, including Ethiopia and South Sudan.

It is recommended the Australian Government consider supporting programs in Africa through Australian NGOs. Australian Aid has supported NGO work in Africa since at least the early 1990s, recognising this approach provides value for money and an opportunity to create lasting change for some of the most disadvantaged in Africa. The most recent program is the Australia Africa Community Engagement Scheme, which has delivered significant results and is valued by countries in Africa. Independent evaluations have reported that the Scheme exceeded its original targets and expectations and impacted positively on 2.3 million people in marginalised communities across eleven countries. Building on the evaluations of this Scheme to develop a new phase would contribute to Australia engaging with a broader set of actors, strengthen linkages with civil society and other local partners. Continuing the focus on better opportunities for women would align the program well with aid policy.

The Australian Government should consider supporting university-led initiatives on science and technology to embrace and encourage innovation, particularly harnessing business knowledge, identifying market opportunities and creating space for shared start-ups. Collaboration in the areas of agriculture and environmental management, where Australia has recognised expertise, should be a priority. There may be opportunities to leverage off DFAT's innovationXchange to identify specific areas where Australia has unique approaches to development needs whilst a number of our universities and research institutes (e.g. ACIAR and CSIRO) have innovative research outputs which are highly relevant for Africa.

The Australia Awards Program – an important flagship for Australia's development assistance to Africa – should continue to be a key vehicle to assist African countries build their capacity to deliver sustainable development. The current focus on extractives, agriculture and public policy is well targeted and is an important contribution to economic development. Ensuring gender equity within the Australia Awards will reinforce Australia's commitment to strengthening the position of women in Africa. Beyond these 3 initiatives, a \$100 million bilateral program to Africa can also contribute to other objectives within this strategy.

As Australia re-engages with a long term and sustainable development assistance program, it will also be important to consider national, regional and international targets, including the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063. Australia has unique expertise in key areas, including water resource management, dryland farming and increasing agricultural productivity, which will assist many African countries, achieve such targets. Africa is a continent that has genuine humanitarian relief needs; Australia's program should continue to have the ability to contribute meaningfully to global responses.

3. Strengthening security

Australia and African countries increasingly face a number of shared security challenges, including the wide-spread threat of terrorism; piracy; threats to cyber security; the strategic impact of climate change; organized crime in a range of areas including drug trafficking, money laundering and people smuggling. Moreover Australia and African countries have a shared interest in promoting the global rule of law and enhancing stability through peacekeeping and strengthening the resilience of societies. It is recommended that the Government develop a targeted and modestly funded program of Defence and national security cooperation with key African Countries.

There is already growing defence and security cooperation with African countries like Kenya and Nigeria, on counter-terrorism and in developing strategies to prevent individuals radicalising. Australia's vital interests have been impacted by piracy off the Horn of Africa, leading to the regular deployment of Royal Australian Navy vessels with the multinational forces patrolling the region.

Australians in Africa, are impacted by the growth of terrorism in Kenya, Nigeria and the Sahel. Our counter terrorism cooperation should be enhanced, with the provision of training to African police and military and relevant civilian agencies.

Australia is currently contributing some \$220 million through assessed contributions to peacekeeping in Africa, and has a small contingent with the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS). We should develop further our training for African peacekeepers and practically focused cooperation with the African Union (AU) on peace and security, as the AU increasingly takes up the peace and security burden on the continent.

Another area of focus of direct relevance to our commercial interests is law enforcement, and we propose strengthening training and cooperation on strategies to counter money laundering, illegal drugs and malign cyber behavior. On cyber security it is recommended government consider developing a program to enhance cyber resilience in Australian companies in the extractive sector working in Africa and with their African partners.

4. Cooperating on global issues

Africa has considerable influence on the development of global issues and Australia must engage with the continent constructively to be able pursue outcomes on a wide range of issues. On a broad range of matters including human rights, the environment, global public health, the international trading system, counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation, African views will continue to be very important.

To be able to pursue Australia's national interests in such matters, Australia will need to be able to conduct effective advocacy in Africa and engage in more regular dialogue with our African partners. Australia will need to garner support for its positions – and its candidacies on various bodies – from Africa.

We need to make more use of multilateral groupings like the Commonwealth and the Indian Ocean Rim Association, in which we often have shared interests, to engage constructively with African nations. We should also continuing building on our cooperation with the African Union and its agencies.

We also need to encourage Ministerial level engagements on these issues with key African counterparts on a regular and on-going basis. We recommend appointing and deploying Special Envoys to engage Africans on key issues and candidacies on their home ground to supplement regular dialogues at our multilateral Posts with African representatives.

5. Closer people-to-people ties

Central to our people-to-people ties is the Australia Awards program and the alumni networks being developed. The Australia Awards Africa program – now at an average of some 300 short and long-term course placements a year – has been significantly reduced from around 1,000 two years ago. As noted above as part of a reshaping of development assistance, consideration should be given to the expanding the program. The Government could also support alumni programs, including covering self-funded students who are typically positive ambassadors for Australian education and values; such programs have been successful in other parts of the world.

The Special Visitors Program and International Media Visits Program are also a key way of building ties. There is an opportunity for the Program to be expanded to a two-way program, taking Australian thought leaders and journalists to Africa to understand the relationship. Emerging dialogues like the Aus-Africa Dialogue pioneered by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute and the Brenthurst Foundation need be encouraged and supported, including with Ministerial engagement. It will also be important to identify opportunities to promote cultural and sporting exchange initiatives; these are areas that remain under-utilised when compared to Australia's relations with other parts of the world.

The growing African diaspora communities in Australia are an important source of people-to-people ties. Regular dialogues between the communities and Government are way to seek their views and develop the

relationship. There are good international examples of where host governments (e.g. Denmark) have been able to use the diaspora community in a structured way to lead programs in countries of origins; other programs (e.g. in the US and the UK) have invested in successful volunteering programs that enable diaspora professionals to volunteer in countries of origin. Diaspora communities also offer opportunities for peacebuilding and reconciliation. The Australian Government could consider piloting initiatives with Diasporas in post-conflict contexts (such as South Sudan) that may be replicable by other host governments. In order to assist with the development of diaspora focused initiatives it is recommended that DFAT consider the creation of a suitably resourced "Diaspora Unit".

The current Africa Down Under Mining Conference in Perth in September has become a centrepiece of the resources industry relationship, with other events linked to it, such as an Academic Seminar and an Oil and Gas Conference. This should be expanded into an Australia Africa Week concept, with broader social and cultural engagement as well. The focus of attention on Australia Africa relations for a week in Perth, the city in Australia that has particularly geographical links with the continent, should provide an annual reminder to the importance and relevance of Africa. It is recommended that the Government take a more direct role in supporting the development of the Australia Africa Week initiative.

6. Strengthening the position of women

Within this new vision of Australia's relations with Africa, a key priority should be given to strengthening the position of women in Africa, as this is vital to the progress of the continent, a priority for the African Union, the UN and Australia's Foreign Policy.

Considerations of gender equality and women's empowerment should be integrated into the other 5 priority areas identified within this strategy:

- As Australia seeks to **expand trade and investment ties**, consideration should be given to ensuring gender equity on trade missions to Africa. The Australian Government could also seek to catalyze action by Australian companies working in Africa to become champions for gender equality and address gender based violence through initiatives with their African workforces.
- Gender equality should be a core commitment as the Australian Government seeks to renew its **Partnership on Development** with Africa. This is consistent with the government's commitment to ensure that 80% of all aid investments will effectively address gender issues in their implementation. AGAAR recommends that the Government develop a flagship initiative to be funded under the bilateral aid program, building on lesson learned from programs in other regions such as Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development and the Investing in Women Initiative in Asia. The initiative should aim to support change for women from poor communities and grassroots organisations.
- Australia can assist with **Strengthening security** through supporting activities identified under Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. For example, Action 2.2: Ensure women have opportunities to participate in the AFP, Defence and ADF and in deployments overseas, including in decision-making positions; and Action 4.3: Support humanitarian action that responds to gender-based violence in crisis situations, with particular regard to health, are relevant to the Australian Government's deployments and humanitarian funding to crises in Africa.
- As Australia seeks to enhance its **cooperation on global issues**, Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls should be encouraged to visit Africa. Through Australia's participation in forums such as the Commonwealth, the G20, the World Bank and the UN, there are opportunities to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment receive a greater level of resources and attention.
- Programs such as the Australia Awards, AVID, Special Visitors Program and the Media Visits Program which enhance **closer people-to-people ties** already aim for gender equity for participants. This practice should be continued.

It is recommended that strengthening the position of women be a key theme within all areas of Australia's relations with the nations of Africa. Australian Ministers, politicians and senior bureaucrats could be personally engaged to promote Australian programs focusing on women in Africa.

DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

The strategy requires a whole of government approach. There should be a whole of government mechanism established to bring together work being done from across government agencies. DFAT is in the best position to lead this. There should also be regular consultation between Government and Australian business and civil society with interests in Africa, in which AGAAR could be engaged.

1. A bilateral emphasis but a multilateral dividend

Africa is a continent of 54 nations and there will be always be a need to prioritise regions and countries in which Australia will be especially active; these priorities will be driven a constant review of national interests and opportunities.

The locations of Australia's few diplomatic missions in Africa are good indicators of key countries and regions.

It is recommended that the Government undertake regular reviews on how best to leverage off the diplomatic assets it already has in the continent. Further use of specific Posts as hubs based on activities, cultures and languages prevalent in the countries of accreditation should be considered.

Posts might also take responsibility for leadership on special themes of activity – for example Nairobi on security and Pretoria on mining – to manage in a pan-African way. These would also have a multilateral dividend in developing shared approaches in multilateral bodies or events. Our Post in Addis Ababa, which is accredited to the AU, has a key role in coordinating that engagement.

There appears to be many opportunities for Australia to work more closely with major international agencies and foundations, including the World Bank's Centres of Excellence, the Wellcome Trust, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and many others, which are active in Africa.

More broadly developing initiatives with non-African countries, including our OECD partners (e.g. US, UK, EU and Japan) but also potentially non-traditional partners (such as China and India) could provide benefits at several levels. Australia has already had experience cooperating with partners with a unique offering in third countries; our work with Cuba in providing health care in the Pacific is an example.

2. Increasing our diplomatic footprint in Africa

Our footprint in Africa is the smallest of any OECD country and needs to be expanded when budget circumstances permit. With the multiple accreditations and many challenges of working in African countries, it is essential that all Posts remain well staffed and resourced.

Beyond that, Australia has been promising to open posts in Francophone Africa for many years and our interests require it. We should look to open in Senegal and Morocco as priorities. Over the coming decade we should look seriously at Tanzania and Zambia – both countries where we once had Posts and now have considerable economic interests. Mozambique has similar claims. Botswana, Zambia and Uganda have opened High Commissions in Australia and would like this to be reciprocated. Given the diaspora links - over time - it would be important to consider Australia representation in South Sudan.

The role of Honorary Consuls in promoting Australian interests and providing consular assistance to Australian citizens in countries where we are not represented is of growing importance. We should aim to have an Honorary Consulate in every African country, and provide the Consuls with the necessary training and support to carry out their tasks effectively.

While the opening of some new posts is highly desirable, in the event that this is not achievable in the short to medium term, it is recommended that additional resources be allocated to the existing diplomatic network to enhance the capacity for engagement in prosecuting national interests.

There is a view that Australia would be able to achieve more diplomatically if the whole suite of Australian engagement and activity in Africa is better understood. It is recommended that a database be established covering government (federal and state) and private sector engagement. Such a database would provide more substantial platform for the identification of synergies and previously unrealised opportunities for new directions in the development of relations.

3. Budget commitments

We need to deliver on our promises and be modest and honest. We will need to take a long term and sustainable approach and avoid raising expectations. The Government's budget for Africa related activities should be consistent and predictable. Apart from the development program, discussed above, there should be stable funding for the whole range of activities including diplomatic representation, trade and investment promotion, Defence Cooperation and Counter-Terrorism. It is acknowledged that a significant part of untied support from Australia to UN bodies goes to Africa, and this should be analysed and reported, as should our peacekeeping contribution: Australia's total annual assistance to Africa – including our contributions through multilateral institutions and to UN peacekeeping operations – is estimated to be over \$500 million in 2015-16.

4. A citizen-led approach

It is important to recognise that Australia-Africa relations are already extensive and successful partly because they are driven by people-to-people connections, rather than by Government. Government does have a role to facilitate these growing contacts, and minimise bureaucratic impediments to collaboration, including through two-way movements of people. A constant practice of consulting with and harnessing these connections should be a priority for Government, and done in a comprehensive and coordinated way.

5. Reviewing our strategy

Advancing and diversifying Australia's engagement with the countries of Africa is necessarily a long-term project. As such, any strategy will require regular review and revision. It is recommended that the Minister for Foreign Affairs consider a periodic review of the Government's African strategy, recommendations and deliverables – perhaps in the form of a major public speech and a report to Parliament. AGAAR itself could make its own annual assessment of its strategy to the Government, following which AGAAR could revise and update the strategy as necessary.

THE ROLE OF AGAAR

AGAAR's role is advisory. It is not funded to provide grants and does not currently seek that role, although, we should not discount revisiting this issue once the Advisory Group moves more fully into its work. However its expertise across many disciplines and the networks of its members should be seen as an invaluable resource to Government to broaden and deepen the relationship. It is important that AGAAR meets regularly and that it has regular engagement with Minister for Foreign Affairs, other Ministers and senior officials so its voice can be heard and heeded. AGAAR should also be facilitated to meet with those in Australia engaging with Africa to ensure its own credibility. As noted above it should also have a focused "health check" audit with the Minister for Foreign Affairs at least once a year to review the state of the relationship and the success of the strategy, if adopted.

Summary of AGAAR Recommendations

AGAAR have generated 23 recommendations; however, 1-15 form the key priorities with 16 - 23 expanding on the priorities.

1. Build a strategic approach matching Australia's specialised offering with opportunity and need based on the following key agendas:
 - a. Expanding trade and investment ties;
 - b. Building a sustainable partnership on development;
 - c. Strengthening security;
 - d. Cooperating on global issues;
 - e. Strengthening the position of women;
 - f. Developing closer people-to-people ties.
2. Explore ways to consolidate and grow Australia's role in the existing sectors at forefront of our trade and investment activities namely: mineral and oil/gas exploration and production; Mining Equipment, Technology and Services (METS); and education services and expand into new areas such as agribusiness, renewable energy and professional services.
3. Support expanded research into new and innovative areas for increasing two-way and multinational trade and investment with Africa.
4. Support strong collaboration between Australian universities, DFAT's innovationXchange and research institutions such as ACIAR and CSIRO to develop initiatives that encourage innovation, particularly where Australia has recognised expertise such as agriculture and environmental management.
5. Organise regular trade and investment delegations to Africa, led by senior political personalities to identify and promote opportunities, outside the established trade and investment events.
6. Increase two way exchanges for African and Australian political and thought leaders and journalists, including through the Special Visits Program, the International Media Visits Program and emerging dialogues like the Aus-Africa Dialogue pioneered by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute and the Brenthurst Foundation.
7. Maintain the Australia Awards Program as a key vehicle to assist African countries build their capacity to deliver sustainable development.
8. Develop a targeted funded program of Defence and national security cooperation with key African countries, to strengthen cooperation in common security challenges.
9. Build a sustainable partnership on development through the return of bilateral aid \$100 million per year and thereafter be retained at a constant percentage of the total aid budget, with additional funding for humanitarian responses. The focus of the aid program should be Southern and Eastern Africa, including Ethiopia and South Sudan.
10. Build cyber resilience programs in Australian companies working in Africa and with their African partners.
11. Conduct deeper engagement and combined effort in dealing with global issues with African nations, through better use of multilateral groupings such as the Commonwealth, the Indian Ocean Rim Association and the African Union.

12. Appoint and deploy Special Envoys to engage Africans on key issues and candidacies in their capital cities to supplement regular dialogues with African representatives at international meetings and multilateral posts.
13. Increase support for people to people links, including expansion of the Australia Awards Program and a well-resourced African alumni program to cover both privately funded and scholarship students.
14. Develop innovative ideas to involve and leverage the significant African diaspora community in Australia to strengthen the country's links with Africa, including through: the establishment of a "Diaspora Unit" in DFAT as a focal point; and the evaluation of best practices of other host countries which have implemented successful diaspora programs.
15. Strengthen the position of women through the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment into the other 5 priority areas identified within this strategy.
16. Explore multinational collaboration (including non-traditional partner countries such as China and India) and international organisations to better leverage limited resources.
17. Establish a data-base of the wide range of Australian engagement and activities in Africa to improve the opportunity for synergies within and across the multiple sectors.
18. Assume a long term and sustainable approach to its activities in Africa and invest in stable funding arrangements for trade and investment promotion, Defence and Counter Terrorism cooperation and development programs.
19. Review the possibility of increasing the number of diplomatic posts in Africa, priority in the medium term be given to opening a post in Francophone Africa and over the longer term consider a series of criteria for new posts including concentration of economic interests, reciprocal representation in Australia and where strong diaspora links are present.
20. Ensure existing Posts be funded to undertake the wide range of activities across the many countries of resident and non-resident accreditation to ensure people to people connections as key delivery mechanism to build Australia's relations in Africa.
21. Develop a flagship initiative on strengthening of the position of women in Africa to be funded under the bilateral aid program, building on lesson learned from programs in other regions such as Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development and the Investing in Women Initiative in Asia.
22. Increase cooperation particularly on key issues such as: counter terrorism; practical training for African peacekeepers as part of Australia's ongoing commitments to peacekeeping in the continent; and on law enforcement matters which have direct relevance to our commercial interests, including money laundering, narcotic trafficking and malign cyber behavior.
23. Continue to support programs in Africa through Australian NGOs delivery model that has been proven successful in the past.

ATTACHMENT A

ADVISORY GROUP ON AUSTRALIA-AFRICA RELATIONS: MEMBERS

- Ms. Denise Cauchi, Director and Founder, Diaspora Action Australia
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