Partnership and Post-War
Guinea-Bissau

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entre les bailleurs de fonds et les pays réciipients les plus pauvres, plutôt que le contraire. Il reste à voir quelles solutions sont offertes par les nouveaux principes adoptés par le CAD pour un bon engagement international dans les états fragiles. La mise à l’épreuve de ces principes semble impliquer l’association des anciens colonisateurs avec leurs anciennes colonies.

Introduction

Development policy is characterised by shifting priorities and corresponding buzzwords. In the second half of the 1990s partnership became the key concept that would render the relations between donor and recipient countries more equal and increase effectiveness of aid. The concept has its roots in the relationship between partners in business based on a contract aimed at being profitable for those involved. In line with that view, the concept partnership was chosen to describe the relationship between the European Economic Community (EEC) and 46 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACPs) in the first Lomé Convention in 1975 (Karagiannis 2004: 11). According to Karagiannis, concepts such as association and cooperation were rejected, as they were thought to correspond to earlier contracts associated with ‘strong French influence’. The convention’s legal and economic role was predominant, and the neutrality of the European Union was stipulated. In later conventions (1980, 1985, 1989, 1994) the political neutrality vanished, and Karagiannis argues the Lomé Convention became ‘a donor driven mechanism of development assistance, based on a growing number of political and economic conditionalities’ (2004: 17).

This essay examines the use of the concept partnership in aid, in particular within the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida). It also examines the consequences of the so-called new partnership policy, which was formulated by international donor agencies in the late 1990s for Guinea-Bissau, a country designated as a difficult partnership country (DPC) and more recently as the first African narco-state.¹

The New Partnership Policy

Maxwell and Christiansen (2002: 478) trace the history of the use of the concept partnership within development aid discourses back to the Pearson report, Partners in Development (1969) and the Brandt Report (1980), and finally the OECD–DAC report Shaping the 21st Century:
The contribution of development co-operation published in 1996. The OECD–DAC report (1996: 2–3) summarises approaches that had already been outlined earlier in a policy statement from the year 1995 entitled Development Partnerships in the New Global Context (OECD–DAC 1995). The report proposes ‘a global development partnership effort’ and aims to contribute to ‘the broad contemporary effort to improve the effectiveness of development co-operation’. According to the report, from the experience of Marshall Plan aid it is evident that the hard work of countries to help themselves is crucial for success, and:

... development assistance will only work where there is a shared commitment of all the partners. We have seen the results in countries that have grown, prospered and achieved industrialization; they no longer depend on aid but stand on their own feet and participate in the global economy. We have seen, on the other hand, the countries in which civil conflict and bad governance have set back development for generations. And we have learned that success takes time and sustained international and local effort. (OECD–DAC 1996: 1)

The Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs formulated in 1997 a new strategy for future aid in the publication Partnership with Africa – Proposals for a New Swedish Policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa. According to the publication, in order for Sweden to support positive and much-needed changes in Africa ‘new instruments’ and a new approach were needed, and were included in the concept partnership. There should be no further discussion about recipient and donor. Rather the partners ‘must agree on premises and conditions’ and ‘(i)f the conditions are not fulfilled by one or other party, modifying or discontinuing the co-operation must be feasible’. The African leaders should have the right to ‘formulate and impose conditions for programmes focusing on development processes in their own countries’ (1997: 8). According to a communication from the Swedish Government, the new policy ‘aimed at developing closer co-operation, on more equal terms – partnership – between Sweden and Africa’ (1998: 1). The aims were: (1) supporting African-led processes of change towards consolidated democracy and sustainable development, focusing particularly on the situation of the poor, (2) developing partnership between Africa and the surrounding world, and (3) strengthening the long-term exchange between Sweden and Africa (1998: 1).

development cooperation within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in the late 1990s, underlined the importance of the qualitative characteristics of partnership. He argued that ‘no partnership can thrive or survive without respect for the other’ and stressed the impossibility of having partnership relations without ‘sharing values’, disclosing interests, and a clear contract with focus on success (1998: 259). Karlsson also emphasised the importance of staying away from ‘the plethora of conditionalities that today bedevils cooperation. But then there should be no backtracking by either party. African civil society tells us clearly that indulging reluctant or corruption-afflicted governments is just another form of paternalism’ (1998: 259). Finally, he mentioned the necessity for partners to have ‘equality of capacity’, which he argued was possible, despite the fact that they might be unequal when it concerned access to money. What mattered was that partners had ‘equality in the capacity to analyse the terms of a contract’ (1998: 259).

In 1997 the UK Government announced its new partnership policy on aid, which relied on similar concepts and approaches to the Swedish one. According to the White Paper of the UK Government (1997), the criterion for becoming a partnership country was to be a low-income country with a large proportion of poor people. In addition the country should:

... have a commitment to the principles of the agreed international development targets and be pursuing policies designed to achieve these and other UN targets which they have agreed; be committed to pro-poor economic growth and conservation of the environment, and be pursuing appropriate policies ... and pursue policies which promote responsive and accountable government, recognising that governments have obligations to all their people; ... which encourages transparency and bears down on corruption in the conduct of both the public service and the business sector (UK Government 1997: Panel 14).

Fears that the poorest and unstable countries would not be able to enter partnership relations, and thus be excluded from aid, were quickly raised. In a brief overview of the UK White Paper, the Overseas Development Institute (1998) pointed out that important questions related to aid cooperation based on the partnership ideology had to be answered. These questions concerned the principles for partnership required and to what degree these would be valid for all countries. Should a country’s performance take priority over need? What should be the
role of recipient countries in defining the concept partnership and deciding on the criteria for partnership?

**Partnership Turns Sour**

In 1998, Karlsson argued that the ‘African renaissance’ had started, and ‘countries which take responsibility for the public good have a right to claim their share of what the world owes Africa’ (1998: 257). He was explicit about what countries would be qualified for partnership relations: ‘Partnership will follow those who lead their countries to greater openness, respect for human rights and deeper democracies. Those who do not will see their legitimacy erode, and with it the basis for partnership’ (1998: 263). Thereby, the positively ideologically loaded concept partnership acquired its opposite: ‘difficult partnership’, a term that incorporated the so-called ‘poor performers’. These were the ‘fragile states’ or ‘failed states’ characterised by political instability, conflict and extremely low income. Countries included saw their legitimacy eroded and became ‘aid orphans’ (Addison et al. 2005; Levin and Dollar 2005; McGillivray 2005, 2006; Torres and Anderson 2004). How were they classified?

The fluid definitions of ‘failed states’, or ‘difficult partnership countries’ (DPCs), used within the donor community have been noted (Torres and Anderson 2004). The OECD–DAC report *Poor Performers: Basic approaches for supporting development in difficult partnerships* (2001) acknowledged that the classification of difficult partnership was technically problematic. Intentions or commitment were considered crucial for the classification of difficult partnership countries. Weak countries although ‘willing’ to do their best should not be classified as DPCs, in contrast to countries represented by governments that ‘do not have credible commitment to effective policies and their implementation’ (2001: 8). High levels of corruption, lack of transparency, violation of human rights, lack of concern for the poor and repression were additional characteristics of DPCs, and the report noted that apparently many of these countries were in conflict or had just emerged from one. Finally, the importance of using aid resources effectively was stressed: thus, between the lines, the report warned against aid to DPCs, while at the same time the importance of supporting the poor was underlined. Criteria for determination of fragility of states vary between donors; however the World Bank’s *Country Policy and Institutional Assessment rating* (CPIA) is increasingly used.
In October 2002 the donor community, represented by the DAC, World Bank, the European Commission (EC) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), organised a joint workshop with the theme Working for Development in Difficult Partnerships. The workshop report stressed that donors should ‘stay engaged, despite the risks involved, in countries where the DAC partnership model does not apply fully’ (OECD–DAC 2002). The importance of identifying innovative approaches suitable for particular circumstances was underlined, as well as acknowledgement of the negative effects, the so-called spill-over effects, of DPCs for neighbouring countries. It was agreed that more knowledge was needed, thus a Learning and Advisory Group was proposed, and it would be hosted by the DAC Network on Good Governance and Capacity Development (GOVNET), which has been responsible since 2001 for work on difficult partnership within the DAC.

On behalf of the DAC Learning and Advisory Process on Difficult Partnership (DAC–LAP), Levin and Dollar prepared the report The Forgotten States: Aid volumes and volatility in difficult partnership countries (1992–2002). Levin and Dollar define DPCs as countries with (1) low-income according to the World Bank classification based on gross domestic income (GDI) per capita, and (2) countries with weak institutions in terms of the two bottom quintiles of the World Bank’s Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA). The main finding of the report is that DPCs received ‘around 40% less aid than predicted by their policy and institutional strength in pooled-sectional regressions, primarily due to disproportionately low flows from bilateral donors’ (2005: 2). However, there were great differences within this group of countries. A subgroup, designated as ‘aid darlings’ (some are post-conflict countries), received more aid than their level of poverty and quality of policy would predict, while the ‘aid orphan’ countries received less (2005: 3). Further still, aid to DPCs was characterised by almost double the volatility compared to aid to other low-income countries. Levin and Dollar argued that aid could be increased to these countries without risking reduction in performance.

The findings of Levin and Dollar (2005) were restated in the Chair’s summary (OECD–DAC 2005a) of the Senior Level Forum on Development Effectiveness (hosted by DiFD and co-summoned by the EC, OECD–DAC and UNDP) held in London, 13–14 January 2005. The Forum focused on development effectiveness in fragile states and highlighted donors’ tendency to be selective in allocating aid to good per-
formers. According to the Chair’s summary (2005, ‘donors appear to have withdrawn from the same country at the same time, e.g., Guinea Bissau or the Central African Republic’ (2005: 5). The simultaneous abandonment of Guinea-Bissau by donors noted by the Senior Level Forum on Development Effectiveness was caused by a particular reading of the pre-conflict situation in the country. It is necessary to examine how the new partnership policy contributed to the exit of donors from Guinea-Bissau.

**Partnership and Pre-conflict Guinea-Bissau**

In 1996, the year before Sweden launched its new partnership policy for Africa, which, as already noted, aimed at ‘strengthening the long term exchange between Sweden and Africa’ (Government Communication 1998: 1), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) was actively working on its withdrawal of aid from Guinea-Bissau. Stefan Sjölander (1997) was recruited to carry out ‘an independent study on Swedish development co-operation with Guinea-Bissau’, which, according to the Terms of Reference, dated 9 October 1996, would be the background against which Sida would formulate its recommendations to the Swedish Government about the future cooperation with the country.

In the evaluation report, Sjölander (1997) highlighted positive trends in Guinea-Bissau when it came to democracy and the high economic growth rate – indeed, one of the highest in Africa at that time. Serious problems related to macro-economic management were identified and performance in relation to development agreements with Sida was stated to be poor. Sjölander explained the lack of performance with regard to the ‘unwillingness’ of the Guinean Government to cooperate with Sweden for improvements in health, agriculture and education, evidenced in limited allocation of resources to these sectors.

He also highlighted ‘the prevention of human competence at certain Ministries to actually participate in the reform of present conditions and through inability to address central issues and make decisions concerning fundamental sector reforms’ (1997: 10–11). Sjölander did not attribute performance failure exclusively to failures of the Guinean Government. Sida’s policy, according to which ‘the recipient country should hold the responsibility of all central project activities, including planning, monitoring and reporting procedures’, was also to blame for meagre results (1997: 8). He pointed out that the most successful projects
in Guinea-Bissau did not apply that strategy. Finally, Sjölander stressed that Guinea-Bissau was ‘one of the most underdeveloped countries’ that Sida cooperated with, and lack of financial and human resources was severe (1997: 7).

According to Sjölander (1997: 8), the evaluation he had carried out was linked to requirements on Sida for savings owing to diminished resources for bilateral aid from the Swedish Government. He maintained that Guinea-Bissau, as well as other ‘weak’ countries, was unlikely to have the possibility of engaging in development collaboration based on the new ‘partnership’ ideology and warned against cutting aid to these countries, as they obviously had less capacity for performance in relation to ‘more developed countries’. That would undermine the policy of the Swedish Parliament to give priority to the poorest countries as recipients for aid. Sjölander’s warning became true and Guinea-Bissau was the first country Sweden classified as an unworthy partner in line with the new partnership policy. In a press release in June 1997, three years after the first democratic elections in Guinea-Bissau, Sida announced its changed aid policy towards the country. It was confirmed that one of the principal reasons for disengagement in aid was the lack of political will of the recipient country. At the same time it was underlined that Guinea-Bissau was one of the poorest countries in the world and the need for assistance was enormous.

In the wake of the press release and apparent scaling down of Sida’s activities in Bissau and plans to move the embassy to Dakar, a debate began in Sida’s newsletter Omvärlten. Was the decision to cut aid to Guinea-Bissau acceptable considering the high level of poverty and the long-term collaboration between both countries? Sten Rylander (1998a), at that time Assistant Director General and Head of the Africa Department of Sida, stated that the collaboration between Sweden and Guinea-Bissau would continue in a new form and content. Aid would be allocated through a multilateral debt relief, which was extremely urgent, particularly for the benefit of the poor, he argued. Rylander confirmed that Sida worked actively against corruption, something those who argued for continuation of aid to Guinea-Bissau should also do. He proclaimed ‘corruption-inclined kleptocracies have no chance to establish dynamic partnership-based relations for cooperation’. Finally, Rylander praised the new Sida thinking on aid characterised by strong engagement for partnership based on jointly formulated demands (in Swedish: ‘gemensamt formulérade krav’) and increased interdependence.
In a lecture given in Dar es Salaam in May 1998, Rylander (1998b) stressed the same five qualitative aspects of partnership presented by Karlsson and discussed earlier (indeed, a part of Rylander’s lecture is a word-for-word repetition of Karlsson’s (1998). Rylander argued the new policy was based on mutual respect, sharing of values and transparency in interests. He claimed the relationship should be based on a contract and, as Karlsson did (1998), he argued it was crucial to ‘avoid the plethora of conditionalities that today bedevils development cooperation. But then there should be no backtracking by either party. African civil society tells us clearly that indulging reluctant or corruption-affected governments is just another form of paternalism’ (11). Thus, the cutting down of aid to Guinea-Bissau could be interpreted as Sida’s response to the demands of African civil society.

Before Sweden had executed its plans to move the embassy from Bissau to Dakar, Guinea-Bissau was at war. On 7 June 1998, a military revolt against the president, Joao Bernardo Vieira, commonly known by the nickname Nino, broke out. It was led by former army commander Ansumane Mane. Mane had been suspended from his position in February 1998, allegedly for having sold weapons to the Casamance rebels in southern Senegal. Within 48 hours nearly 1,300 Senegalese troops and 500 troops from Guinea (Conakry) entered Bissau, according to the UN and Conflict Monitor (2000), and ‘encouraged by France, both Guinea and Senegal sent troops in support of Vieira’. Vieira and Mane signed a peace agreement on 2 November 1998, in Abuja, Nigeria. Elections were to be held and the Senegalese and Guinean troops replaced by a regional peacekeeping force. The deal established an interim government of national unity with supporters of both President Vieira and the rebel faction. The peace accord did not hold and finally Vieira was ousted on 6 May 1999. He sought political asylum in Portugal and a new interim government was established awaiting elections.6

During the war the Swedish ambassador did her best to provide emergency supplies to the population and contribute to the peace process. Yet, the war did not change Sida’s plan. After peace was established the time was ripe for departure and Sida moved its headquarters to the more fashionable Dakar in neighbouring Senegal. Sida claimed it was still serving the interests of the poor, thus it would contribute to the alleviation of the debt burden, in addition to a minimal support to rebuild what was left of the National Public Health Laboratory, a Swedish
project in Bissau, which had been bombed during the last days of the war.\footnote{7}

As already noted, before the military uprising in 1998 donors were preparing their exit from Guinea-Bissau. This is reflected in statistics from the African Development Bank (Pureza et al. 2007: 16) of the net official development assistance to Guinea-Bissau from all sources, which fell from $US180 million in 1996 to $124 million in 1997 and still further to $96 million in 1998, the year of the outbreak of war. In 1999 the net official development assistance to the country from all sources was less than one third of what it was in 1996, or $52 million. The most important donors since the post-independence period, Sweden, the Netherlands and USA, all left. The consequences of such a dramatic cut in aid had to be substantial, in particular taking into account the extreme aid dependency of the country (OECD–DAC 2006: 48). The population lived in dire conditions with increasing disparities between those who had benefited and suffered from the liberalisation politics since the mid-1980s.

Lately, research on the causes of war has burgeoned. Economic decline is recognised as a contributing factor to conflict, and in particular economic shock (Miguel et al. 2004). Bussmann et al. (2005) find evidence in support of claims that foreign economic liberalisation policies destabilise countries and contribute to civil war in Africa. They take Guinea and Guinea-Bissau as comparative examples of countries with similar risks of conflict after their governments had introduced far-reaching economic reforms. They argue that the Guinean president avoided war with a carrot-and-stick strategy, while Nino did not compensate the losers, not even within the army, with dire consequences.

Kovsted and Tarp (1999) point out that, as a consequence of the World Bank conditionality, military expenditure was cut and the army size reduced from 12,000 in 1991 to 7,000 in 1997. Payment for 700 non-existent soldiers was also cut. Thus, both a decline in military spending and attempts to end the army’s illegal lucrative arms sales to the Casamance rebels may have triggered the revolt. In addition, President Nino had promoted his supporters within the army, which caused tension between the older group of the military (‘antigos combatentes’) and the younger group of career soldiers. The UN and Conflict Monitor (2000) reports that the replacement of the Guinean Peso as the national currency with the CFA franc in 1997 caused ‘a cost of living rise and unrest within the army’. Rudebeck (2001) argues that the mili-
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Turbulent Democracy

Since the 1998 military uprising, the Guinean population has participated in six elections that have been judged to be free and fair by the international community. In February 2000 Kumba Yala took office as president following two rounds of presidential elections. President Yala’s rule turned out to be chaotic and problematic (Ferreira 2004). His speeches were unstructured and statements about moving the capital from Bissau to Buba (a town in southern Guinea-Bissau), as well as threats to invade The Gambia, contributed to concerns about his sanity. Owing to inadequate management, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) suspended budgetary assistance to the government, and implementation of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRSP) was abandoned. On 14 November 2002, Yala dismissed the government, dissolved the National Assembly and appointed Mario Pires to lead a government controlled by presidential decree.

Yala’s endless replacement of ministers and repeated postponement of planned elections caused dissatisfaction and unrest (Ferreira 2004). On 14 September 2003, the army, led by Chief of Defence General Verrisimo Correia Seabra, placed President Yala under house arrest, two days after he had announced the postponement of elections. Subsequently, President Yala announced his resignation in order to maintain national unity and peace. Among the majority of the population the coup d’état was welcomed, while the UN Security Council and the international community condemned it and demanded legislative elections as soon as possible. The presidents of Nigeria, Ghana and Senegal insisted that the military leaders set up a non-military team to serve as a
national unity government in the meantime. A Committee for the Restoration of Democracy and Constitutional Order was established, and on 28 September 2003, Henrique Rosa, a businessman in Bissau, was sworn in as president and Artur Sanha became prime minister.

On 28 and 30 March 2004, legislative elections were held. These were judged by international observers as free and fair despite some irregularities and disorder (Ferreira 2004). The PAIGC made an alliance with Yala’s party (PRS) and on 9 May, Carlos Gomes Jr became prime minister. In October violence broke out following a mutiny by soldiers who returned from a UN peacekeeping mission in Liberia demanding unpaid salaries. Despite the chief of the armed forces, General Seabra, being killed, a peaceful end to the uprising was negotiated without any legal aftermath.

Presidential elections were held in 2005. As noted in a report from the Security Council (2005a) of 10 June, the controversy surrounding the election started when it came to deciding about the eligibility of ex-presidents Yala and Nino. In the end, both were cleared as lawful candidates, a highly contested decision. Ferreira (2005: 2) argues, for instance, that there were legal problems with the decision, and thus it was more of a political choice than a juridical judgment. According to IRINnews.org (11 May 2005), the Supreme Court had cleared Nino and Yala to contest the presidential election, ‘but has not publicly announced its reasons for overruling the legal obstacles which had threatened to prevent both men from standing’. In the same news report, Joaquim Chissano, the UN special envoy to Guinea-Bissau, declared he was ‘very satisfied’ with the situation in Bissau and confirmed that the military would respect the civilian authorities.

Nino, with Yala’s support, won the second round of the presidential elections. However, the defeated candidate, Malam Bacai Sanha, did not accept the results and alleged fraud. In a communication from the Security Council dated 19 August 2005, the Council congratulated the Guinean population for its participation in the elections, which were judged as ‘free, fair and transparent’ by international observers (Security Council 2005 b). After an unsuccessful appeal by Sanha and his supporters for a recount, Nino was sworn in as president in October 2005. Nonetheless, in Guinea-Bissau the results are still disputed. Lars Rudebeck (2007: 17) argues:

When election results are disputed, leading to harsh political and economic crisis (as for instance in Guinea-Bissau in 2005 and since) it is
obvious that society suffers from a serious lack of trust. This manifests itself at several levels: as distrust within the political system between various key actors, as citizens’ distrust of the system, and as distrust between citizens in society at large in ‘civil society’.

In addition to accusations of fraud in the second round of the presidential elections of 2005, there were also concerns about financial matters. Ferreira (2005: 2) notes that Nino was the candidate with the best financial backing. During this writer’s visit to Guinea-Bissau in December 2005–January 2006 rumours were rife. Nino’s opponents argued Nino and Yala should not have been accepted as lawful candidates. The sources of Nino’s financial power were also debated. Some suggested he had received both US and French oil-money while others were of the opinion that the US, also interested in future oil contracts, supported Nino financially. Another reason for the assumption that the Americans supported Nino financially was that they did not want a Muslim as president. However, Nino’s supporters countered that he was the only person who was able to control the army. Many noted the absence of donors and some were confident that Nino would bring them back, in particular Sweden.

**Difficult Partnership Country Becomes ‘Narco-state’**

Whatever the causal link between the economic policy adopted and the military uprising in 1998, the sudden economic shock caused by the cutting down of aid, as well as the ending of the diplomatic presence in the late 1990s certainly did not make the situation easier. Despite repeated elections, declared by the international community to have been free and fair, support from the international community to Guinea-Bissau has been characterised by a ‘wait and see’ approach (Economic and Social Council 2005). Even before the military uprising in 1998 Guinea-Bissau had been labelled as a poor performer and a difficult partnership country. In 2005, the Ad Hoc Advisory Group of the Economic and Social Council on Guinea-Bissau confirmed that bilateral donors had:

... made it clear that the Government needed to promote political stability, demonstrate political will to define a national vision for development and develop the capacity to implement its strategy before assistance would be forthcoming. It should be noted that 80% per cent of the State’s budget is derived from official development assistance (2005: 6).
Despite the Security Council (2005b) praising the Guinean population for its participation in ‘free, fair and transparent’ elections, donors were reluctant to respond to the Council’s repeated encouragement to give aid to Guinea-Bissau. A round-table meeting with donors held in Lisbon on 11 February 2005 resulted in pledges worth no more than 1 million Euros; evidently they were waiting for the coming elections. Nonetheless, it even turned out to be difficult to mobilise economic support to finance the elections, which in turn were a prerequisite for further support (2005b: 10).

In a report published after the second presidential elections the Security Council (2006a) described the catastrophic economic situation and the political deadlock that characterised the country. The bitter dispute over the 2005 presidential elections echoed in the national parliament and the balance of power was uncertain. Lack of dialogue between camps was recognised. In a report dated 3 July 2007, the Security Council (2007) affirmed that ‘against a backdrop of months of rising political and social tension, and a deteriorating economic situation, a national political stability pact’ was agreed on in March 2007, when a group of President Nino’s supporters defected during a parliamentary confidence motion against the prime minister. Despite Nino’s resistance, a new government of national consensus was installed in April. Thus the programmes that had been suspended by the Bretton Woods institutions were revived. The report finally called on donors to honour the pledges made at a round-table meeting in Geneva in November 2006, which had resulted in pledges of $US262.51 million, or less than 50 per cent of the overall goal of $538 million (Security Council 2006a).

The report from the Security Council in July 2007 laments the shocking increase in organised crime, drug trafficking, illegal immigration and the large number of illicit small arms in Guinea-Bissau. The Economist (2007: 46) reports that Guinea-Bissau has become Africa’s first ‘narco-state’, the ‘pushers’ paradise’. The country has become a drug-distribution hub for cocaine that arrives from Colombia in huge amounts in aircraft and boats. From Guinea-Bissau most of the drugs are transported to Europe, but also to growing markets in the Middle East and Far East. Accordingly, Amnesty International (2007) was worried about news of threats to and harassment of journalists and human rights activists as a result of their reporting on drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau. They had published news linking senior individuals and military offi-
cials of high rank to the drug trafficking. The military officials went on national radio and urged the journalists to publicly renounce their reports. After failure to do so, an announcement was made asking them to report to the nearest police station, which resulted in the journalists hiding, as they feared for their lives.

Increasingly, development institutions are becoming concerned about the cost of non-intervention in difficult partnership countries (McGillivray 2006). The report *Data Annex to Monitoring Resource Flows to Fragile States* ordered by the DAC Senior Level Meeting in December 2005 affirms ‘evidence suggests that the cost of state failure or continued state fragility is exceptionally high to the population of the countries themselves, their neighbours, and to the wider international community’ (OECD–DAC 2006: 7). Nonetheless, development institutions, bilateral and multilateral, seem reluctant to allocate aid to fragile states or even other poor countries independent of their assumed fragility. Nunnenkamp and Thiele (2006: 1199) find that ‘the targeting of aid to low-income countries has not become stronger in recent years’, and, contrary to claims, the contribution of the World Bank is not better in that respect than that of bilateral donors. Post-colonial ties and commercial interests are still important determinants for allocation of aid. Nunnenkamp and Thiele maintain that the ambiguity in aid allocation criteria stems partially from the lack of information of the CPIA ratings used by the World Bank. François and Sud (2006) also find the CPIA rating subjective and non-transparent. They argue that ‘the inability to raise the standard of living of the people ... is the most important criterion for state fragility’ (2006: 148–9).

In the report *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States* the Development Co-operation Directorate presents a compiled list of principles (OECD–DAC 2005b). The long-term aim is to assist the building of ‘legitimate, effective and resilient state institutions’. The aid procedures proposed are at first glance strikingly similar to the ‘normal’ ones. Harmonisation, coherence and alignment are all included in the current policy for aid. One may suspect the principle on coming to an agreement on ‘practical co-ordination mechanisms’ may be the gateway to conditionality. Stressing attention to ‘context’, choosing ‘instruments to fit circumstances’ and recognising the ‘political-security-development nexus’ may possibly be classified as innovative trends. The principle of ensuring no harm should be obvious in all aid, while emphasis on fast response and long-term engagement is an appropriate...
reminder. Avoiding aid orphans is a noble objective. A number of DAC members have offered to pilot-test these principles on certain difficult partnership countries. Among these, Portugal has offered to test the principles on Guinea-Bissau.

**Conclusion**

The new partnership policy formulated in the 1990s had little to offer the populations of Guinea-Bissau and other low-income or post-conflict countries in a similar situation. However, it justified donors’ classification of their recipient countries as poor performers or fragile states, even on the basis of ill-defined evidence. The partnership policy was used as an exit strategy offering a legitimate reason for donors to abandon countries judged as difficult, which not only happened to be the poorest countries but also unstable and conflict-prone countries. Thus, while the partnership rhetoric stressed concern for poverty reduction, it turned anti-poverty in practice by its reluctance to give aid to the populations of the poorest countries in the world.

In practice, the partnership policy has underlined the unequal relations between donors and recipient countries, rather than the opposite. Somewhat scornful use of vocabulary to describe the countries unworthy of partnership relations by high-ranking officials within the donor community is distasteful. The same applies to some of their discussions about the qualitative aspects identified as crucial for partnership relations, such as mutual respect, sharing of values and equality in capacity, which recalls the former division between civilised and barbarian societies. Guinea-Bissau and other so-called difficult partnership countries belong to the latter category, and thereby lost their legacy as worthy partners for development with dire consequences for the populations. For instance, in Guinea-Bissau children have been out of school for months, if not years, in addition to the influx of drug-dealers into the county, which has acquired yet another sad denomination: the first narco-state in Africa.

It remains to be seen what solutions the new principles adopted by DAC for good international engagement in fragile states can offer. Ironically, the testing of these principles, accidentally or not, seems to imply the pairing of former colonisers with their ex-colonies. The absence of partnership rhetoric is in this case rather noteworthy.
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Notes

1 See The Economist, 9–15 June 2007: 46.
2 This essay, whose title refers to ‘genuine’ partnership as ‘partnership’ was not enough, is a revised version of a series of lectures held in 1997 in Abidjan, Dar es Salaam, Dakar, Kampala and Stockholm.
4 See also McGillivray (2005, 2006).
6 For more details on the conflict, see Rudebeck (2001), Kovsted and Tarp (1999), and Ferreira (2004).
7 See Einarsdóttir and Gunnlaugsson (2005).
8 See Rudebeck (2006).
9 See also Addison et al. (2005).
10 See http://www.oecd.org/document/46/0,2340, en_2649_33693550 35233262 1_1_1_1,00.html.

References


Guinea-Bissau is one of the most fragile countries in the world. As a consequence, it has barely progressed in the last decades, mainly when compared to its peers. Bissau’s post-war period, without chronic political instability real GDP per capita could have been at least two thirds higher than its 2013 level. This assessment shows the crucial importance of the security sector reform (and other governance-increasing, rent-seeking inhibiting reforms). It also shows that the current estimated cost of the security sector reform is modest in comparison, since it puts into perspective its monetary costs which are easy to calculate and mostly front-loaded vis-à-vis its wide and deep benefits, which are not as explicit and accrue over time. Guinea-Bissau was in dire need of a functioning state and not just for the good of the country itself. The quest for a stable state also served the interest of global Western players in fighting terrorism and in encouraging the stability of the entire West African sub-region, which has already been labeled the “Pandora Box of Africa.” States and Citizenship in Africa. Leiden: Brill. Einarsdóttir, Jónna (2007): Partnership and post-war Guinea-Bissau, in: African Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 10, No. 1–2, pp. 93–112. Ellis, Stephen (2009): West Africa’s international drug trade, in: African Affairs, Vol. 108, No. 431, pp. 171–196. EU EOM Guinea-Bissau (2009): Preliminary report on presidential elections, July 2009, Guinea-Bissau. The Guinea-Bissau War of Independence was an armed conflict and national liberation struggle that took place in Portuguese Guinea between 1963 and 1974. The war ended when Portugal, after the Carnation Revolution of 1974, granted the independence of Guinea-Bissau, as well as Cape Verde a year later. Portuguese Guinea (as well as the nearby Cape Verde archipelago) had been claimed by Portugal since 1446 and was a major trading post for commodities and African slaves during the 18th century, before the Guinea-Bissau is unlikely to receive substantially more attention in the near future for several reasons: the international community’s preoccupation with other, much bloodier situations; the capacity of the transitional authorities to maintain domestic order so far and play the dialogue game; and the willingness of ECOWAS to engage with them. Nhamadjo took over as transitional president, and Rui Duarte Barros, a PRS associate, became prime minister, formed a cabinet and presented his transition program on 21 July. ECOWAS deployed a 629-man strong police and army contingent (ECOWAS mission in Bissau, ECOMIB) to help with security sector reform, support the transition and facilitate the departure of the Angolan military mission, which was completed peacefully on 9 June.