

Half full or half empty?

Overshadowed by the media coverage of the G20 Summit, the OECD has released its annual figures on net ODA as provided by its 22 country Development Assistance Committee (DAC).

The results come as a surprise. In 2008, ODA increased by 10.2% to \$119.8 bn. Eight DAC members increased net ODA by 10 % or more: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Greece, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain and the UK. Donors are scaling up core aid programmes including to LDCs. Of DAC members' \$26 bn net bilateral ODA to Africa, \$22.5 bn went to sub Saharan Africa.

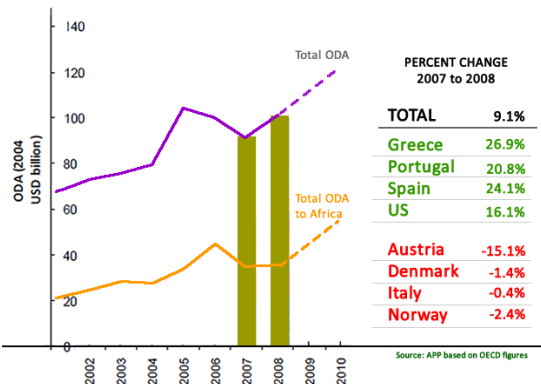
The OECD says that 2010 aid targets will be achieved by many countries, and are within grasp overall: "\$10-15 billion must still be added to current forward spending plans if donors are to meet their current 2010 commitments".

Is the glass half full or half empty? The aid debate is so gloomy that the figures seem happily positive. Aid advocates in government and civil society deserve recognition. Progress is being made.

But step back, and the big picture is still poor: only five countries have reached the UN's ODA target of 0.7% GNI, and some countries are letting the others' down. The DAC average is only 0.3%. Global economic recession is massively increasing the financing and emergency needs of LDCs. If ODA volume is a litmus test of donor countries' sense of responsibility for equitable growth and poverty reduction, it leaves much to be desired.

Grandstanding about whether aid works must not be allowed to detract from ODA's importance and potential: to meet urgent needs; to promote growth and opportunity; to help recipient countries leverage other financial flows, including domestic revenues and investment; and ultimately to end aid dependence.

DAC MEMBERS' ODA 2002 - 2008



News Overview

[Southern African leaders held a special summit in Swaziland on Monday to examine an economic recovery plan for Zimbabwe](#) where they approved Zimbabwe's reconstruction plan, amounting to \$8.5 billion. The Africa Union and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have urged both Washington and the European Union to lift sanctions against Zimbabwe now that the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) has joined President Mugabe's ZANU-PF party to form a unity government.

At the same summit, the SADC responded to the controversial change of government in **Madagascar** following the inauguration of the former opposition leader [Andry Rajoelina as the country's president](#) and went further to suspend it from its regional group. The African Union denounced the change in government there as a coup and as such suspended the country's membership.

Somalis are expressing anger over Thursday's [assassination attempt on the life of Interior Minister Sheikh Abdulkadir Ali Omar](#) that left at least two people dead. Hard line insurgent group, al-Shabaab (described by Washington as a terrorist organization with close links to Al Qaeda) is suspected of carrying out the attack.

Leaders of the **Group of 20** will gather in London on Thursday 2 April for a one-day summit to chart a way out of the worst global downturn in generations. [A draft communiqué](#) prepared ahead of the summit states that the group will give more money to the International Monetary Fund to lend to poor nations hit by the economic turmoil.

Arab leaders ended their annual summit in Doha, Qatar, with a list of resolutions and closing statements vowing unity, despite recent divisions and verbal disputes. [Qatar's Sheikh Hamid expressed Arab leader's support of Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir](#) in his tug-of-war with the International Criminal Court over an indictment for war crimes in Darfur. President Bashir, who ordered aid groups out of Darfur immediately following the issuing of the arrest warrant against him, told the summit that the Sudanese people are rallying around him, and he later thanked Arab leaders for supporting him in his battle against what he called an "unjust indictment."

Postdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) presents a report on ["Global Green Recovery: Recommendations for Immediate G20 Action"](#) to the G20 London Summit, stating that a global green recovery could deliver immediate and long-term economic benefits.

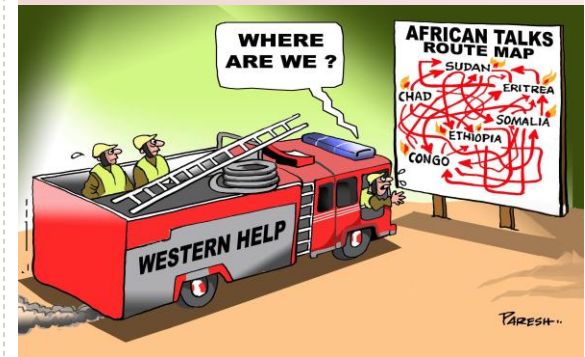
On the blogs

[GEG Blog: Africa, Trade and the Crisis: A Stimulus Package for Africa, 23 March 2009](#)

Dominique Njinkeu, Executive Director of the International Lawyers and Economists Against Poverty (ILEAP) sets out the trade-related challenges facing Africa in the current economic crisis and makes the case for a stimulus package for Africa.

[Reuters Africa Blog: France and Africa. New relationship? 26 March 2009](#)

Matthew Tostevin, a journalist at Reuters, highlights how President Sarkozy intended to break France's old way of doing business in Africa when he was elected president in 2007 and what the actual situation is today. He goes further to state that "the pace of progress so far has raised questions over how determined France is to break with the past."



APP Activities

Peter Eigen participated in a [two-day meeting: "Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation – One Year Later,"](#) hosted by the Kofi Annan Foundation in Geneva, Switzerland. The above-mentioned meeting aimed to intensify lessons learned from the mediation process in Kenya. **Kofi Annan's** opening remarks called on Kenyan leaders to accelerate implementation of the country's reform process. On 30 March, **Graça Machel** along with Hon Douglas Alexander opened the multi-stakeholder event on health-related MDGs and the importance of public-private partnerships that was co-hosted by IBLF and GAVI Alliance in London. She encouraged business people to become active in Africa. The APP launched a pamphlet on ["New Multilateralism"](#) with contributions from **Linah Mohohlo** and **Michel Camdessus** prior to the G20 summit in London. **Tidjane Thiam** was announced CEO of Prudential plc. **Olusegun Obasanjo** attended an HD meeting in Zanzibar on "Mediators on Wars in Africa" to discuss how conflict in Africa can be more effectively resolved.

“ At current aid levels the actual and potential costs of bank bailouts are equivalent to official development assistance for the next 154 years! ”

Olivier Consolo, Director of CONCORD (European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development)

Multilateral Organizations

African Union

- [The AU Commission and the UN issued a joint communiqué at the "African Regional Workshop on Security Sector Reform" on 23-25 March 2009](#)
- [African Ministers of Trade at their 5th Ordinary Session on 20 March called for more collaboration to ensure Aid for Trade](#)

AfDB

- [A report titled: "Impact of the Crisis on African Economies: Sustaining Growth and Poverty Reduction: African Perspectives and Recommendations to the G20" was presented to Gordon Brown ahead of the G20 London Summit](#)
- [Africa Regional Paper delivered at the 5th World Water Forum in March 2009](#)

World Bank

- [World Bank predicts sharp decline of growth in developing world in 2009; weak recovery in 2010](#)
- [World Bank assistance of \\$40 million gives boost to Niger's private sector development](#)

IMF

- [IMF Managing Director outlined a five-point agenda on which the IMF would like to see progress at the London G20 Summit](#)
- [IMF revamps its lending to help countries face crisis](#)

OECD

- [Official Development Assistance figures: "Development Aid at its highest level ever in 2008"](#)

UN

- [UN set to double Kenya food aid](#)
- [Report of the OHCHR on the relationship between climate change and human rights](#)

AWEPA

- [Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa \(AWEPA\) calls on parliamentarians to build partnerships in ECOWAS to combat climate change](#)

IFPRI

- [Brief by the International Food Policy Research Institute on: "Agriculture and Climate Change: An Agenda for Negotiation in Copenhagen" in December 2009](#)

Opinions

[Inter Press Service \(South Africa\): Africa-help yourself, there's plenty, 27 March 2009](#)

Joyce Mulama, a journalist at IPS, reminds the African continent that it has enough resources to help itself, but that it needs to make better use of them.

[Business Daily \(Kenya\): Global partnership holds promise for Africa, 23 March 2009](#)

The UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, highlights the challenges facing the AU Peace and Security Council, as well as, the importance of a close partnership between the UN and the AU in ensuring peace and security in Africa.

[Denver Post \(USA\): A time for global action, 24 March 2009](#)

The United States President, Barack Obama calls on the G20 leaders to take bold, comprehensive and coordinated action to restart the global economy and reform it so as to prevent similar crises from recurring.

[African Monitor \(South Africa\): The G20 crisis meeting must reflect the concerns of grassroots, 1 April 2009](#)

In a comment on the G20 meeting in London, founder and president of the African Monitor, Archbishop Njongo Ndungane, highlights the impact of the global economic recession on African countries and offers pragmatic recommendations on how to counter them.

[Financial Times \(UK\): Peripheral care should be the central concern, 23 March 2009](#)

George Soros, Chairman of Soros Fund Management, argues that the forthcoming Group of 20 meeting has to come up with practical measures to support the less developed countries.

[The Observer \(UK\): What the G20 must do, 29 March 2009](#)

Former UN Secretary-General, and Chair of the Africa Progress Panel, Kofi Annan states that "Africa is hit twice by the global crisis" and that "a new and improved form of multilateralism is needed to allow the continent overcome these bleak prospects."

[Pambazuka News \(South Africa\): The global financial crisis: Lessons and responses from Africa, 19 March 2009](#)

Demba Moussa Dembele, Director of the Forum for African Alternatives highlights some fundamental lessons that should be drawn from the global financial crisis. He calls for "Africa and Africans not to forget neoliberal capitalism and explore new paths to an endogenous development for and by its people, recommending that Africa should restore capital controls and reject unfavorable trade liberalization policies, as well as reversing the privatization of key sectors and natural resources."

G20 Update

[CHINA- Chinese Vice-Minister for Agriculture signed an agreement with the UN Food and Agricultural Organization \(FAO\) to create a \\$30 million trust fund that will help boost the food output of developing countries with a strong focus on Africa](#)

[FRANCE- Nicolas Sarkozy promised a new relationship with Africa during his three nation tour to Africa aimed to promote peace, democracy and French business interests](#)

[USA- USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance \(OFDA\) says it will provide \\$3.7 million to assist with food security in Senegal](#)

[GERMANY- State Secretary Erich Stather of the German Development Ministry announced that Germany will withdraw its government advisors in Madagascar, as well as call on the EU to suspend its development cooperation with the army-backed regime](#)

[ITALY- The Italian Government states that it is working on a G8-Africa alliance to address questions concerning the availability and security of water resources worldwide](#)

[JAPAN- The Government of Japan stated that it would faithfully fulfill the commitment made at TICAD IV to double its ODA to Africa, and to assist in doubling Japanese private investment in Africa by 2012](#)

[JAPAN- Prime Minister Taro Aso carries African concerns to the G20 Summit in London](#)

Calendar

31 Mar-3 April	4 th Southern African AIDS Conference: "Scaling up for Success" Durban, South Africa
2 April	G20 Summit: "Growth, Jobs and Stability" London, United Kingdom
7 April	World Health Day
7 April	15 th anniversary commemoration of the Rwanda genocide
9 April	Algeria's Presidential Elections
10 April	AfDB Workshop : The Financial Crisis-Strategies for Mitigating its Impact in Africa, Tunis

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