

Introduction

Background to the inquiry

- 1.1 On 7 October 2009, during the 42nd Parliament, the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Stephen Smith MP referred to the Committee, an inquiry into Australia's relationship with the countries of Africa. The terms of reference of the inquiry were to:

... report on Australia's relationship with Africa, with special emphasis on:

- bilateral relations at the parliamentary and government levels;
- economic issues, including trade and investment;
- cultural, scientific and educational relations and exchanges;
- development assistance co-operation and capacity building;
- defence cooperation, regional security and strategic issues; and
- migration and human rights issues.

- 1.2 The Minister commented that the Australian Government was committed to broadening and deepening Australia's engagement in Africa. The policy took into account Australia's growing trade, investment, and people-to-people links with Africa, and Africa's growing importance in economic, political and security terms. The Minister further noted that Australia's relations with Africa had advanced significantly in recent times, through increased high-level contact and dialogue, significant increases in Australian development assistance to Africa, a heightened focus on

expanding trade and investment, and cooperation on international security and law enforcement issues.¹

- 1.3 Africa's importance to Australia was again reiterated by the Minister in a speech delivered to the South African Institute for International Affairs, Pretoria in January 2010:

For too long Australia did not give Africa the priority it required and deserved.

This Australian Government, however, is deeply committed to enhanced engagement with the countries and regional institutions of Africa.

The need for Australia to engage much more substantially with Africa is driven by our economic interests and our strategic interests.

Australia is the country of 20 million people: Africa a continent of nearly a billion people.

To survive as a prosperous nation into the future, economically and politically, we cannot ignore a continent of nearly a billion people made up of more than 50 countries. A strengthened partnership with our closest economic partner in Africa, South Africa, is a central part of this endeavour. ...

I strongly believe it is in both our long-term national interests to be doing more together, regionally and internationally.²

- 1.4 It has been reported that other advanced countries are turning their attention towards Africa. Following a visit to Africa in 2009 the President of the World Bank, Mr Robert Zoellick, called for the 21st century to be 'the century of Africa'. The report of his visit noted:

Over the past decade, Africa's economies have grown on average five per cent to six per cent a year.

Meanwhile, its wealth in natural resources and need for infrastructure investment has attracted increased investment from China, whose economy is starting to resume strong growth while industrialised economies are expected to emerge slowly from a deep recession.

With some international investors uneasy about the ability of the United States and Europe to recover quickly from the global crisis,

1 Hon. Stephen Smith MP, *Correspondence to the Committee*.

2 DFAT, *Submission No. 46*, p. 519.

Zoellick said government controlled sovereign wealth funds and pension funds are now looking more closely at high growth regions like Africa.³

- 1.5 More recently, Mr Kofi Annan, in opening the Tenth Ordinary Session of the African Union in March 2011 said:

The theme for this year's Summit is 'Industrial Development of Africa'. As you all know the achievement of an accelerated and sustainable socio – economic development of Africa is one of the cardinal objectives of the African Union ...

In spite of the efforts made so far in this direction, Africa's share of global manufacturing is still regrettably less than one per cent. There is, therefore, the urgent need to resolve the paradox of widespread poverty on the continent in the midst of its rich natural endowments by engaging in an aggressive industrialisation process.⁴

- 1.6 It is therefore in Australia's interests to take account of these international developments and increase its engagement with the countries of Africa.

Africa—a diverse continent

- 1.7 Witnesses have emphasised that the 53 countries of Africa are diverse and cannot be considered as a whole; as Ms Margaret Callaghan⁵ explained:

... so often "Africa" is taken to be one homogenous mass. It is far from being that, with significant economic, historical and social differences between regions and countries. Factors such as population size, extent of urbanisation, type of resources, human resource capacity, infrastructure, agricultural base, type of climate and geography and disease burden vary considerably.⁶

- 1.8 Responding to whether there were common themes underlying the crises in various African countries, Professor the Hon. Gareth Evans, former

3 Reuters, *Africa's century for development: World Bank chief*.
<<http://af.reuters.com/articlePrint?articleId=AFJOE57D02S20090814>> Accessed March 2011.

4 Kufuor Speech at the opening of the Tenth Ordinary Session of the AU.
<<http://www.ghanatoghana.com/Ghanahomepage/kufuor-speech-opening-tenth-ordinar...>> Accessed March 2011

5 Ms Callaghan has 20 years experience in international development, having worked for seven years with AusAID and 13 years with the United Nations.

6 Ms Margaret O'Callaghan, *Submission No. 54*, pp. 645–6.

Minister for Foreign Affairs, and former Chief Executive and President of the International Crisis Group, commented:

... I think it is most unwise to try and impose any kind of cookie cutter analysis, any more than it is wise to impose cookie cutter solutions. Every one of these cases has its own dynamic, its own history, its own personalities, its own economic dimensions and its own ethnicity issues, and combinations of greed, grievance and other kinds of factors ...

... you have to drill down into each one of these situations and craft a solution that is appropriate to the dynamics of that situation ... Often, in regions as a whole, you have interlocking combinations of problems which, with ethnic issues crossing over state lines ... you have to look at in a more holistic way.⁷

- 1.9 As a consequence of a multitude of factors, Australia's engagement with the countries of Africa must therefore recognise this African diversity.

African multinational organisations

- 1.10 As noted above, the 53 countries of Africa are diverse in their politics, cultures, resources, and the problems they face. Many of the borders of African countries were arbitrarily constructed by the European powers reflecting historical accident and administrative convenience.⁸ This has occasionally led to internal tensions and the potential for fragmentation. As a consequence, there is an important role for African multinational organisations to resolve disputes and internal tensions.

- 1.11 Prominent African multinational organisations are:

- the African Union (AU);
- Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); and
- Southern African Development Community (SADC);

The African Union

- 1.12 The AU is the largest multinational intergovernmental organisation in Africa. Its membership includes 53 countries – all of the countries of

⁷ Professor Gareth Evans, *Transcript 8 December 2010*, p. 63.

⁸ Naomi Chazan, Robert Mortimer, John Ravenhill, and Donald Rothchild (1988), *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*, London: MacMillan, pp. 24–7.

Africa except Morocco.⁹ Cote d'Ivoire, Madagascar, and Mauritania are currently suspended and Eritrea has withdrawn temporarily in response to AU support for UN sanctions. These sanctions were enacted against Eritrea in response to its alleged support for insurgent groups in neighbouring countries, including Al-Shabaab in Somalia.

- 1.13 The AU is the successor organisation to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which was formed in the 1960s during Africa's decolonisation. During the 1990s, increasing criticism of the OAU as a 'mere talk shop' led Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi to propose a 'United States of Africa', modelled on the European Union. This in turn led to the formation of the AU in 2002.
- 1.14 The AU's goals are to support economic and political integration between its members, so as to achieve development, eliminate poverty and corruption, and end conflict in Africa. The AU plans to inaugurate a human rights court, central bank, monetary union, and an African Economic Community by 2023.¹⁰
- 1.15 These aspirations were confirmed when the Committee Delegation met with the Deputy Chairperson, AU Commission, HE Erastus Mwencha, during its visit to Addis Ababa in May 2011. Mr Mwencha drew attention to moves towards integration within Africa's regional organisations. There was often the fear, however, that one member of the region would economically dominate the others and it was the AU's role to coordinate progress and bring countries together.
- 1.16 The current principle organs of the AU are:
 - The Assembly. This is the supreme organ of the AU. It is comprised of the heads of state and government of the AU member countries. The Assembly meets once a year to determine AU policy. The AU Chairperson is elected by the Assembly for a one year period, and the current chair is His Excellency Dr Bingu Wa Mutharika, President of Malawi.¹¹

9 African Union Website, < www.africa-union.org/root/AU/MemberStates/map.htm > Accessed January 2011.

10 BBC News, *Profile: African Union*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/3870303.stm> Accessed January 2011.

11 Stephanie Hanson, *The African Union*, Council on Foreign Relations Backgrounder, September 2009, p. 5; African Union Website, <www.africa-union.org/root/au/index/index.htm> Accessed January 2011.

- The Executive Council. This organ is comprised of the foreign ministers of the member states where possible, and meets at least twice a year to advise the Assembly members.¹²
- The Commission. This is the secretariat of the AU, and is the administrative branch. It comprises ten commissioners, and is responsible for the implementation of AU policy and coordination of its activities.¹³
- The Peace and Security Council. This Council was set up in 2004 because the AU believed it was necessary to settle conflicts before prosperity could be achieved. In cases of genocide and crimes against humanity, the Peace and Security Council can deploy military force. So far, three AU peacekeeping forces have been deployed; to Burundi, southern Sudan, and Somalia.¹⁴ An intervention in the Comoros island of Anjouan was also conducted in 2008.¹⁵
- The Pan-African Parliament. This organ was established in 2004 to bring together parliamentarians from member states to debate issues that affect the African continent, and to advise the AU heads of state and government.¹⁶ It currently possesses no legislative powers, but it is intended that it will 'gravitate in that direction'.¹⁷
- Other organs include the Economic, Social and Cultural Council, the Court of Justice, and the various financial institutions mentioned in the AU charter. One 'potentially significant' and unique organ of the AU is the Panel of the Wise. The Panel plays a role in conflict prevention and peacemaking by facilitating diplomacy, political dialogue and confidence building measures between warring parties.¹⁸

12 BBC News, *Profile: African Union*,
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/3870303.stm> Accessed January 2011.

13 BBC News, *Profile: African Union*,
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/3870303.stm> Accessed January 2011.

14 Rodrigo Tavares (2010), *Regional Security: the capacity of international organisations*, London: Routledge, pp. 22 – 23.

15 Stephanie Hanson, *The African Union*, Council on Foreign Relations Backgrounder, September 2009, p. 6.

16 Stephanie Hanson, *The African Union*, Council on Foreign Relations Backgrounder, September 2009, p. 6.

17 South African High Commissioner His Excellency Mr Lenin Shope, *Transcript 20 April 2010*, p. 48.

18 Rodrigo Tavares, *Regional Security*, p. 26.

Challenges and Successes

- 1.17 The AU is the only regional organisation in Africa to explicitly recognise the right to intervene in its member states on humanitarian grounds. This is facilitated by the AU having replaced the OAU's approach to sovereignty (non-interference) with a new approach (non-indifference).¹⁹ As mentioned, it has already undertaken four interventions in member states. These interventions have met with limited success due to limitations in manpower, expertise and funds, coupled with the difficult and complex conflicts extant in the region.²⁰
- 1.18 In the area of conflict prevention, the AU has instituted a Continental Early Warning System. This organ collects and analyses data relating to potential conflicts in Africa, with a view to preventing them from occurring or worsening. Challenges in this area include a lack of continent-wide coordination, and coordination with similar organs in sub-regional institutions.²¹
- 1.19 The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) noted that the AU has 'played a leading role in resolving conflicts arising out of disputed election outcomes'.²²
- 1.20 The challenge remains, however, in the creation of an African Standby Force under the AU's African Peace and Security Architecture developed in 2005. The force was to be divided into five regional brigades comprising some 5000 troops encompassing military, police, and civilian components. As yet none of the brigades are operational.²³
- 1.21 The AU encourages all of its member states to accede to the voluntary African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). DFAT described the APRM as:
- ... a mutually agreed instrument voluntarily acceded to by the member states of the African Union as a self-monitoring mechanism. Established in 2003, the APRM's mandate is to assist participating member states to ensure that their policies and practices conform to agreed political, economic and

19 Rodrigo Tavares, *Regional Security*, p. 26.

20 Stephanie Hanson, *The African Union*, Council on Foreign Relations Backgrounder, September 2009, p. 3; High Commissioner Professor Sunday Olu Agbi, *Transcript 20 April 2010*, p. 62.

21 Rodrigo Tavares, *Regional Security*, p. 27.

22 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Submission No. 46I*, p. 466.

23 Africa Review, *Coming soon: An African standby force*, Wednesday, May 25, 2011.
<http://www.africareview.com/Special+Reports/-/979182/1154792/-/10tgx97z/-/index.html> Accessed May 2011.

corporate governance values, codes and standards, and ...
mutually agreed objectives in socio-economic development ...²⁴

- 1.22 Thus far, the APRM has 29 member states, of which 14 had been peer reviewed by September 2010.²⁵

The Economic Community of West African States

- 1.23 ECOWAS was founded in 1975, and was originally conceived as a way of moving towards an economic union in West Africa. There are 15 member states.²⁶ ECOWAS has become the dominant sub-regional organisation in sub-Saharan Africa.²⁷
- 1.24 Since its inception ECOWAS has expanded its focus to include issues of security and justice. Like the AU, it permits intervention in the internal affairs of member states when the security or peace of the community is under threat, or in the case of human rights violations. However, to date no such interventions have occurred without consent. The five interventions that have occurred have taken place in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, and Cote d'Ivoire.²⁸
- 1.25 The principle organs of ECOWAS are:
- Authority of Heads of State and Government. This is the supreme organ of ECOWAS, and hence determines policy;
 - The Commission. Formerly known as the ECOWAS Secretariat, this organ is seen as the 'soul' of the organisation.²⁹ It is responsible for implementing policy;
 - ECOWAS Parliament. The Parliament gathers representatives from all ECOWAS members to provide a 'forum for dialogue, consultation and consensus ... [and] to promote integration'.³⁰ As with the AU Parliament, at present the ECOWAS Parliament has no legislative powers, but intends to move in that direction;

24 DFAT, *Submission No 94*, p. 6 (of submission)

25 NEPAD Website, <www.nepad.org/economicandcorporategovernance/african-peer-review-mechanism/about> Accessed January 2011.

26 ECOWAS member states are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

27 Rodrigo Tavares, *Regional Security*, p. 36.

28 Rodrigo Tavares, *Regional Security*, pp. 36–7.

29 Rodrigo Tavares, *Regional Security*, p. 37.

30 ECOWAS Website, <www.parl.ecowas.int/english/clinus.htm> Accessed January 2011.

- ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID). Founded in 1999, EBID is an investment and development finance bank. As such, its focus is on the granting of loans and guarantees for development project, in both the public and private sectors;³¹ and
- Other organs include the Community Court of Justice, the Defence and Security Commission, and the Mediation and Security Council.

Challenges and Successes

- 1.26 ECOWAS has been very active, and has had a relatively high degree of success in achieving regional integration. This is shown by its interventions in conflict-prone member states, and West Africa becoming a free trade area in 2000. As well, it has launched a customs union between member states. A monetary union between five of its members has also been launched, and ECOWAS plans to expand on this in future.³²

Southern African Development Community

- 1.27 SADC is the culmination of a number of groups beginning in 1974 when a group called the Frontline States (FLS) was formed. The FLS was an intergovernmental organisation committed to the political liberation of Southern Africa. In 1981, the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) was formed as a 'frank acknowledgement' of the sub-region's dependence on South Africa as a regional trade hub.³³
- 1.28 The aims of SADCC were to lessen economic dependence on apartheid-era South Africa, and the integration of the national economies of the sub-region. In 1992, SADCC became SADC through a formal treaty, signed in Windhoek in Namibia. The Windhoek Declaration also committed SADC to a range of activities beyond its original economic focus, including strengthening regional security. When apartheid ended in South Africa in 1994, the FLS was officially dissolved.³⁴
- 1.29 SADC is the most advanced of the African regions in creating a standby force. It has been reported that in October 2010, the SADC Secretariat decided to speed up the creation of a brigade comprising between 5000 510,000 troops.³⁵

31 EBID Website, <www.bidc-ebid.org/en/bidc_en.php> Accessed January 2011.

32 *Exhibit No. 39*, p. 35

33 Rodrigo Tavares, *Regional Security*, p. 56

34 Rodrigo Tavares, *Regional Security*, pp. 56–7.

35 Business Daily (Nairobi), *Kenya: Speed Up the Creation of African Union Standby Force*, 19 January 2011. <<http://allafrica.com/stories/201101190317.html>> Accessed May 2011.

1.30 SADC currently has 15 member states.³⁶ The current Chairperson of SADC is President Sam Nujoma of Namibia.

1.31 Its principle organs are:

- Summit of Heads of State and Government. This is the supreme organ of SADC, and usually meets twice a year to determine policy directions. The Summit incorporates a Troika which includes the Chair, incoming Chair, and outgoing Chair. This enables the Summit to fulfil its functions between meetings.
- The Council of Ministers. This organ is made up of the ministers for foreign affairs or economic policy of member states where possible. It oversees the 'functioning and development of SADC', and ensures that policies are properly implemented.³⁷
- The Standing Committee of Officials. This is an organ which provides technical advice to the Council of Ministers.³⁸
- The Organ on Politics, Defence and Security. This organ began functioning in late 2000. Unlike the security organs of ECOWAS and the AU, the SADC Organ does not allow armed intervention in member states without consent, and takes the form of a defensive alliance between the SADC member states.³⁹ Like the Summit, the Organ is headed by a troika, which is mutually exclusive with the Summit Troika.
- The Tribunal. This was established in 1992 to oversee and ensure compliance with the Treaty which established SADC.
- The SADC National Committees. Each member state of SADC has its own National Committee. These provide input, advice and assistance with the implementation of SADC policies and programs at the national level. They also provide national input into regional programs.
- The Secretariat. This is the executive arm of SADC. It is responsible for the management and coordination of SADC programs and policies.⁴⁰

36 SADC member states are Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

37 African Union website, <www.africa-union.org/root/au/recs/sadc.htm> Accessed January 2011.

38 African Union website, <<http://www.africa-union.org/recs/sadcprofile.pdf>> Accessed January 2011.

39 Rodrigo Tavares, *Regional Security*, pp. 58–61.

40 African Union website, <www.africa-union.org/recs/sadcprofile.pdf> Accessed January 2011.

- The SADC Parliamentary Forum. This is an inter-parliamentary body which includes parliamentarians from all SADC member-state parliaments except Madagascar and Seychelles.
- 1.32 Just prior to the Committee Delegation's visit to Africa, SADC in a communiqué on 31 March 2011 toughened its stance on the situation in Zimbabwe. This is discussed in Chapter 7 where the Committee reviews the situation in Zimbabwe.

Challenges and Successes

- 1.33 SADC generally has been beset with serious challenges since its founding. It has experienced periods of serious internal tension (largely between South Africa and Zimbabwe) and political disputes, as well as a lack of resources and 'overall lassitude'. Furthermore, its capacity to achieve its goals is limited by a low number of staff – SADC has around 200 staff supporting its activities.⁴¹
- 1.34 Parliamentarians from five southern African countries have praised the SADC Parliamentary Forum for its cooperation with the Southern African Resource Watch group. In particular, the role of these two groups in the advancement of 'parliamentary awareness, oversight and capacity development in the quest for resource justice in Africa' in relation to resource extraction has been 'highly commended'.⁴²
- 1.35 In 2009, SADC launched a free trade area among its 15 members, and plans to negotiate a customs union have been announced.⁴³

Other Multinational Intergovernmental Organisations

- 1.36 There are a number of smaller subregional organisations currently operating in Sub-Saharan Africa:
- East African Community (EAC);
 - Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGAD);
 - Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); and
 - Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

41 Rodrigo Tavares, *Regional Security*, pp. 59, 65.

42 SADC Parliamentary Forum and Southern African Resource Watch, *Exhibit No.44*, pp. 1–3.

43 *Exhibit 39*, p. 35.

The East African Community

- 1.37 The EAC was originally established in 1967, but was dissolved in 1977. The idea of an EAC was revived in the late 1990s, and the EAC again began functioning in 2000, the culmination of a process of increasing cooperation and integration between Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania.
- 1.38 Its focus is on increasing economic and political integration between member states.⁴⁴ The membership of the EAC is currently Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi.
- 1.39 In 2010, the EAC became a customs union.

Intergovernmental Authority on Development

- 1.40 IGAD is the successor organisation to the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), itself founded in 1986 in response to famine and natural disaster in the Horn of Africa region.⁴⁵ IGADD's mandate was expanded 1996 to include issues of regional development, trade, security, and political and economic integration, at which point it became IGAD.
- 1.41 IGAD and its activities have been hampered by internal and inter-state conflicts, the ongoing humanitarian situation in Somalia, poverty, natural disasters, and very high levels of illiteracy.⁴⁶

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

- 1.42 The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa was founded in 1994 as an institution focused on increasing economic integration between member states.⁴⁷ It has been successful in this endeavour, founding a free trade area in 2000 and launching a customs union in 2009.⁴⁸

44 EAC website, <www.eac.int/about-eac/eac-history.html> Accessed January 2011.

45 IGAD member states are Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda.

46 Rodrigo Tavares, *Regional Security*, pp. 46–7.

47 COMESA member states are Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

48 COMESA website, <<http://about.comesa.int/lang-en/overview>> Accessed January 2011.

Economic Community of Central African States

- 1.43 ECASS, better known by its French acronym CEEAC, was established in 1983, and began functioning two years later.⁴⁹ It has been largely inactive since 1992, due largely to non-payment of fees by member states, and the conflicts in the Great Lakes area.

The outlook for Africa

- 1.44 DFAT has provided the Committee with a positive outlook for Africa:

... Africa is changing for the better. Overall, it is a more stable, free and prosperous continent than 10 years ago.

Following economic reforms, many African countries have enjoyed strong growth in recent years. Africa is especially rich in resources, offering major economic opportunities, but posing a challenge to governance. ...

Collectively, African countries are becoming more important in global economic and political terms. They play an influential role in multilateral forums, including in the World Trade Organisation and in the United Nations. African countries comprise 27 percent of each body.⁵⁰

- 1.45 This view was supported by Professor Evans who advised that the Human Security Report Project⁵¹ had noted a 70 to 80 per cent decline in the number of conflicts worldwide since the early 1990s with a similar decline in the number of violent deaths – Africa was at the forefront of this improvement. The reason, Professor Evans suggested, was the 'very intense engagement over the last decade and a half by the UN and by regional organisations' such as the AU and ECOWAS.⁵²
- 1.46 It is encouraging to note that countries such as Rwanda and Mozambique which have faced major challenges in the past are now characterised by improved economic growth and political stability.

49 ECASS member states are: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, and Sao Tome and Principe.

50 DFAT, *Submission No. 46*, p. 460.

51 Produced by the School for International Studies, Simon Fraser University, the British Columbia, Canada. <<http://www.hsrgroup.org/human-security-reports/20092010/overview.aspx>> Accessed, January 2011.

52 Professor Gareth Evans, *Transcript 8 December 2010*, p. 53.

- 1.47 There are still, however, a number of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa which are of concern regarding peace and security. These were identified by Professor Evans and include Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Somalia, as well as areas of Nigeria, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Darfur region of Sudan.⁵³ Despite this Professor Evans remained optimistic.⁵⁴
- 1.48 Notwithstanding the progress in security, DFAT advised that 'Africa will remain the world's poorest continent and gains in governance and political stability remain fragile.' It had 33 out of 49 of the world's least developed countries and one half of the continent lived in 'absolute poverty'.⁵⁵
- 1.49 Further, AusAID told the Committee that the group of sub-Saharan countries remained unlikely to achieve their millennium development goals.⁵⁶
- 1.50 Finally, many countries in Africa do not perform well against the standards set by Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index. In 2009, the worst five performers were Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Chad, Sudan, and Somalia (worst performer); the five best performing sub-Saharan countries were Botswana (best performer), Mauritius, Cape Verde, Seychelles, and South Africa. Even so, Botswana only achieved a score of 5.6 out of 10 on the scale.⁵⁷

Australia's engagement with Africa

- 1.51 Australia has had a limited engagement with Africa – unlike the Europeans it had a minimal role in African history and geographically there were 'no supply lines and no communication lines of any great significance.' Aside from its role during the apartheid era, Australia has been able to exert little diplomatic influence on developments on the continent.⁵⁸
- 1.52 The level of Australian government aid has reflected this lack of engagement and influence. In 1997 Australian bilateral aid was confined

53 Professor Gareth Evans, *Transcript 8 December 2010*, p. 54.

54 Professor Gareth Evans, *Transcript 8 December 2010*, p. 63.

55 DFAT, *Submission No. 46*, p. 460.

56 Ms Catherine Walker, *Transcript 20 April 2010*, p. 29; AusAID, *Submission No. 47*, p. 591.

57 Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2009, Regional Highlights*.

58 Professor Gareth Evans, *Transcript 8 December 2010*, p. 55.

to South Africa and Mozambique. As Dr David Lucas noted, a comment in 2001 stated: 'The welfare of Africa and its people is a matter of remote concern for the governments of Australia and New Zealand and probably always will be.'⁵⁹

- 1.53 The relatively low level of Australian Government engagement in the past, however, has not been reflected by the attention of the Australian public to African issues – Australian NGOs working in Africa have contributed far more than AusAID.⁶⁰ For example, in 2008–09 Australia's ODA to Africa amounted to \$184 million;⁶¹ this compares to \$323 million provided by NGOs.⁶²
- 1.54 The beginning of the resource boom in Africa in 2003 has contributed to a re-awakening of Australian Government attention to Africa.⁶³ In 2008, the then Foreign Minister, the Hon Stephen Smith MP, announced Australia's commitment to deepen and broaden its engagement with Africa.⁶⁴
- 1.55 Professor Evans argued there were three broad reasons why Australia should be interested in Africa:
 - Economic and trade interests – exemplified by the increasing activity of Australian natural resource companies in Africa.
 - Geostrategic and political interests – the strategic importance of the Indian Ocean as well as the rising influence of African countries in multinational organisations.
 - Being, and being seen to be, a good international citizen.⁶⁵
- 1.56 Regarding the third reason, Professor Evans said:

Terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, proliferation, piracy, organised crime, drug and people trafficking, health pandemics, refugee outflows, the climate ... many of these problems do have an African face, and it is important, I think, that Australia be alert to opportunities to contribute to their solution.

59 Dr David Lucas, *Submission No. 22*, p. 163, quoting Gavin Kitchen, *Why I gave up African Studies*, *African Studies Review and Newsletter*, 22 (1), pp 21–6.

60 Dr David Lucas, *Submission No. 22*, p. 164.

61 AusAID, *Submission No. 107*, p. 1278.

62 ACFID, *Annual Report 2010*, pp 19–20.

63 *Exhibit No. 14*, Mr Roger Donnelly & Mr Benjamin Ford, *Into Africa: How the Resource Boom is Making Sub-Saharan Africa More Important to Australia*, Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2008.

64 Hon Stephen Smith MP, *Africa Day Speech*, 26 May 2008.
<http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2008/080526_africa_day.html> Accessed July 2010.

65 Professor Gareth Evans, *Transcript 8 December 2010*, pp. 55–6.

... You do improve the chances of getting international support for your own interests in these various transnational problem areas if you are seen to be a constructive and creative and helpful player, not just doing things because there is an immediate buck in it or because there is an immediate vote in it.⁶⁶

- 1.57 Further support for being a good international citizen as a reason for boosting engagement with Africa was provided by Oxfam Australia. Its submission drew attention to the concept of 'responsible sovereignty'. Responsible sovereignty was wider than the recent 2005 World Summit agreement on the Responsibility to Protect civilian populations from genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity, Oxfam Australia argued:

Notions of responsible sovereignty are also contributing to current debates around more stringent international arms controls and armed violence survivor assistance. ...

... Responsible sovereignty underpins emerging calls for the full recognition of the right to social protection underpinned by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Political Rights. ... Social protection goes beyond safety nets, to encompass a broader goal of **tackling poverty and vulnerability with greater emphasis on protection as a basic right and government responsibility**. [Emphasis added.]⁶⁷

- 1.58 It is fully consistent with the doctrine of responsible sovereignty that governments also assist each other in times of crisis, for example in responding to natural disasters, such as cyclones, floods, earthquakes, and tsunamis.
- 1.59 Further comment was provided by Professor Craig McGarty, Murdoch University, who told the Committee:

Africa is a very significant part of the world. It is increasingly significant to the entire world. An increasingly significant proportion of the population that is born in Africa, lives in Africa or moves from Africa. There is significant economic growth and change in Africa. Those dynamics will produce changes which Australians need to understand. Australians need to understand them because Australians are part of that world. It may have been possible to imagine a world where you could draw a line down

66 Gareth Evans, *Transcript 8 December 2010*, p. 56.

67 Oxfam Australia, *Submission No. 39*, p. 373–4.

the middle as the Pope did and divide it into particular regions that one people can worry about and others do not worry about. We do not live in that world any more. ...

It has changed. I suppose the evidence of rapid, dynamic change in political systems in major countries in North Africa is a very telling example of that. Those changes will have consequences for our trade relations. They will have implications for the prices we pay for products such as oil. They will have implications for where our tourists go. They will have implications for where our students come from. How many other major export industries do we need to go through? The activities in Africa would have massive implications for the changes in our environment. The economic choices made by Africans or African governments either on their own or in partnership with major economic forces such as China will have crucial implications for where those major economic partners of those countries – which are major economic partners of Australia – will purchase their minerals, where they will locate their industries and where they will purchase their services.⁶⁸

Conduct of the inquiry

- 1.60 The Chair of the Committee, Senator Michael Forshaw announced the inquiry via media release on 30 October 2009 and the inquiry was subsequently advertised in *The Australian* on 28 October 2009. Letters inviting submissions were also sent to State Premiers, Ministers, Commonwealth agencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioner from Sub-Saharan African countries based in Canberra, and a wide range of individuals and organisations with an expected interest in Australia's engagement with African countries.
- 1.61 Following the 2010 Federal election, the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the 43rd Parliament, the Hon. Kevin Rudd MP re-referred the inquiry to the Committee, noting that the policy of enhanced engagement with Africa remained a priority for the Government.
- 1.62 Following its re-referral, the inquiry was re-advertised in *The Australian* on 1 December 2010. Stakeholders were advised by way of an electronic newsletter.

68 Professor Craig McGarty, *Transcript 10 March 2011*, p. 11.

- 1.63 Towards the end of the Inquiry a Delegation of Committee members visited four countries in Africa – South Africa, Zimbabwe, Ghana, and Ethiopia – over a two week period in early April 2011. The Delegation met with a variety of people including ministers, politicians, ambassadors from other countries, NGOs, and business representatives, and visited several AusAID assisted projects including the Hamlin Fistula Hospital and College of Midwives in Addis Ababa. The Delegation also visited the Adamus Resources gold mine in Ghana.
- 1.64 The Committee's comments, findings and descriptions of aid projects arising from the visit are included throughout the report where they are relevant. An itinerary of the visit is at Appendix D.
- 1.65 The Committee received 122 submissions (listed at Appendix A), 53 exhibits (listed at Appendix B) and took evidence from 55 organisations and individuals during nine days of public hearings in Canberra, Melbourne, Perth, and Sydney (listed at Appendix C).

Structure of the report

- 1.66 This report focuses on Sub-Sahara Africa which reflects the evidence received and the fact that the Committee has previously inquired into Australia's trade and investment with the countries of North Africa in 2006.
- 1.67 This report comprises eight chapters. The following chapters discuss:
- Chapter 2 – government links with Africa, including Australia's diplomatic representation, Parliamentary links and government links at ministerial and officials level.
 - Chapter 3 – Australia's aid program, including Australia's official development assistance, assistance provided by NGOs and individual and private sector initiatives. The chapter also describes several aid projects which the Committee visited when it travelled to Africa.
 - Chapter 4 – education links, including discussion of the suggestion that there be a centre for studying African issues.
 - Chapter 5 – research links, , including a discussion of development related research provided by Australia and other organisations.
 - Chapter 6 – trade and investment, including discussion of the potential for growth in trade and impediments to this growth. The role of

Australia's mining sector in Africa is discussed, including corporate social responsibility obligations. This includes a description of the programs provided by several Australian mining companies. The Chapter concludes with consideration of the need for an Australia Africa Council.

- Chapter 7 – defence and security. The Committee examines Australia's policy framework, peacekeeping activities, and a discussion of crime and security. The Committee's observations from its visit to Zimbabwe and Ethiopia are included.
- Chapter 8 – Africans in Australia which includes a discussion of the problems facing African migrants and refugees living in Australia and how the African community in Australia can contribute to Australia-Africa relations.

