POST-2015 CONSENSUS

AN EAST AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

The EastAfrican

OUTLOOK

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

For each $1 spent to save reefs, $24 of environmental benefits are made

COMMENTARY
DR BJØRN LOMBORG

"We rely on the natural world for many different benefits or what experts call 'ecosystem services.' Forests don't just provide timber and firewood, but also flood protection."

To combat climate change, consider better technology

COMMENTARY
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"In order to make progress, we can't afford to pour money into projects that pay back less than what we put in. Likewise, we can't afford not to focus on projects that will do immense amounts of good."

Climate change has certainly received immense exposure among the most eminent issues of the 21st century so far. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon argues that it is "an existential challenge for the whole human race." On the other hand, when five million people were asked by the UN what they saw as most important, climate change came at the bottom of the list of 17 issues: Way below healthcare, education, corruption, nutrition and water — and even below phone and Internet access.

This is startling, particularly given the consensus that climate change is real and happening. Are people right to be sceptical about current policies?

The Copenhagen Consensus has asked teams of expert economists to analyse all the options facing humanity — from health and education to violence, water make progress, we can't afford to pour money into projects which pay back less than what we put in. Likewise, we can't afford not to focus on projects that will do immense amounts of good.

The author of the main paper, economist Isabel Galiana, comes to a conclusion that is sure to be controversial: Present policies designed to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases are failing and cannot be effective until better technology is available. Despite the Kyoto Protocol and many national initiatives, emissions have increased by almost half since 1990 and will continue to increase for many decades to come.

In stark contrast, the UN and many governments aim to keep the average temperature rise below 2°C above pre-industrial times. However, the problem is that there is no realistic chance of keeping to this limit with cur-

The MDGs, which expire in 2015 to pave way for the SDGs, set 21 targets in eight areas, including gender equality and child and maternal health. Picture: File

For its next development agenda, UN needs a fix on achievable goals

COMMENTARY
DR BJØRN LOMBORG

"Negotiators now need to zero in on the targets that promise the biggest benefit for

Free regional trade could make every East African richer by $200 a year

With one simple policy — more free trade — we could make the world $500 trillion better off and lift 160 million people out of extreme poverty. If there is one question we have to ask ourselves, it is: Why don't we?

In 2000, the international community agreed to a set of important targets to improve the lot of the world's poorest by 2015, the Millennium Development Goals. Many of these goals were extremely successful in vital areas such as reducing poverty and hunger, but there is still much to be done. Through the UN, world leaders are now working on the next set of targets for 2015-2030. As the world will spend $2.5 trillion just on development aid over that period, and countless trillions in na-

Let universal education rest; put more money in expanding pre-schooling

As the United Nations is currently debating how to allocate about $2.5 trillion in development aid for the 2015-2030 period, education will most likely gain prominence. But do we fund early education or secondary school? Economist George Psacharopoulos says the priority should be increasing the number of preschooled children in sub-Saharan Africa.

With the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) expiring next year, the world is busy prioritising various highly important issues and setting goals for the next 15 years. Education has been among the objectives in the forefront, and will remain so, partially because the noble goal of achieving universal education has proved impossible to achieve so far. In 1961 Unesco set the goal of achieving 100

Pupils in group work. Children are highly receptive to knowledge when young because there is generally no cultural barrier to education of girls and young children can contribute relatively little in terms of labour. Picture: File

Making modern contraception freely available globally is a good investment

COMMENTARY
DR BJØRN LOMBORG

"Providing contraception to the 215 million women who want to avoid pregnancy would cost about $3.6 billion. It would result in 650,000 fewer newborn death."

There was a time we worried about a "population explosion," with ever more people fighting over ever fewer resources. However, the population growth has decreased since the late 1960s and resources have not run out.

There are still population problems, but the two main ones are very probably different from what you think.

The UN expects 2.4 billion more people by 2050. But contrary to common knowledge, this is not mostly about couples having lots of babies. Remember, the average woman in the developing world had 5.4 children in the early 1970s, but today that number has dropped to 2.7. In Uganda, the average woman used to have 7.1 children in 1970, of Europeans rose rapidly. More recently, a number of East Asian countries have gone through a similar transition, none more so than China. The good news is that it could work anywhere, also allowing African countries to catch up fast.

The Chinese government slowed the growth of its population by imposing a "one-child per family" rule. This may have been good economically, but was also an infringement of human rights. Fortunately, there are other, less drastic, ways to travel this road, particularly by making modern contraception available to everyone who wants it.

Population is just one key issue on the agenda for the international community at the moment. The problem is that, al-

Better data is needed for better results but it will cost a huge chunk of aid

While the world has generally seen success with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) — halve the proportion of hunger and poverty, get all children into school and drastically reduce child mortality — drawn up nearly 15 years ago, not all promises will be achieved.

What is somewhat surprising, however, is that we have fairly little information about what exactly we achieved. According to World Bank data, in 1990 there were 850 maternal deaths out of 100,000 live births in sub-Saharan Africa and this number went down to 500 in 2010. However, the World Health Organisation has warned that measuring the maternal mortality ratio remains a challenge as less than 40 per cent of countries have a complete civil registration system that appropriately attributes the cause of death.

Actually, most of the available numbers are rather projections and estimates, not data. In total, there are more gaps than real observations and the observations themselves are often dubious. This matters, because the world is now discussing a new set of targets for the next decade and a half. To do the most good, the Copenhagen Consensus, has asked 63 teams of the world's top economists to look

Government officials during Kenya's recent biometric registration of civil servants. Countries where data collection has not yet started will spend even more on the exercise. Picture: File

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from civil society and the private sector suggested 59 targets and advocated building "better data-collection systems, especially in developing countries." And some months ago, 70 UN ambassadors in the Open Working Group proposed a bewildering 169 targets. One of these argued that by 2020 the world should "increase significantly the availability of

"Given that the world will spend

Curbing illicit financial flows: How to raise $770b for Africa's development

If we think about development priorities for the next 15 years — with the Millennium Development Goals expiring in 2015 — adequate nutrition and basic education immediately come to mind. Illicit financial flows (IFF) would not be top priority, but in a paper for the Copenhagen Consensus Centre, economist Alex Cobham argues that they are important enough to be included in the post-2015 goals now being debated by the international community.

If we look at the costs of IFF, he clearly has a point: 20 sub-Saharan Africa countries are estimated to have lost more than 10 per cent of their GDPs since 1980, while Africa as a whole is still estimated to be losing 3.4 per cent of GDP, that is, $76 billion each year. The Washington-based think thank Global Financial Integrity (GFI) estimates illicit flows to total ten-times the current level of international aid.

Nigeria offers a particularly egregious example of the problem. The well-respected governor of the central bank, Lamido Sanusi, was suspended for blowing the whistle on an apparent $20 billion difference between the country's recorded oil ex-

The revenue lost through misinvoicing by African countries could have been invested in development, including into education, healthcare, or infrastructure improvements. Picture: File

COMMENTARY
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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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For its next development agenda, UN needs a fix on achievable goals

COMMENTARY
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"Negotiators now need to zero in on the targets that promise the biggest benefit for the $2.5 trillion in development aid the world will spend until 2030."

If you could come up with goals for the world to aspire to over the next 15 years, what would they be? What should we focus on?

The United Nations is currently conducting an online survey, asking people from around the world what matters most to them. Over 2.5 million people have responded, with everything from better transport and roads, to affordable and nutritious food, under consideration. So far, the top global priority is better education, followed by better healthcare and an honest and responsive government, with reliable energy and climate change at the bottom. But to make a more considered priority list, we need much more information on what solutions exist, their costs and their likelihood of success to make a better prioritisation.

This survey is part of a larger effort by the UN to find a successor scheme for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which are set to expire in 2015. The MDGs set 21 mostly sharp and achievable targets in eight areas, including poverty and hunger, gender equality, education, and child and maternal health.

These goals have been hugely successful, not only in driving more development funding but also in making the world a better place. For instance, the MDGs aimed to halve the proportion of people hungry counting from 1990. And the progress has been remarkable. In 1990, almost 24 per cent of all people in the developing world were starving. In 2012, "only" 14.5 per cent were starving, and if current trends continue, the world will reach 12.2 per cent in 2015, just shy of the halving at 11.9 per cent.

MDG successor scheme

Likewise, we promised to cut by half the proportion of the poor. In 1990, 43 per cent of the developing world lived below a dollar a day. In 2010, the proportion had already been more than halved at 20.6 per cent — on current trends the proportion will drop below 15 per cent by 2015, showing spectacular progress.

With the MDGs expiring next year, the UN is now working to replace the MDGs with a successor scheme, called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). But that's easier said than done. One tracker shows a list of more than 1,400 proposed targets. Clearly we need priorities.

The SDGs will determine a large part of the $2.5 trillion development aid the world will spend until 2030. In order to spend the money most effectively and help as many people as possible, negotiators now need to zero in on the targets that promise the biggest benefit for the investment.

My think-tank, the Copenhagen Consensus, has engaged in a project to determine which targets will do the most good per dollar spent. We have commissioned 57 teams of renowned economists to estimate costs and benefits within 19 major areas, comprising about 50 targets, throughout the rest of this year. Estimating the benefits will take account not just of economic benefits but also the health, social and environmental benefits that may be accrued from these targets. The recommendations will be peer-reviewed. At the same time, UN agencies, NGOs and businesses will comment on the findings. Three Nobel Laureates will then evaluate the economic evidence to classify all targets into categories ranging from phenomenal, good, and fair to poor. Phenomenal targets will be colour coded dark green, fair targets yellow, and poor targets red. Backed by thousands of pages of peer reviewed economic research, such a simple colour scheme will hopefully help the world's busy decision makers focus on picking the most effective targets.

But with the negotiations already begun, we asked our economists to prepare a preliminary assessment on about 200 of the proposed targets.

They found that reducing malaria and tuberculosis, for example, is a phenomenal target. Its costs are small because solutions are simple, cheap and well-documented. Its benefits are large, not only because it avoids death and prolonged, agonising sickness, but also improves societal productivity and initiates a virtuous circle.

Similarly, we should focus on at least halving malnutrition, because there is robust evidence that proper nutrition for young children leads to a lifetime of large benefits — better brain development, improved academic performance, and ultimately higher productivity as adults. For every dollar spent, future generations will receive almost $60 in benefits.

But at what point do goals simply become aspirations? While many ambitious goals are commendable, they may be unrealistic in practice — and could hinder instead of advance progress. For example, setting an absolute goal of ending global malnutrition, warn the economists, may sound alluring, but is implausibly optimistic and inefficient. We cannot achieve it, and even if we could, the resources to help the last hungry person would be better spent elsewhere.

Change of focus

At the other end of the scale, some proposed targets are ineffective. The doubling of the renewable energy share by 2030, for example, sounds great in theory but practically is an expensive way to cut just a little carbon dioxide. Instead, the focus should be on providing more energy to poor people, a proven way of inclusive growth and poverty alleviation. And in order to reduce carbon emissions, removing fossil fuel subsidies in Third World countries promises much higher benefits. Reducing these subsidies in countries where fuel is sometimes sold for a few cents per litre would stop wasting resources, send the right price signals, and reduce the strain on government budgets, while also cutting emissions.

Labelling development targets as great, good, fair and poor is not rocket science, but surprisingly, it has never been done systematically before.

Over the coming months, I look forward to sharing the economists' thinking over 19 important areas and help kickstart the conversation on our goals for 2030. Of course, the ultimate decision for the 2030 targets is a political one. No doubt, economics is not the only measure of what global society should ultimately choose as its development priorities, but costs and benefits do play an important role. If well-documented economic arguments can help swap a few poor targets for a few phenomenal ones, leveraging trillions of dollars in development aid in the right direction, could make this the best thing any of us get to do this decade.

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Dr Bjørn Lomborg, an adjunct professor at the Copenhagen Business School, directs the Copenhagen Consensus Centre

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Let universal education rest; put more money in expanding pre-schooling

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With the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) expiring next year, the world is busy prioritising various highly important issues and setting goals for the next 15 years. Education has been among the objectives in the forefront, and will remain so, partially because the noble goal of achieving universal education has proved impossible to achieve so far. In 1961 Unesco set the goal of achieving 100 per cent primary enrolment by 1980 (from a then baseline of 40 per cent), and since then a set of goals has been missed and simply reformulated with a later target date.

The post-2015 proposals follow the trend by pushing targets out to 2030, while 60 million children remain out of school. Sub-Saharan Africa is where the greatest problems lie and where the most can be achieved.

While Africa made very good progress on education — the total net primary school enrollment for Africa rose from 64 per cent in 2000 to 84 per cent in 2009, according to the United Nations — it has not achieved universal primary education. In Kenya, 74.2 per cent of children attended primary school in 2003 according to the Unesco, and 81.8 per cent by 2009.

Uganda is also unlikely to achieve universal primary education by 2015, even though it was one of the first African nations to introduce a policy of providing free schooling to primary children. According to a 2014 Unicef study, the country has a 92 per cent net primary school enrollment rate, but a poor retention rate — only one-third of Ugandan children who enter primary school complete it. The main reason is poverty — while tuition is free, education is not "costless" (e.g. books, uniforms, opportunity cost) and families cannot afford to continue primary education.

Pupils in group work. Children are highly receptive to knowledge when young because there is generally no cultural barrier to education of girls and young children can contribute relatively little in terms of labour. Picture: File

COMMENTARY
DR BJØRN LOMBORG

"It seems that pre-schooling gives children a boost in social skills or emotional development, which is not easy to quantify."

Instead of once again pushing back the deadline of universal education, it is time for the international community to prioritise targets and focus limited resources on the most effective, says economist George Psacharopoulos, formerly of London School of Economics and the World Bank, the first in a series of papers commissioned by the Copenhagen Consensus Center looking at the post-2015 development agenda.

Abandoning the concept of universal education, money should be spent on expanding pre-schooling, in Sub-Saharan Africa, Psacharopoulos says, as it is at this age, and in this region where the greatest benefit can be achieved for every dollar spent. Pre-schooling provides children a head start in life, improves their life-long earning power and has wider societal benefits.

Using cost-benefit analysis, Psacharopoulos states that funding schooling and pre-schooling for all, will require spending more than the entire global education budget. This is clearly not sustainable.

The reasons for focusing resources first on pre-school and primary education include that children are highly receptive to knowledge when young, there is generally no cultural barrier to education of girls at this stage, and young children can contribute relatively little in terms of labour. It is also cheaper to deliver early years' education.

The longer term effects of funding early education are more profound and less obvious than the short-term ones. While the initial learning boost from attending pre-school does not provide an advantage for long compared to that in primary school, it does give an unexpected payback later in life, with adults earning more.

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It seems that pre-schooling gives children a boost in social skills or emotional development, which is not easy to quantify.

However, to make choices between different education targets and goals from other areas — health and nutrition, for example — estimates have to be made. While it is straightforward enough to work out the costs of education — mainly the obvious costs of providing teachers and school buildings, plus the opportunity cost of child labour — the benefits are less clear-cut.

Based on the most extensive data collected, Psacharopoulos shows that the best target is likely to be: "Increase the pre-school enrollment ratio in sub-Saharan Africa from the present 18 per cent to 59 per cent," which has a benefit-cost ratio of 33.5. This means that for every dollar spent on pre-school, SSA will get $33.5 back in improved future earnings for the individual, and other social benefits.

Achieving 100 per cent primary education in sub-Saharan Africa alone shows a benefit of 7, which is much lower than the 50 per cent target for pre-school in the same region. Concentrating on the most cost-effective goal would be a better use of scarce resources.

Undoubtedly, quality of education is also important, but hard to achieve. Extra expenditure on factors like reduced class sizes alone make surprisingly little impact, but investment in institutional changes such as exams and teacher accountability could have a higher impact.

If the world's poorest are to be helped the most, tough choices have to be made between competing goals. In an ideal world, universal, high quality secondary education would be an excellent goal, but first the urgent problem of basic level education in the world's most deprived regions has to be addressed. This way, we have the best hope of doing the most good with limited resources over the next 15 years.

Dr Bjørn Lomborg, an adjunct professor at the Copenhagen Business School, directs the Copenhagen Consensus Centre

Human-wildlife conflict reduces number of lions in Tanzania

By ADAM IHUCHA
Special Correspondent

THERE HAS BEEN a huge decline in the number of lions in wildlife-rich-Tanzania in the past decade, thanks to retaliatory killings.

A recent survey shows that Tarangire-Manyara ecosystem, the country's key lion's refuge, has been losing an average of 25 lions annually during the period under review.

Findings by the Tarangire Lion Project show a total of 226 lions have been killed between 2004-2013 in retaliation by neighbouring communities for the killing of livestock. Dr Bernard Kissui, a leading lion researcher warned that the entire big cat population could disappear and hurt the $1.9 billion tourism industry if affirmative action is not taken.

"Retaliatory killing of lions is silent, but a real threat to the lion population in the Tarangire–Manyara ecosystem where incidences of spearing and poisoning of lions by livestock keepers has been recorded," Dr Kissui says.

The worst mass killing was in 2009 when a pride preyed on villagers' cows, and over 26 lions were slaughtered by angry villagers, near Tarangire National Park in western Arusha, shaking Tanzania's reputation as one of the remaining lion strongholds in the world.

Official estimates show that there are between 15,000 and 16,000 lions in national parks and game reserves with a smaller population in unprotected areas.

25
Number of lions Tarangire-Manyara ecosystem lost annually, according to a recent survey

This is the largest population in Africa and about 40 per cent of the total population of remaining lions in the world. Tanzania Association of Tour Operators council member, Peter Lindstrom, suggests the state should protect migration corridors and wildlife dispersal areas outside protected areas.

He said that the state should reform policies to devolve management and benefits from wildlife.

"We need to encourage community based tourism and investment in areas outside game parks and protected areas by allowing communities to be amply rewarded for protecting lions and other wildlife through tangible and realistic financial rewards for doing so" Mr Lindstrom noted.

Records show that the entire Tarangire-Manyara ecosystem faces a massive decline in wildlife populations due to an increase in human population coupled with an ever increasing demand for land uses not compatible with conservation interests.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Curbing illicit financial flows: How to raise $770b for Africa's development

If we think about development priorities for the next 15 years — with the Millenium Development Goals expiring in 2015 — adequate nutrition and basic education immediately come to mind. Illicit financial flows (IFF) would not be top priority, but in a paper for the Copenhagen Consensus Centre, economist Alex Cobham argues that they are important enough to be included in the post-2015 goals now being debated by the international community.

If we look at the costs of IFF, he clearly has a point: 20 sub-Saharan Africa countries are estimated to have lost more than 10 per cent of their GDPs since 1980, while Africa as a whole is still estimated to be losing 3.4 per cent of GDP, that is, $76 billion each year. The Washington-based think thank Global Financial Integrity (GFI) estimates illicit flows to total ten-times the current level of international aid.

Nigeria offers a particularly egregious example of the problem. The well-respected governor of the central bank, Lamido Sanusi, was suspended for blowing the whistle on an apparent $20 billion difference between the country's recorded oil exports and those reported to the bank.

Illicit cash flows are not necessarily strictly illegal. Money laundering — transferring the proceeds of crime through apparently legitimate channels — is clearly illegal and the subject of stringent checks in the banking sector. Abuse of power by kleptocratic regimes to skim off a country's wealth into Swiss bank accounts at the expense of the rest of society is morally wrong and often also criminal.

What is less clear-cut is the avoidance of tax; while being legal in the strict sense of the word, this is frowned on by society. Recently, this has become a big story in some countries as multinational companies have, quite legitimately, minimised their tax liabilities by being registered in a low-tax country and declaring their profit there while in practice doing most of their business elsewhere.

The revenue lost through misinvoicing by African countries could have been invested in development, including into education, healthcare, or infrastructure improvements. Picture: File

COMMENTARY
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"A recent study by GFI found that between 2002 and 2011, $60.8 billion moved illegally into or out of Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Uganda using trade misinvoicing."

A recent study by GFI found that between 2002 and 2011, $60.8 billion moved illegally into or out of Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Uganda using trade misinvoicing. This practice means that companies alter the value of their exports and imports to justify illicitly moving money in and out of a country.

The potential average annual tax loss from trade misinvoicing came to about 12.7 per cent of Uganda's total government revenue between 2002 and 2011, followed by Ghana (11 per cent), Kenya (8.3 per cent), and Tanzania (7.4 per cent), GFI states. This tax revenue could have been invested in development, including into education, healthcare, or infrastructure improvements.

While public exposure is often enough for companies to change practices to protect their reputation, Cobham — research fellow at the Centre for Global Development — suggests transparency should be achieved via statutory public registers rather than investigative journalism and naming and shaming.

He makes three proposals: to make public full details of company ownership (that is, no shell companies with the real owners remaining hidden), ensure that there is automatic exchange of tax information between jurisdictions and require multinationals to report on a country-by-country basis. This transparency should greatly reduce illicit transfers.

Cobham proposes that one of the key targets for the UN system should be "Reduce to zero the legal persons and arrangements for which beneficial ownership info is not publicly available." If this gave just a 10 per cent reduction in the average losses to IFF in the decade from 2002, the benefit would be $768 billion, but reducing current losses by half would raise this to a staggering $7.5 trillion.

> **"Transparency should be achieved via statutory public registers rather than investigative journalism and naming and shaming.**
> Research Fellow, Alex Cobham

A wide range of compliance costs have also been estimated, but even using the highest of these ($66 billion) with the lowest benefit scenario gives a very attractive benefit-cost ratio: for each dollar spent on the above goal, $13 would be gained.

Not reassuring

However, these transparency proposals have to be as closely adhered to universally as possible, if there is to be a substantial impact — otherwise more money will simply pass through other channels which remain open. The precedent of the existing anti-money laundering framework is not reassuring.

This system is universally accepted and most countries obey the letter of the law without stemming the flow of illegal money in practice. Even major international banks are sometimes found to have flagrantly flouted the rules. However, these systems are complex and varied and the wider transparency proposals have the benefit of greater simplicity, so perhaps we should be more optimistic about them.

In an ideal world, it would not be possible for criminals to move their money about with impunity; neither should companies and individuals pay less tax than society deems to be fair in comparison with others. It is now up to us to consider whether it is worth putting scarce resources into trying to make the financial world more ideal, or whether there are better ways to use them.

Dr Bjørn Lomborg, an adjunct professor at the Copenhagen Business School, directs the Copenhagen Consensus Centre

Endemic violence inflicted daily on children at home, says Unicef report

By SOMINI SENGUPTA
New York Times News Service

ONE IN 10 girls worldwide have been forced into a sexual act, and 6 in 10 children ages 2 to 14 are regularly beaten by parents and caregivers, according to a Unicef report.

The report, drawing on data from 190 countries, paints a picture of endemic physical and emotional violence inflicted daily on children, mostly at home and in peacetime rather than on the streets or during war. Homicide is especially common in some of the Latin American countries from which children are fleeing by the tens of thousands into the US: It is the leading killer of adolescent boys ages 19 and younger in El Salvador, Guatemala and Venezuela. Central and Eastern Europe report the lowest rates of homicide among children.

Overall, war accounts for a small share of violence against children. But during conflicts and other humanitarian crises, domestic violence against women and children rises measurably, according to the authors of the study.

"Most violence against children occurs at the hands of the people charged with their care or with whom they interact daily - caregivers, peers and intimate partners," the report says.

About 6 in 10 children, 1 billion worldwide, are subjected to corporal punishment as a form of discipline by their caregivers, including parents, although the report concludes that "the most severe forms of corporal punishment — hitting a child on the head, ears or face or hitting a child hard and repeatedly — are less common over all."

Among girls ages 15 to 19, almost one-fourth said they had been the victims of "some form of physical violence since age 15." They said they suffered most at the hands of the men to whom they were closest. In countries as varied as India and Zambia, for instance, more than 70 percent of girls named their current or former husbands or partners as the perpetrators of physical violence against them.

60pc
Or 6 in 10 children aged 2 to 14 are regularly beaten by parents and caregivers, according to a Unicef report.

There seems to be widespread social acceptance of the practice: Half of all girls ages 15 to 19 said they believed a man was sometimes justified in hitting his wife.

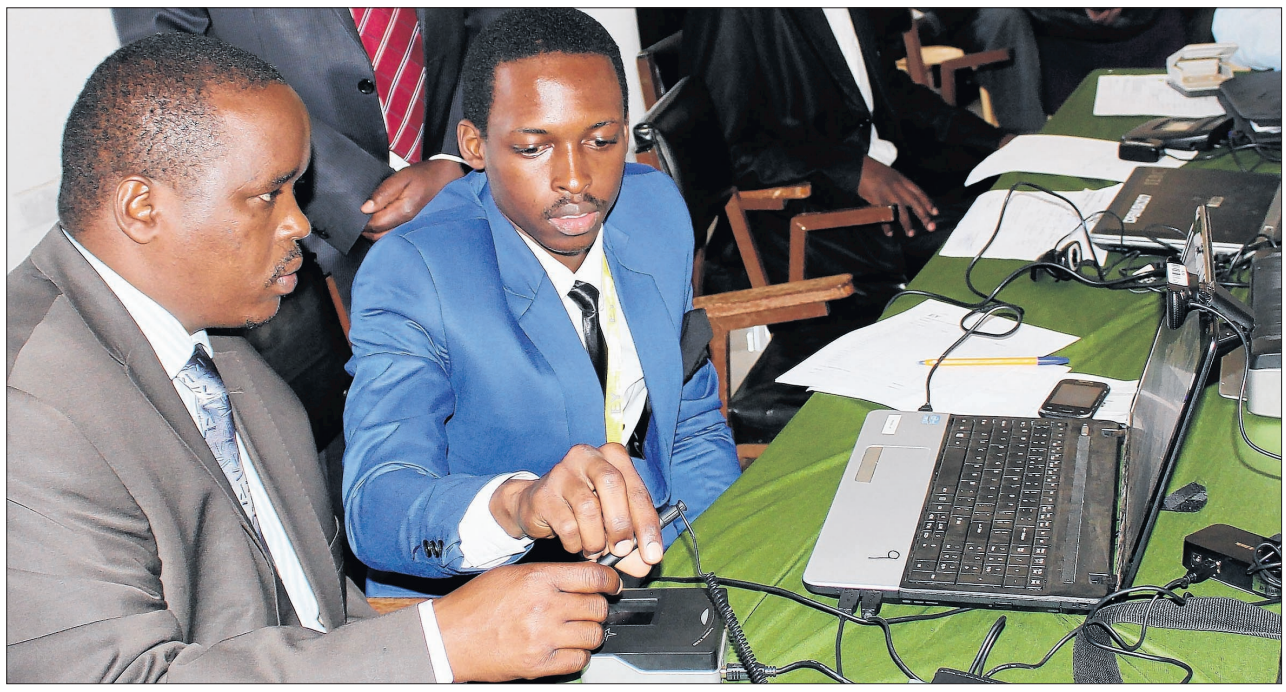
Likewise, girls worldwide reported being subjected to sexual violence at the hands of their husbands and boyfriends. One in 10 said they had experienced "forced intercourse or other forced sexual acts at some point in their lives." Boys were found to have experienced sexual violence, too, but to a lesser extent.

In the US, 35 per cent of girls ages 14 to 17, and 20 per cent of boys in the same age range, had experienced such violence.

Separately, an advocacy group called the Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict issued a report Thursday documenting the recruitment of child soldiers by the militant group Boko Haram in Nigeria, and by a civil defence group formed to counter the militants.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Better data is needed for better results but it will cost a huge chunk of aid



Government officials during Kenya's recent biometric registration of civil servants. Countries where data collection has not yet started will spend even more on the exercise. Picture: File

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While the world has generally seen success with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) — halve the proportion of hunger and poverty, get all children into school and drastically reduce child mortality — drawn up nearly 15 years ago, not all promises will be achieved.

What is somewhat surprising, however, is that we have fairly little information about what exactly we achieved. According to World Bank data, in 1990 there were 850 maternal deaths out of 100,000 live births in sub-Saharan Africa and this number went down to 500 in 2010. However, the World Health Organisation has warned that measuring the maternal mortality ratio remains a challenge as less than 40 per cent of countries have a complete civil registration system that appropriately attributes the cause of death.

Actually, most of the available numbers are rather projections and estimates, not data. In total, there are more gaps than real observations and the observations themselves are often dubious. This matters, because the world is now discussing a new set of targets for the next decade and a half. To do the most good, the Copenhagen Consensus, has asked 63 teams of the world's top economists to look at the economic, social and environmental costs and benefits of all the top targets. Of course most of the attention is on the high-profile issues like health, education, food, water and environment.

But to be able to measure how well we handle all these issues has real costs. How much this will cost and how much the international community can justify spending in this way is the important topic covered by Prof Morten Jerven in his new paper for the Copenhagen Consensus.

Take the original MDGs. There were just 18 simple targets. Data collection for these targets had many gaps, and much of the information collected was of dubious quality. However, Prof Jerven collates the information we have about survey costs across the world and estimates that the proper monitoring of all 18 targets and 48 indicators would have cost the world $27 billion. That is a significant number, but given that the world will spend about $1.9 trillion over the same period, 1.4 per cent is perhaps not unreasonable to spend on getting information.

The problem is, that the next set of targets is growing ever larger. A high-level panel with UK Prime Minister David Cameron, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono from Indonesia and Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf along with leaders from civil society and the private sector suggested 59 targets and advocated building "better data-collection systems, especially in developing countries." And some months ago, 70 UN ambassadors in the Open Working Group proposed a bewildering 169 targets. One of these argued that by 2020 the world should "increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts."

Doing even a minimum data collection for all these 169 targets will cost at least $254 billion, or almost twice the entire global annual development budget, Prof Jerven estimates.

And this is a very low estimate, since it does not take account of basic administrative data gathering by national governments, or costs for all the household surveys, which are recommended. And countries where data has not yet been collected, will likely prove even costlier. Remember, six of 49 countries in sub-Saharan Africa have never had a household survey and only 28 have had one in the past seven years.

"Given that the world will spend about $1.9 trillion over the same period, 1.4 per cent is perhaps not unreasonable to spend on getting information.

Moreover, there is a serious question of capacity. Worldwide, only about 60 countries have the basic registration systems needed to monitor trends in social indicators. Many poor countries do not have the capacity to collect useful data on a national basis. In the $254 billion estimate there is no allowance for maintaining the statistical office, training and retaining personnel, analysing along with disseminating the data. There is ample evidence that the MDG agenda has already stretched statistical capacity and strained statistical offices in poor countries and that 169 new targets will only make it much worse.

Most participants discussing the Sustainable Development Goals recognise that we need much, much fewer targets. Taking into account the formidable costs of data collection for each target, it is reasonable to reconsider the best number of targets. For comparison: both the Norwegian and British governments have official statistical services, which cost about 0.2 per cent of their GDP. Using this figure as a measure of willingness to pay would suggest that we should aim more at four SDG targets, which could be properly monitored, rather than a massive 169.

Dr Bjørn Lomborg, an adjunct professor at the Copenhagen Business School, directs the Copenhagen Consensus Centre, ranking the smartest solutions to the world's biggest problems by cost-benefit. He is the author of The Skeptical Environmentalist and Cool It. His new book is How To Spend $75 Billion to Make the World a Better Place.

Elderly and want to retire in EA? Go to Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania

By CHRISTABEL LIGAMI
Special Correspondent

RWANDA, UGANDA and Tanzania are the best countries in East Africa for the elderly to retire in, according to a new Global AgeWatch Index.

The three East African countries are among the 11 African countries ranked out of 96 globally.

Mauritius is ranked top at position 38 globally followed by South Africa at 80, Ghana 81, Morocco 83, Nigeria 85, Rwanda 86, Zambia 88, Uganda 89, Tanzania 92, Malawi 93 and Mozambique 95.

HelpAge International's Global Index ranks countries according to the social and economic wellbeing of its citizens over the age of 60 years in four key areas: Income, security, health, personal capacity and enabling environment.

Norway is the top at the first position globally followed by Sweden that is closely followed by Switzerland, Canada and Germany.

Over the past decade, Tanzania has taken steps towards the introduction of a universal pension, but the scheme — which could lift 1.5 million people out of poverty —has yet to be implemented.

The report says that although Africa's population is predominantly young, the number and proportion of older people are growing rapidly.

"The low rankings of African countries in the Index may reflect the low priority given to ageing issues on domestic policy agendas," it says.

Five countries—Bangladesh, Iraq, Mozambique, Uganda and Zambia—have been added to the Index this year, bringing the total to 96, representing 790 million people aged 60 and over – 91 per cent of the global older population.

38
The position globally of the top country in Africa, in the ranking, Mauritius

The inclusion of new countries, together with new and improved data, has led to new rankings.

The Index shows that average life expectancy at age 60 is at least 16 more years. On average, a woman aged 60 today can expect to live until she is 82, whereas in 1990, she could expect to live until she was 80.

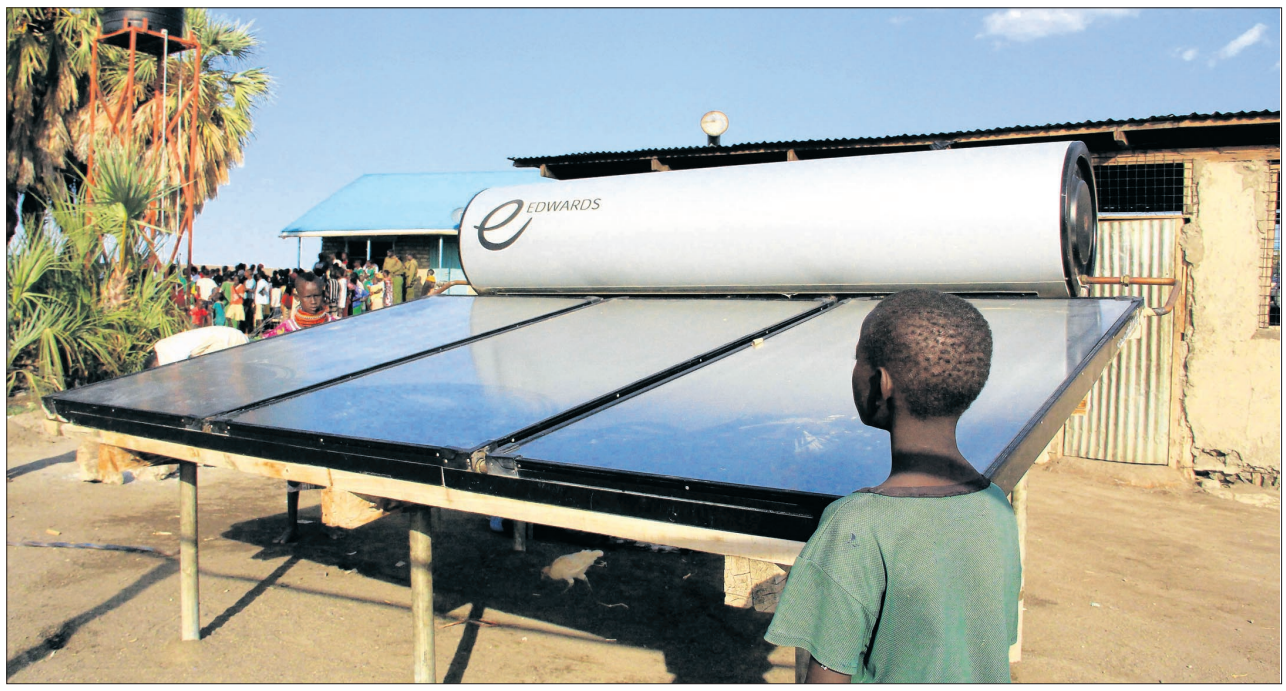
In countries like Rwanda, life expectancy at 60 has risen on a par with high-income countries. People aged 60 can expect to live three years longer in Rwanda even though it ranks in the lower half of the Index, showing that gains in longevity are not being accompanied by policies to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of their older citizens.

The 2014 Index reveals some encouraging developments, but also highlights areas where more action is needed. For instance, while in many countries people are living longer, there is considerable variation in life expectancy at age 60 and healthy life expectancy at 60.

Social policies to support healthy ageing are lagging in many countries, and a dearth of robust sex- and age-disaggregated data continues to hinder a full assessment and comparison of older women and men's wellbeing.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Cleaner cooking, electricity, better lives: A case for reliable, affordable energy



An alluring option could be to move to clean energy like wind, solar and hydro. Some are suggesting that developing countries should skip the fossil step and move right to clean energy. Picture: File

COMMENTARY

DR BJØRN LOMBORG

"Providing cleaner cooking facilities would improve health, increase productivity, allow women to spend time earning money and children to go to school."

Nutritious food, clean water and basic healthcare for all may be obvious high-priority targets for the international community, but we shouldn't ignore energy. Reliable and affordable energy is as vital for today's developing and emerging economies as it was before the Industrial Revolution. Driven mostly by its five-fold increase in coal use, China's economy has grown 18-fold over the past 30 years while lifting 680 million people out of poverty.

The energy ladder is a way of visualising stages of development. At the bottom are traditional biofuels — firewood, dung and crop waste. Almost three billion people use these for cooking and heating indoors, which is so polluting that the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates they kill one of every 13 people that die on the planet.

The next rung on the ladder is "transition fuels" such as kerosene, charcoal and liquified petroleum gas, while the top of the ladder is electricity. Because electricity is often powered by fossil fuels, it contributes to global warming. Hence an alluring option could be to move to clean energy, like wind, solar and hydro. Some are suggesting that developing countries should skip the fossil step and move right to clean energy.

What should the world prioritise? Fifteen years ago, the world agreed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), ambitious targets to tackle poverty, hunger, health and education. These goals have given direction to international aid and mostly led to improvement.

Now, the UN is considering the next set of targets for 2015-2030. Some argue that we should continue with the few, sharp targets from the MDGs, since we are not done. Others point out that many other issues, like environment and social justice, also need attention. At Copenhagen Consensus, we have asked some of the world's top economists to carry out analyses within all major challenge areas, estimating the economic, social and environmental costs and benefits of different targets.

So, should the almost-three billion people cooking with toxic open fires take higher priority than the broader, long term objective of cutting back on fossil fuel use? It turns out there are smart ways to help on both accounts, say Isabel Galiana and Amy Sopinka, the two economists who wrote the main paper on energy.

Burning firewood and dung on open indoor fires is inefficient and causes horrendous air pollution. More than four million people each year die from respiratory illness because of smoke from indoor open fires. In Kenya alone, the WHO estimates 15,700 people die each year. In Uganda, another 13,200 die annually.

Most of these are women and children, who are also the ones spending their time fetching firewood, often from quite far away. Providing cleaner cooking facilities — efficient stoves that run on liquefied gas — would improve health, increase productivity, allow women to spend time earning money and children to go to school.

The economic benefits of getting everyone off dung and wood are as high as the human welfare ones — more than $500 billion each year. Costs would be much lower, about $60 billion annually, including grants and subsidies to purchase stoves. Every dollar spent would buy almost $9 of benefits, which is a very good way to help.

However, the economists also provide a more realistic (and more efficient) target. Since it is awfully hard to get to 100 per cent, they suggest providing modern cooking fuels to 30 per cent. This will still help 780 million people, but at the much lower cost of $11 billion annually. For every dollar spent, we would do more than $14 worth of good.

While clean cooking is important, electricity can bring different benefits. Lighting means that students can study after dark, clinics can refrigerate vaccines, and water can be pumped from wells so that women do not have to walk miles to fetch it. Nearly 84 per cent of Kenya, or about 33.4 million people, still miss access to electricity, according to 2011 data by the International Energy Agency. Only nine per cent of Ugandans had electricity in the same year.

"The economic benefits of getting everyone off dung and wood are as high as the human welfare ones — more than $500 billion each year."

The value of getting electricity to everyone is about $380 billion annually. The cost is more difficult to work out. To provide electricity to everyone would need the equivalent of 250 more power stations, but many rural areas may best be served by solar panels and batteries. This is not an ideal solution, but would still be enough to make an enormous improvement to people's lives. The overall cost is probably around $75 billion per year, which still does $5 of benefits for each dollar spent.

If we want to tackle global warming, on the other hand, there are some targets we should be wary of; for example, doubling the world's share of renewables, particularly solar and wind is a rather ineffective use of resources. The extra costs of coping with the intermittent and unpredictable output of renewables makes them expensive, and the cost is likely to be higher than the benefits.

However, the world spends $544 billion in fossil fuel subsidies, almost exclusively in Third World countries. This inhibits public budgets from being able to provide health and education, while encouraging higher carbondioxide emissions. Moreover, fuel subsidies mostly help rich people, because they are the only ones to afford a car. To phase out fossil fuel subsidies would be a phenomenal target because it would cut carbon dioxide while saving money for other and better public uses. The economists estimate that every dollar in costs would do more than $15 of climate and public good.

With such high-return targets, the economic evidence shows that — if carefully chosen — energy targets should definitely be part of the goals for the next 15 years.

Dr Bjørn Lomborg, an adjunct professor at the Copenhagen Business School, directs the Copenhagen Consensus Centre, ranking the smartest solutions to the world's biggest problems by cost-benefit. He is the author of The Skeptical Environmentalist *and* Cool It. *His new book is* How To Spend $75 Billion to Make the World a Better Place.

Kenyan trends, insights and terms on Twitter through letters of the alphabet

By CHRISTABEL LIGAMI
Special Correspondent

APPROXIMATELY 700,000 Kenyans on Twitter are active each month out of a possible 2 million users in the country, says a report by Nendo Ventures, a Nairobi-based social media strategy and digital story telling consultancy.

Dubbed *A-to-Z of Kenyan Twitter,* the report is presented using the 26 letters of the alphabet, each with an accompanying explanation, visual, video and supporting digital material.

It features Kenyan terminologies, brands and personalities. Notable inclusions are events, television shows, politicians, musicians, athletes and socialites.

"The *A-to-Z of Kenyan Twitter* celebrates the culture, quirks and characters behind the millions of updates that are shared with the world," said report author and founder of Nendo, Mark Kaigwa.

700,000
The number of Kenyans who are active on Twitter each month, out of a possible 2 million

The publication will serve as a guide for local, regional and global businesses and brands seeking to connect with Kenyans online, said Mr Kaigwa.

"Whether government, business or society, it is paramount to engage online Kenyan communities from a point of understanding if one wishes to create and derive value," Mark Kaigwa affirmed.

The digital publication, website and campaign presents 26 of the most important trends, insights and terms from the Kenyans on micro-blogging social networks.

Launched online from Nairobi using the hashtag #AtoZofKOT, the publication features an array of social networks, each highlighting aspects of *The A-to-Z of Kenyan Twitter*'s in different forms including video, audio, photographs, an animated photo and more.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

From 'brain drain' to 'brain gain': Up migration to make the world richer

There is a way to make the poor of this world $500 billion better off, but this solution is rarely discussed. This matters, because the international community is gearing up to produce the next set of development goals for 2015-2030, to follow on from the Millennium Development Goals. Some $2.5 trillion in development aid plus unknown trillions from national budgets hang in the balance, so getting our priorities right is vital. Spending money on poor targets is possibly a wasted opportunity to do much more good elsewhere.

To do the most good, the Copenhagen Consensus has asked 63 teams of the world's top economists to look at the economic, social and environmental costs and benefits of all the top targets. One of these is the transfer of technology from rich to poor and middle-income countries as an aid to sustainable development.

The reason technology is so important is that it makes people more productive, so boosting overall economic growth. Not just that but, once knowledge has been gained, it is embedded in society and can be used as a stepping stone for future growth. Countries with a reasonable technical or research and development base are in a better position to absorb and make the best use of more new technologies as they become available.

Prof Keith E. Maskus from the University of Colorado has written an extensive paper on what works and how much good it will do. As he rightly points out, the UN's technology-related targets are simply too general and bland. Instead, using the economic literature, he puts forward two proposals.

The first proposal is straightforward: If our goal is to get more technology available for the poor, maybe we should simply increase investment in research and development, especially in the developing world.

If there is an opportunity to go abroad and make more money as a doctor or engineer, it will induce more young people to invest in a professional education, meaning more doctors and technicians in the long run. Picture: File

The point is the benefits from R&D do not just go to the company doing it; there are also broader societal benefits as productivity gains occur elsewhere in the economy and other people learn on the job or see the possibility for more innovation. After Apple produced an innovative touchscreen on its first iPhone, the knowledge is now available to lots of products in many different areas.

This broader benefit justifies governments supporting research, either through tax credits or direct government spending on research in public institutions. On average, the developing countries spend just 0.2 per cent of their GDP on R&D and perhaps 0.3 per cent in 2030. If we instead aim at 0.5 per cent of GDP by 2030 and 1.5 per cent for emerging economies, this would naturally increase the direct government costs, but it would also increase the long-run technological innovation and capabilities. For comparison, Kenya already spends about 1 per cent, so it is above the target, even if the average developing country is not.

COMMENTARY
DR BJØRN LOMBORG

"Instead of focusing on innovating more technology to make people more productive, we could focus on getting more people to places where they would be productive."

The models estimate in total that for every dollar spent, we could likely end up doing $3 worth of good. That is not bad.

However, there is another, and much more effective way to increase technological capabilities in low-income countries. Instead of focusing on innovating more technology to make people more productive, we could focus on getting more people to places where they would be productive.

While allowing the free mobility of goods (free trade) can add several percentage points to global GDP, we have long known that free mobility of people could add anywhere from 67-147 per cent to global GDP. Allowing free mobility could essentially double the world's income.

This is because people in poor areas are not inherently unproductive but their circumstances mostly make them unproductive. So, if they were to migrate, from say, Kenya to the European Union, they would become much more productive.

Of course, absolutely free mobility would result in a massive relocation from poor to rich countries, which would likely engender huge political issues. But Prof Maskus suggests that we could start off with a modest goal of increasing current skilled migration by 5-20 per cent with 10-year visas.

An increase in skilled migration could mean about 117,000 more managerial and technical workers, with about half going to the EU, 13,000 to other large economies like Turkey and South Africa, and 50,000 would be crossing borders to work within the African continent. Although other research shows migrants would only become half or less as productive as Europeans and other more productive neighbours, this would still make them much better off. The model shows they would earn $22 billion more over the next 25 years. Moreover, as they would bring with them new ideas and concepts, they will increase productivity in the EU and elsewhere by $660 million.

Of course, this will also mean an outflow of skilled workers from poorer countries. Maybe 6,900 people will leave Kenya for 10 years. But they will send back money — about $410 million in total. And while many worry about a "brain drain," there is actually more evidence for a "brain gain": If there is an opportunity to go abroad and make more money as a doctor or engineer, it will induce more young people to invest in a professional education, meaning more doctors and technicians in the long run. And as these skilled professionals come back after 10 years, they will also bring back new ideas and higher productivity.

In total, the costs, mostly in lost tax revenue, are significantly outweighed by the gains. For every dollar spent, this target could do $10 to $48 worth of good. The potential benefits could go as high as $500 billion. That should make the target of higher labour mobility a strong contender for the world's next set of goals.

Dr. Bjørn Lomborg, an adjunct professor at the Copenhagen Business School, directs the Copenhagen Consensus Centre, ranking the smartest solutions to the world's biggest problems by cost-benefit. He is the author of The Sceptical Environmentalist and Cool It.

Courageous and controversial scholar, artist and philosopher

FROM PAGE 25

ment and democracy. There are yet to emerge national leaders who will entrench the culture of accountability, inclusion and selfless service to the people. In his last days, Ali Mazrui was searching for national leaders who would steer the economic transformation of Africa, especially within the context of recent discoveries of natural resources. When will the leaders of pan-Africanism with the fire of Kwame Nkrumah and Patrice Lumumba light up the African continent?

An interesting concept in the speculative discourse of pan-Africanism supported by Prof Mazrui, is Afrabia. This concept, inspired by the blurring of the boundaries between Africa and the Middle East, would seem to suggest that the two regions are in the process of merging. The East African Coast seems to be a continuum of parts of the Middle East, especially Oman. In fact, the number of families that speak Kiswahili in Oman is quite impressive and my own Kiswahili teacher, the late Hilal Bualy, retired toOman. So did Mwalimu Tejani, formerly of Kenyatta University College. Whether it is cultural connections or relations of ideology, geography or genealogy, the interaction between Africa and the Middle East is extremely intense.

Moreover, the concept of Afrabia is not too far-fetched when one considers the impact of global terrorism and the spread of Islam as a cultural and political force.

Inclusive politics

Ali Mazrui was totally committed to inclusive politics. Writing on language and governance in *The Power of Babel,* he laments the political dependence on imperial languages. This dependence excludes the majority of citizens from the governance process. Even more comical is the fact that on days of national significance, citizens are addressed by their leaders, not in the national language, but in a European language. Furthermore, European languages are the official languages of constitutions in Africa, notwithstanding the fact that the majority of the people who face the courts on a daily basis speak African languages. Without a clear understanding of the purpose of leadership, these contradictions will persist.

As we celebrate the life of Prof Ali Mazrui, the controversial and courageous son of Africa, let us take time to critically read his writings. Let us ask the question: What happens to a soul genuinely wanting to come home, but denied the opportunity to do so by an elite frightened by the power of ideas?

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The hidden, far reaching costs of violence against women and children

Scouts march in Nairobi to promote peace and harmony. To reduce violence against women and girls, a programme in Uganda called SASA! (Swahili for "Now!") that promotes the view that violence against a partner is unacceptable, has halved the level of violence. Picture: Gerald Anderson

COMMENTARY
DR BJØRN LOMBORG

"If we could avoid these murders and assaults, the region would be better off in a way that would be comparable with everyone being 4 per cent richer.

Violence holds a huge cost for our world. Globally the cost runs to more than 11 per cent of the world's GDP. But this is not mostly about the highly visible violence that dominates TV and news.

Civil wars and conflicts rumble on far too long in far too many places like Syria and the Sudans, and they are devastating for those involved. Economists have measured the costs of all such conflict, from the death toll from civil wars, regular wars, terrorism along with the costs of refugees but also including the way conflicts can blight countries' economic growth for decades. Yet, their total impact, though important in specific hotspots, is globally fairly small, with a total cost of about 0.2 per cent of global GDP.

But surprisingly, other forms of violence are probably a much greater problem and they certainly deserve more of the world's attention. This is the argument by James Fearon and Anke Hoeffler in a new research paper for the Copenhagen Consensus.

Take the stark fact that, for each civil war battlefield death, roughly nine people are murdered. If you measure the total cost, not just of homicides but assaults and the fear associated with these, the global cost runs to more than 1.4 per cent of GDP. For sub-Saharan Africa, because of higher crime rates, the cost is nearly 4 per cent of the region's GDP. This does not mean that the region loses some $86 billion each year from this violence, but rather that if we could avoid these murders and assaults, the region would be better off in a way that would be comparable with everyone being 4 per cent richer.

But even murders are not the most important part of violence. The most devastating impact of violence comes from two areas that are often neglected, and the economic analysis shows us why we need to give them much more attention.

The first area is child abuse: Across the world, many children still have a very violent upbringing. Almost all parents use non-violent discipline like explaining why certain behaviour is wrong and perhaps taking away privileges. But each month, more than 15 per cent of all children experience what the UN calls severe physical punishment. They are being slapped on the face, head and ears and 4 per cent are even being beat up with an implement, being hit over and over as hard as possible. This is the fate of 290 million children across the world each month, with 125 million cases occurring in sub-Saharan Africa.

The economists estimate the cost of such child assault, not just from the obvious costs of increased child welfare interventions, but also from the well-documented loss of future earnings from an assaulted child. The total global cost reaches an astounding $3.5 trillion annually. For Kenya, the cost is estimated at $15 billion.

Violence against women is the biggest global cost, and it includes female infanticide, genital mutilation and incitement for widows to commit suicide. But far bigger is the cost of intimate partner violence, including being slapped, pushed, shoved, kicked, choked, burnt on purpose and forced to have sex. Over the past year, this violence afflicted more than 28 per cent of women in sub-Saharan Africa.

The total cost of such violence against women runs to $4.4 trillion per year, or about $10 billion just for Kenya. Together with violence against children, the social cost of violence reaches almost $25 billion in Kenya annually.

The world and the UN are trying to answer the question: What kind of world do you want in 2030? The focus is to find the best targets for the world to concentrate on.

That is why my think-tank, Copenhagen Consensus, has asked some of the world's top economists to look at the economic, social and environmental costs and benefits of many different proposed targets, from areas like health, food and education to the thorny question of violence.

The economists find that a target to reduce civil wars could be achieved with more active deployment of peacekeeping forces. While costly, these could help prevent future civil wars, and the analysis shows that each $1 spent could do between $2 and $7 worth of good. They also find changing alcohol laws could partially reduce assaults: In the UK such change has lowered assaults so much that the benefits outweighed costs 17-to-1.

To reduce violence against women and girls, a programme in Uganda called SASA! (Swahili for "Now!") promotes the view that violence against a partner is unacceptable, and has halved the level of violence. While such a programme seems like a great idea, we still don't have the analysis to show how much good it does for each dollar.

Reducing violence against children could be helped by strengthening social services. Studies from Washington state show that home visitation programmes can reduce child abuse hence reduce both further spending on child welfare and litigation, while helping the children avoid medical, mental health and quality of life costs. For each dollar spent the benefits could reach $13-$14.

We now need to start a conversation about which targets for the world we want to set. Knowing the costs and benefits of ways to reduce violence is one part of that puzzle.

Dr. Bjørn Lomborg, an adjunct professor at the Copenhagen Business School, directs the Copenhagen Consensus Centre, ranking the smartest solutions to the world's biggest problems by cost-benefit. He is the author of The Sceptical Environmentalist and Cool It.

Girls and women face barriers to the exercise of real power at home, at work and in politics. Picture: File

'World still failing on equality between boys and girls'

By CHRISTABEL LIGAMI
Special Correspondent

ONE IN four adolescent girls globally experience physical violence, says a United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) report.

The data reveal damaging perceptions on the acceptability of violence, particularly among girls. Globally, nearly half of girls aged 15 to 19 believe a man is justified in beating his wife or partner under certain circumstances such as refusing to have sex, leaving the house without permission, arguing, neglecting the children or burning dinner.

"These numbers speak to a mindset that tolerates, perpetuates, and even justifies violence — and should sound an alarm to everyone, everywhere," said Unicef deputy executive director Geeta Rao Gupta.

Despite new legislation and proactive policies such as quotas, the report shows that the world is failing to deliver on equality between girls and boys.

The Unicef report was launched to coincide with the International Day of the Girl Child on October 11.

It sought to identify actions that could address unequal power relations. It also investigated whether power always protects the status quo or whether it can be a force for positive change.

While the report acknowledged substantial progress, it warned that "warm words" on equality sometimes mask the reality that girls and women face barriers to the exercise of real power at home, at work and in politics.

"We shouldn't let the notion that we are now on some irreversible path to equality creep in. Scratch the surface, and across the world you'll find that girls' and women's pathways to power remain blocked," said the report.

The report said a "curriculum of chores" still held girls back at home, while women and girls remain disproportionately affected by domestic violence. It pointed out that women make up just 22 per cent of parliamentarians, while just 19 states have female leaders.

Unicef points to specific actions to prevent violence against girls. They include: Keeping girls in school; providing them with critical life skills; supporting parents, including with cash transfers to mitigate risks to girls; changing attitudes and norms through community conversations; and strengthening judicial, criminal and social systems and services.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Making modern contraception freely available globally is a good investment

COMMENTARY
DR BJØRN LOMBORG

"Providing contraception to the 215 million women who want to avoid pregnancy would cost about $3.6 billion. It would result in 650,000 fewer newborn death."

There was a time we worried about a "population explosion," with ever more people fighting over ever fewer resources. However, the population growth has decreased since the late 1960s and resources have not run out.

There are still population problems, but the two main ones are very probably different from what you think.

The UN expects 2.4 billion more people by 2050. But contrary to common knowledge, this is not mostly about couples having lots of babies. Remember, the average woman in the developing world had 5.4 children in the early 1970s, but today that number has dropped to 2.7. In Uganda, the average woman used to have 7.1 children in 1970, today that number has dropped to 6.4.

Even if every man and woman just had one baby survive, world population would still increase by 1.9 billion by 2050. Still, if families have fewer children, they can invest more in their future, giving them much greater earning potential. As countries become more prosperous, their birth rates fall. Mothers have fewer children who are better-educated and have small families.

Increasing prosperity is shared among fewer people. This is what first happened in the Old World during the Industrial Revolution, and the living standards of Europeans rose rapidly. More recently, a number of East Asian countries have gone through a similar transition, none more so than China. The good news is that it could work anywhere, also allowing African countries to catch up fast.

The Chinese government slowed the growth of its population by imposing a "one-child per family" rule. This may have been good economically, but was also an infringement of human rights. Fortunately, there are other, less drastic, ways to travel this road, particularly by making modern contraception available to everyone who wants it.

Population is just one key issue on the agenda for the international community at the moment. The problem is that, although everyone agrees that we should be doing everything we can to make poor people's lives better, prioritising a particular set of targets is difficult.

Governments and NGOs have been working together to agree how best to improve people's lives in the period to 2030, but there are still literally hundreds of possible targets, all of them stoutly defended by someone.

Having hundreds of priorities is like having none at all. That is why the Copenhagen Consensus is trying to help focus on the most effective targets, using the tools of economic analysis. Although economics does not provide the entire picture, understanding where we do most good is at least a very good starting point.

Contraception — including these free condoms at a clinic in Kenya — would avoid about $145 billion in human misery. Picture: File

Groups of top economists are looking at each of 19 possible issues and making their recommendations. On the population issue, Hans-Peter Kohler and Jere Behrman from the University of Pennsylvania argue that making modern contraception freely available is a phenomenally good investment. Providing contraception to the 215 million women who today want to avoid pregnancy but cannot, would cost about $3.6 billion. It would annually result in 640,000 fewer newborn deaths, 150,000 fewer maternal deaths and 600,000 fewer children who lose their mother. Estimating this misery in economic terms may seem cold, but it makes it possible to compare contraception to other big challenges. In total, contraception would avoid about $145 billion in human misery. That alone means that every dollar spent will do $40 worth of good.

But experts also estimate that with fewer children, parents can afford better schooling, while society benefits from fewer costs from children and more income from a larger working population. Those benefits total $288 billion per year, making a dollar spent on contraception do $120 worth of good.

But development also means growth in older people and possibly shrinking populations. This is already happening in Europe and Japan, but will also start soon in China and eventually most places. Today, 12 per cent of the world's population is above 60, but in 36 years, that will almost double to 21 per cent. Uganda has fewer than one million people older than 65 today, but will have about five million by mid-century.

Although ageing may seem a less pressing problem than global population growth, it is real and has to be tackled. Policies aimed at increasing the birth rate in Europe and elsewhere have not been successful, but there is a better solution: Allow more migration. Properly managed, this can benefit the receiving nation (getting more workers), the migrants (getting better pay) and the sending country (getting remittances). In total, it turns out that the benefits are more than forty times the cost.

There are other promising targets, which are more difficult to cost – discouraging early retirement and dependency, for example. But overall, the economists make a powerful argument for why contraception and migration should be prioritised on the list of global targets.

Dr. Bjørn Lomborg, an adjunct professor at the Copenhagen Business School, directs the Copenhagen Consensus Centre, ranking the smartest solutions to the world's biggest problems by cost-benefit. He is the author of The Sceptical Environmentalist *and* Cool It.

EA oil and gas sector in dire need of infrastructure

By SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
The EastAfrican

OFFSHORE EXPLORATION has increased exponentially over the past five years but East Africa will first need to secure financing to develop infrastructure if it is to gain momentum, the Standard Bank Group said on Wednesday.

Standard's director of oil and gas Charlie Houston said Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania will need $50 billion to $75 billion in energy investments over the next five to seven years.

Mr Houston said crude oil and natural gas resources will require associated infrastructure like export pipelines, refineries and LNG facilities on a continent that lags behind with regard to energy access.

"Development of oil and gas across East Africa will be staggered over time. The success of initial development will drive further investment as recoverable resources increase with further exploration and appraisal," he said.

Tullow Oil and Africa Oil Corporation have discovered 600 million barrels of crude oil in South Lokichar basin in northwestern Kenya. Oil resources in the Albertine basin in western Uganda were revised upwards in August by the government to 6.5 billion barrels after further appraisal work.

Mr Houston said the immediate challenge is for stakeholders to agree on the commercial ownership structure of the pipeline to the Kenyan Coast, from where crude will be shipped to export markets.

"Without this agreement and the pipeline, the vast bulk of the discovered reserves cannot be monetised and will not attract the necessary investment from the international investor base," he said.

Kenya and Uganda are next year set to jointly start building next year a $4 billion crude oil export pipeline running 1,300 kilometres from Hoima in Uganda to Lamu in Kenya. Completion of the line is expected in 2018.

The Anadarko and Eni discoveries in Areas 1 and 4 in Mozambique could hold more than 100 trillion cubic feet of gas while in Tanzania, BG Group and Ophir Energy have also found major gas deposits, as has Statoil and its partner ExxonMobil.

However, before that can happen, a huge challenge is to build facilities to turn the reserves into liquefied natural gas, which can then be shipped to the markets.

Associate infrastructure like export pipelines, refineries and LNG facilities is sorely needed. Picture: File

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Free regional trade could make every East African richer by $200 a year

A loaded truck leaving the Mombasa port. Free trade will help Africa focus on what it does best, boosting growth as happened with China. Picture: Laban Walloga

COMMENTARY
DR BJØRN LOMBORG

"The jobs that are lost from free trade are obvious — witness Western farmers protesting losing their subsidies. But the benefits are spread out — for example, food will be a bit cheaper for everyone."

With one simple policy — more free trade — we could make the world $500 trillion better off and lift 160 million people out of extreme poverty. If there is one question we have to ask ourselves, it is: Why don't we?

In 2000, the international community agreed to a set of important targets to improve the lot of the world's poorest by 2015, the Millennium Development Goals. Many of these goals were extremely successful in vital areas such as reducing poverty and hunger, but there is still much to be done. Through the UN, world leaders are now working on the next set of targets for 2015-2030. As the world will spend $2.5 trillion just on development aid over that period, and countless trillions in national budgets, there are lots of contenders for these targets.

That is why the Copenhagen Consensus has asked some 60 of the world's top economists to look at the economic, social and environmental costs and benefits of many different targets, in areas like health, nutrition and education. These are all important but one issue is often missing. As argued in a new paper by Prof Kym Anderson of the University of Adelaide, reducing trade barriers not only makes the world richer, it is a great enabler for reducing poverty, curtailing hunger, improving health, and restoring the environment.

What ir does best

Freer trade means that each country can focus on doing what it does best, making all countries better off. Big strides have been made in liberalisation since the Second World War, but the latest phase — the Doha Development Agenda — seems stalled, with little hope of a resolution. This is dreadful, particularly for developing countries, because two of the main areas where agreement is elusive are agriculture and textiles, both sectors where lower wage countries in the tropics and sub-tropics have a comparative advantage.

A successful Doha round could get Africa better prices for agricultural produce and textile, which would make Africa richer. But more importantly, free trade will help Africa focus on what it does best, boosting growth as happened with China.

Analysis shows that there would be substantial rewards for completing the Doha round. The direct economic benefits would be a 1.1 per cent increase in global GDP. This sounds modest. But because it would impact the entire world economy, by 2030 we would be about $1.5 trillion richer every year.

But open economies also grow faster. In the past 50 years, countries as diverse as South Korea, Chile and India have seen their rate of growth shoot up by 1.5 per cent per annum on average, shortly after liberalisation. If Doha can be completed, it is estimated that the global economy will grow by an extra 0.6 per cent for the next few decades. By 2030, such dynamic growth would make the world economy $11.5 trillion larger each year, leaving us 10 per cent more resources to fix all other problems.

And a large part of the benefit will go to the developing world, which by 2030 would see its economy $7 trillion larger each year. On average, this increased GDP is equivalent to $1,000 more for every person in the developing world. For Kenya and Uganda, this would mean the average person could be making an extra $250 and $150 respectively, while an average Rwandan and Tanzanian would both be $200 richer per year.

By the end of the century, free trade could leave our grandchildren 20 per cent better off, or with $100 trillion more every year than they would otherwise have had.

For now, powerful vested interests make it hard for politicians to compromise. The jobs that are lost from free trade are obvious and concentrated — witness Western farmers protesting losing their subsidies. But the benefits are spread out — for example, food will be a bit cheaper for everyone, and Third World farmers will see greater profits.

Yet we need to keep a sense of proportion. There are real costs from free trade in terms of workers needing retraining and the provision of unemployment benefits. These outlays will occur mostly over the next decade and will cost $100 billion-$300 billion. But the benefits will accrue for at least the next nine decades, and total $500 trillion in present day dollars. For every dollar spent, we will achieve more than $3,000 of benefits.

And this will have huge impacts for the world's poor. We know that economic growth has been one of the major drivers of poverty reduction — China's rapid growth over the past 30 years has pulled 680 million people out of poverty, the most ever achieved in human history.

Yet we still have about 1.2 billion people living in abject poverty today. With future growth, this number will likely be reduced to a still chokingly high 700 million by 2030. But if we achieve freer trade through the Doha round, the faster growth could lift an extra 160 million people out of poverty by 2030.

It is worth stepping back and realising this amazing opportunity for the world. Yes, we should help in areas like food, education, health, and the environment. But if we could just get it right on free trade, we could possibly do more good here than anywhere else — leaving the world $500 trillion better off, with 160 million fewer poor.

Dr. Bjørn Lomborg, an adjunct professor at the Copenhagen Business School, directs the Copenhagen Consensus Centre, ranking the smartest solutions to the world's biggest problems by cost-benefit. He is the author of The Sceptical Environmentalist *and* Cool It.

By 2020, the world's population aged 60 years and older is expected to reach two billion. Picture: File

Make 'ageing well' a global priority, urges new report

By CHRISTABEL LIGAMI
Special Correspondent

AS PEOPLE live longer, soaring levels of chronic illness and diminished wellbeing are poised to become a major global public health challenge and thus "ageing well" must be a global priority, according to a new series on health and ageing, published in *The Lancet*.

It warns that unless health systems find effective strategies to address the problems faced by an ageing world population, the growing burden of chronic disease will greatly affect the quality of life of older people.

The Lancet report indicates that worldwide, life expectancy of older people continues to rise. By 2020, the number of people aged 60 years and older will outnumber children younger than five years.

By 2050, the world's population aged 60 years and older is expected to total 2 billion, up from 841 million today. Eighty per cent of these older people will be living in low-income and middle-income countries.

The increase in longevity, especially in high-income countries, has been largely due to the decline in deaths from cardiovascular disease, mainly because of simple, cost-effective strategies to reduce tobacco use and high blood pressure, and improved coverage and effectiveness of health intervention.

However, people are not necessarily healthier than before – nearly a quarter (23 per cent) of the overall global burden of death and illness is in people aged over 60, and much of this burden is attributable to long-term illness caused by diseases such as cancer, chronic respiratory diseases, heart disease, musculoskeletal diseases (such as arthritis and osteoporosis), and mental and neurological disorders.

This long-term burden of illness and diminished wellbeing affects patients, their families, health systems, and economies, and is forecast to accelerate. For example, latest estimates indicate that the number of people with dementia is expected to rise from 44 million now, to 135 million by 2050.

"Deep and fundamental reforms of health and social care systems will be required," says John Beard, director of the Department of Ageing and Life Course at the World Health Organisation, and co-leader of the series.

"But we must be careful that these reforms do not reinforce the inequities that drive much of the poor health and functional limitation we see in older age."

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

To combat climate change, consider better technology

COMMENTARY
DR BJØRN LOMBORG

"In order to make progress, we can't afford to pour money into projects that pay back less than what we put in. Likewise, we can't afford not to focus on projects that will do immense amounts of good."

Climate change has certainly received immense exposure among the most eminent issues of the 21st century so far. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon argues that it is "an existential challenge for the whole human race." On the other hand, when five million people were asked by the UN what they saw as most important, climate change came at the bottom of the list of 17 issues: Way below healthcare, education, corruption, nutrition and water — and even below phone and Internet access.

This is startling, particularly given the consensus that climate change is real and happening. Are people right to be sceptical about current policies?

The Copenhagen Consensus has asked teams of expert economists to analyse all the options facing humanity — from health and education to violence, water and global warming — to estimate where we can do the most good for our money. This matters, because the UN is about to set its next set of targets for the world from 2015-2030. Like the Millennium Development Goals, set 15 years ago, these targets will determine where trillions of dollars will be spent. In order to make progress, we can't afford to pour money into projects which pay back less than what we put in. Likewise, we can't afford not to focus on projects that will do immense amounts of good.

The author of the main paper, economist Isabel Galiana, comes to a conclusion that is sure to be controversial: Present policies designed to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases are failing and cannot be effective until better technology is available. Despite the Kyoto Protocol and many national initiatives, emissions have increased by almost half since 1990 and will continue to increase for many decades to come.

In stark contrast, the UN and many governments aim to keep the average temperature rise below 2°C above pre-industrial times. However, the problem is that there is no realistic chance of keeping to this limit with current trends in fossil fuel use. To do this, emissions would have to peak and then be drastically cut with some technology capturing carbon dioxide, liquefying it and injecting it deep underground. But this technology on the vast scale needed doesn't exist yet. Moreover, solar and wind, though very popular, will even in 2035 contribute just a tiny fraction of global energy needs.

Solar and wind, though very popular, will even in 2035 contribute just a tiny fraction of global energy needs. Picture: File

The upshot is that pursuing this 2°C target is costly and not guaranteed to be successful. Estimating all the economic, social and environmental costs and benefits is difficult, but one thing is clear: The programme would cost much more than the benefits it would bring. In the meantime, that money could have been used to improve people's welfare in much more cost-effective programmes.

Galiana suggests that investing 0.5 per cent of global GDP, which would be around $220 million for Kenya, into development of better energy technology would be a much better use of money. This could be funded with a slowly rising carbon tax (giving businesses an incentive to cut emissions but not telling them how to do it) and could give a payback of $11 for every dollar spent.

Galiana also suggests the world should spend 0.05 per cent of GDP for adaptation, essentially helping many nations to cope better with specific climate impacts. Every $1 spent will likely do more than $2 of social good.

The cost of action on climate change rises rapidly as the targets get tougher, points out Robert Mendelsohn, another economist who has contributed his perspective. Keeping average temperature rises below 5°C could cost about $10 trillion, but aiming for a 2°C target would cost ten times as much.

Much better, then, to target a maximum of, say, 3°C rise, which will cost about $40 trillion but avoid most damages. If we insist on 2°C, we will pay an extra $60,000 billion, but only prevent a stream of $100 billion damages that begins in 70-80 years. Moreover, all of these estimates assume cost-effective climate policies, whereas in real life they have often become many times more expensive.

Climate change is a big issue and cannot be ignored. But we need to take the emotion away and look at the facts; otherwise it will be the world's poorest that will suffer. Money that is not spent on costly, ineffective carboon dioxide cuts can be used to fund programmes that are guaranteed to improve their lives.

Dr. Bjørn Lomborg, an adjunct professor at the Copenhagen Business School, directs the Copenhagen Consensus Centre, ranking the smartest solutions to the world's biggest problems by cost-benefit. He is the author of The Sceptical Environmentalist *and* Cool It.

New policy aims at lower energy costs

By KENNEDY SENELWA
Special Correspondent

KENYA HAS drafted a national energy and petroleum policy that seeks to ensure competitively priced energy while protecting the environment.

According to the draft, the national government will explore and adopt financing options from local and international sources for cost-effective utilisation of all energy resources.

"Tax and other concessions are planned to encourage investment in oil and gas exploration, exploitation of geothermal energy, hydroelectric power and other forms of renewable energy such as wind, solar and biomass," says the draft.

This is important especially since petroleum products and electricity, as sources of energy, are the main drivers of the economy in Kenya.

Kenya relies on imported petroleum products but the discovery of oil is expected to bring about major changes. Electricity generation is predominently hydro, supplemented by geothermal and thermal sources.

According to the draft policy, a National Upstream Petroleum Advisory Committee will be responsible for exploration and development of oil with gas while the National Coal Advisory Committee will be in charge of coal. The Rural Electrification Authority will be transformed into the Rural Electrification and Renewable Energy Authority, the lead development agency for renewable energy resources other than geothermal and large hydros.

Kenya will support public-private partnerships in development, operation and maintenance of energy infrastructure as well as set up a consolidated energy fund to cater for the proposed National Energy and Petroleum Institute.

The fund will support acquisition of strategic petroleum reserves, energy sector environmental disaster mitigation, water towers conservation, energy efficiency and conservation programmes, and renewable energy initiatives.

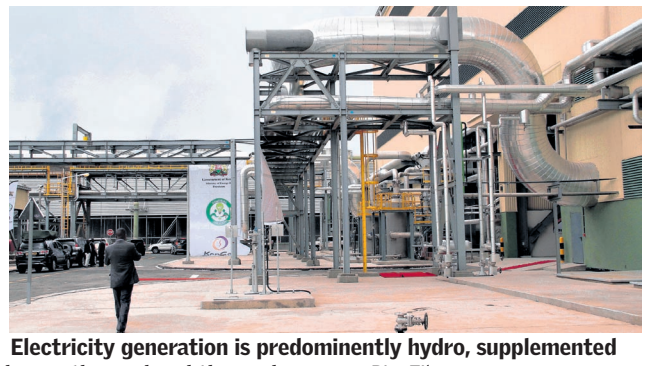
The fund will also support the National Energy and Petroleum Institute to undertake training, research and development, nurture talent, innovation and enhance capacity building in the sector.

The draft policy has a roadmap to raise Kenya's power generation capacity by at least 5,000 Megawatts from 1,664MW by 2016. The generation cost is projected to reduce from US cents 11.30 to US cents 7.4. The indicative end-user tariffs are projected to reduce from US cents 14.14 to US cents 9 for commercial as well as industrial customers and from US cents 19.78 to US cents 10.45 for domestic customers

The government will support the Kenya Electricity Transmission Company (Ketraco) to build about 5,000 kilometres of transmission lines in the short term. To enhance security, reliability and affordability of electricity supply, 16,000 kilometres of new transmission lines will be built by 2031. The draft said a robust distribution network is to be developed with gradual elimination of overhead distribution systems to ensure efficient and safe provision of distribution services by licensed network service providers.

Once adopted, it will replace Sessional Paper No. 4 of 2004, which has policies guiding energy sector development governed by Geothermal Resources Act of 1982, the Energy Act of 2006 and Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Act of 1986.

"The draft policy has a roadmap to raise Kenya's power generation capacity by at least 5,000MW by 2016."



Electricity generation is predominently hydro, supplemented by geothermal and thermal sources. Pic: File

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

For each $1 spent to save reefs, $24 of environmental benefits are made

COMMENTARY
DR BJØRN LOMBORG

"We rely on the natural world for many different benefits or what experts call 'ecosystem services.' Forests don't just provide timber and firewood, but also flood protection.'

Biodiversity — the range of species we share our planet with — is important, but can we put a value on it? And can we estimate the benefits and costs of conservation? In three new scientific papers for the Copenhagen Consensus, Prof Anil Markandya and two other economists — Luke Brander and Alistair McVittie — find that not only can we estimate the costs and benefits for some projects but also that conservation can be a great investment.

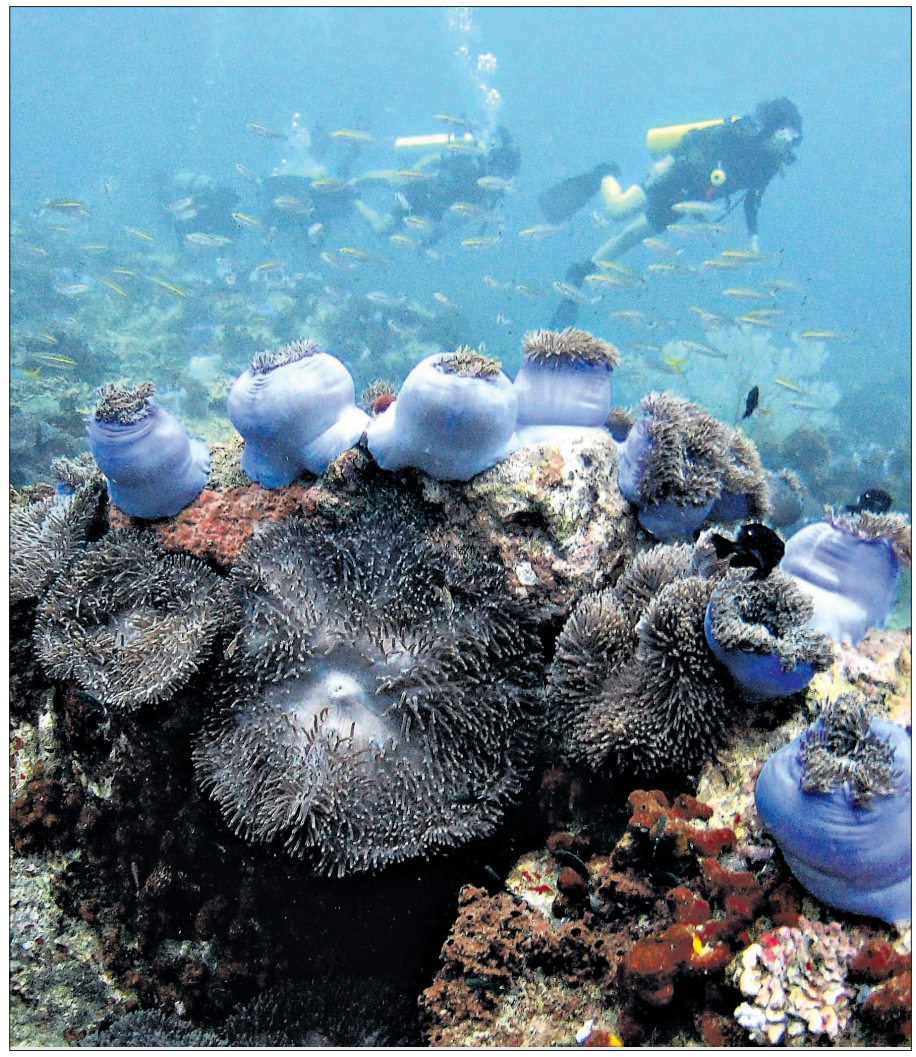
A target to prevent the loss of coral reefs will, for each dollar spent, deliver at least $24 of environmental benefits. Likewise, the researchers find that reducing future loss of forests by half would likely do about $10 of good for each dollar spent. This is of particular relevance for Tanzania, for instance, where about 37 per cent of the country is covered by forests. The economists also find that increasing protected areas is likely to be a poor target, an important point as 32 per cent of the area of Tanzania is already protected.

This matters because the global community, spearheaded by the UN, is currently working to formulate a set of key targets, which will guide how resources are used from next year until 2030. These follow on from the Millennium Development Goals, an ambitious set of targets that has directed the spending of hundreds of billions of development dollars since 2000.

The problem is that right now, most interest groups understandably battle to include their favourite targets, but having more than a thousand potential targets leaves the world with no priorities. That is why the Copenhagen Consensus is helping by asking top economists to analyse what works and what we can afford.

Of course, some of the obvious issues relate to adequate food, clean water and better schooling and healthcare. But humans don't live separately from the natural world. Rather, we rely on it for many different benefits or what experts call "ecosystem services." For example, forests don't just provide timber and firewood, but also provide flood protection, because they can soak up intense rainfalls — a big part of the reason Pakistan had such hugely damaging floods in 2010 was because large parts of its mountain forests had been cut down. Here forests could have protected many of the poor whose homes were flooded and whose children perished.

Forests also provide aesthetic experiences for local residents while drawing in tourism, generating more benefits. At the same time, growing forests take up carbon dioxide from the air and lock it away for decades or even centuries while producing oxygen. Forests also provide refuge for enormous numbers of bird, animal and plant species, especially tropical rainforests.



Coral reefs possess an amazing beauty that shows up not only in large tourism revenues but also in most individuals saying they are willing to pay a certain amount to make sure they continue to exist for their grandchildren. Picture: File

All of these benefits can be valued. Timber has a commercial price, so that is straightforward. Locking away carbon can be priced based on likely costs of avoided climate damage, and likewise flood protection value shows up as lower costs of future floods. There is also a value for recreation and tourism, but not all of this is paid for by the users. Moreover, preserving species clearly has a benefit, but typically not one we pay for. This is where putting a price on a natural resources become more difficult, and economists have to fall back on surveys that ask people how much they are willing to pay to keep forests in place.

That makes it more difficult to put a firm value on a hectare of forest, but the academics all agree that spending a dollar is likely to do more than a dollar 'sworth of good. The most likely outcome of a series of cost-benefit analyses shows that setting the goal "reduce global forest loss by 50 per cent" is likely to do about $5-$15 worth of social good for every $1 spent.

The same kind of analysis suggests that preserving wetlands could be a good idea. The economists show that reducing global wetland loss by 50 per cent will most probably do more good than its cost, falling in the same range of about $10 back on each dollar.

More spectacular is the analysis for coral reefs, which both act as fishery hatcheries and fishing resources while storing abundant numbers of species. At the same time, coral reefs possess an amazing beauty that shows up not only in large tourism revenues but also in most individuals saying they are willing to pay a certain amount to make sure they continue to exist for their grandchildren. The analyses illustrate that reducing global coral loss by 50 per cent may cost about $3 billion per year but the total benefits are likely to run to at least $72 billion, or about $24 back for every $1 invested.

However, economics also reveals poor targets: Substantially increasing protected areas is likely to cost so much —close to a trillion dollars — that it will generate less environmental benefit than the cost.

Of course, as we look forward to the next 15 years, we have to focus most of our attention on the obvious wrongs that afflict billions of people who are poor, lack food, water, health and education. But these analyses suggest that carefully crafted environmental targets should also be a part of this solution.

Our job is to make sure that economic arguments are heard so we pick the smart targets but drop the poor ones, to make sure the next 15 years help the world and its inhabitants as much as possible.

Dr. Bjørn Lomborg, an adjunct professor at the Copenhagen Business School, directs the Copenhagen Consensus Centre, ranking the smartest solutions to the world's biggest problems by cost-benefit. He is the author of The Sceptical Environmentalist *and* Cool It.

UN: Emissions pledges by US, others 'not enough'

By JOBY WARRICK
The Washington Post

PLEDGES BY the US and other countries to sharply reduce greenhouse-gas emissions still aren't enough to prevent global temperatures from rising beyond levels that scientists believe could be dangerous to the planet's health, a UN-commissioned study says.

The report by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) cited a sizeable "emissions gap" between the promises made by world leaders to lower pollution and the maximum amount of carbon the atmosphere can safely absorb.

"Without additional climate policies, global emissions will increase hugely up to at least 2050," said the study, which also argues that nations could eliminate the gap by ramping up investments in renewable energy and making smarter policy decisions on economic development.

"On the one hand, we're way off track. But on the other hand, there is increasing evidence that much of this can be done more cheaply than has previous been estimated," said Andrew Steer, president of the World Resources Institute, a Washington think tank that provided technical support for the study.

Citing warnings from climate scientists, world leaders agreed four years ago to a goal of limiting the rise in global temperatures from greenhouse gases to no more than 2 degrees Celsius. But carbon emissions have continued to soar, making that goal harder to achieve.

To stay below a 2-degree temperature rise, nations will have to achieve "global carbon neutrality" — meaning no net increase in the amount of carbon in the atmosphere — sometime in the second half of the century, the report said. For that to happen, countries will have to rapidly shift to cleaner forms of energy while also creating new carbon "sinks," such as expanded forest cover, to draw carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.

Under current projections, the study said, the growth of global carbon emissions will have to peak within the next decade and fall by half by 2050 to meet the 2-degree goal.

"Taking more action now reduces the need for more extreme action later to stay within safe emission limits," said Achim Steiner, UNEP executive director.

The report comes after China and the US announced historic pledges to scale back carbon emissions in the next two decades.

Cuntries have to rapidly shift to cleaner forms of energy. Picture: File

All articles within this series were originally published by The East Africa, a weekly newspaper published in Kenya and circulated within Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Rwanda. The Post-2015 project brings together 60 teams of economist with NGOs, international agencies and businesses to identify the goals with the greatest benefit-to-cost ratio for the next set of UN development goals.

For more information visit post2015consensus.com

COPENHAGEN CONSENSUS CENTER

Copenhagen Consensus Center is a think tank that investigates and publishes the best policies and investment opportunities based on how much social good (measured in dollars, but also incorporating e.g. welfare, health and environmental protection) for every dollar spent. The Copenhagen Consensus was conceived to address a fundamental, but overlooked topic in international development: In a world with limited budgets and attention spans, we need to find effective ways to do the most good for the most people. The Copenhagen Consensus works with 100+ of the world's top economists including 7 Nobel Laureates to prioritize solutions to the world's biggest problems, on the basis of data and cost-benefit analysis.

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