

target is not going to alleviate poverty because it is only sufficient to keep economic growth in step with population growth.

Recognising that the context for Canadian aid in Africa will likely not change as a result of the Initiative, Canada should continue to focus on promoting human rights and on human security issues, including the provision of basic needs (shelter, nourishment, safety) and the development of civil society and institutions. While other initiatives, such as closing the digital divide, may be a worthy goal, they may be premature and ineffective at this time.

2. The NAI is comparable to structural adjustment programmes in that it does not reflect the views of the people it affects the most – ordinary Africans:

- The centralised model ignores the need to build capacity at the local level in order to enable mass participation in the reform process. (A point was made that even though the African leaders are reluctant to promote bottom-up approaches, the NAI acknowledges the activities of civil society groups and movements.)
- Wisdom Tettey (University of Calgary) pointed out that the African leaders have embarked upon designing and implementing the Initiative without setting-up any domestic public monitoring mechanisms or checks – raising serious questions for the leaders' accountability at home.

Strengthening local and municipal governance could address the accountability and transparency gaps (and improve the delivery of basic services). Creating public monitoring mechanisms, including media outlets, could also be useful.

Canada could help build capacity at the local level to enable mass participation in the reform process and beyond. For instance, Canadians could draw on our experience with Information and Communications Technologies (ITCs), mass media, and local governance, to help local media outlets better inform constituents and help them hold national leaders accountable.

3. The Initiative lacks an internationally-based monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms.

4. Currently, the African countries lack administrative capacity to implement the Initiative.

5. Some participants pointed out that while the NAI contains some worthy ideas, it offers nothing new. Others disagreed, pointing out that new elements include:

- indigenous ownership of the reform process,
- a new multilateral partnership, and
- the willingness to accept responsibility for the failures of the post-colonial leadership