



Submission No 4

**Review of Australia's Relationship with the
Countries of Africa**

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Organisation: Australian Leadership Program for Africa

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Secretary:.....	

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Thursday, 10 December, 2009

Senator Michael Forshaw - Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
jscfadt@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Forshaw,

Re: Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with the Countries of Africa

The Australian Leadership Program for Africa (ALPA) is delighted that this timely inquiry has been established.

What is ALPA?

The Australian Leadership Program for Africa (ALPA) is a not-for-profit group which first met early in 2009, and is – at this stage - based in South Australia. Our members believe that the people and nations of Africa do not and must not have an inevitable future of poverty, chaos and corruption. The members of the group are primarily graduates of the highly acclaimed Governor's Leadership Foundation (GLF) Program, and at least three members are African immigrants.

We believe that, by bringing predominantly young future leaders from selected African countries for a live-in leadership program in Australia, we will be able to expose them to the systems of accountability and governance currently lacking in their countries. Ongoing networks would be established for those who complete the program so that "graduate-talk" combined with ongoing mentoring from Australia would provide them with the confidence to implement such systems of accountability and governance in their own countries.

It is clear to us that few Africans benefit from the current system, and many are hungry for change.

Please find attached our submission, and we would appreciate the opportunity to send a representative of our group to appear before the committee.

Yours sincerely

Hon. Sandra Kanck
Chairperson - ALPA

Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with the Countries of Africa

**Submission from the Australian Leadership Program for Africa (ALPA)
to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade**

10th December, 2009

Terms of reference of this inquiry

In this submission ALPA will address two of the terms of reference:

- cultural, scientific and educational relations and exchanges
- development assistance, co-operation and capacity building.

The program ALPA proposes involves educational relations and exchanges, and the consequence of this, if implemented, would be improvement of capacity building by reducing corruption.

Introduction

The practice of good governance is what distinguishes successful democracies from the poorly governed ones. One of the main reasons much of Africa is in nearly constant political and economic chaos is due to a "leadership crisis." Robert Rotberg of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government has indicated this crisis to be due to malevolent leadership by autocrats and predatory kleptocrats.

Essentially, the governing elites of these countries do not appear to know how to govern effectively and for the good of the people. While there are many historical, cultural, socio-economic and geopolitical reasons for this, there is no doubt that the most obvious and the most direct underlying cause behind the leadership crisis is that of a lack of training in and exposure to transparent, dedicated, public service processes.

The record of leadership in much of Africa is lamentable and there are few examples of good governance to point to. However, many well-meaning – often well-educated, and young – African public servants want to change this state of affairs but have not been exposed to successful, democratic, decision-making processes. Consequently, it is hard for them to instigate significant improvements in the way processes work in their countries. Yet, these improvements are absolutely essential if Africa is ever to get out of its current development trap and remove its constant tag of "basket case".

There is an emerging view that foreign aid is not getting to the people in Africa for whom it is intended and that such aid might in fact be counterproductive, creating a mendicant culture and leading to more corruption. As an example, members of the committee would find it valuable to view a segment of ABC TV's Foreign Correspondent of 17/3/09 with its provocative title "Is Aid Killing Africa?". This interview with Dambisa Moyo can still be viewed at

<http://www.abc.net.au/foreign/content/2009/s2520029.htm>. This is a little over eight minutes long and easy to watch. Some of the arguments were presented by Ms Moyo in the Wall Street Journal a few days later:

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123758895999200083.html>

Such a perspective should not be construed as an argument for Australia to further reduce a relatively small budget to assist African countries. Rather, we must look at what might be the best use of that money. The proposal contained in this submission would be one way to achieve better results.

The AusAID website advises an intention to “expand scholarship programs in areas of Australian expertise” listing economic governance as one such area of expertise. However, as a country Australia rates highly in political governance. Transparency International has this year ranked Australia eighth out of 140 countries on their corruption perception index, so Australia has a lot to offer. By contrast, African countries range from 37 (Botswana) to 140 (Somalia, which is the lowest).

Because of the history of colonisation and political interference, the motives of nations such as France, Great Britain, Belgium and the United States are treated with suspicion by many of the peoples of Africa. Lacking that same taint, Australia would be perceived as neutral and as such we are in a position to make a positive contribution to African countries.

What differentiates ALPA from other leadership programs that are offered both inside and outside Africa to Africans?

ALPA plans to use that which is already in practice, basing itself on the highly acclaimed “Governor’s Leadership Foundation” (GLF) program which has been running in South Australia since 2000, which is run by the Leaders Institute of South Australia (LISA), with the patronage of the Governor of South Australia – see www.lisa.com.au

It is envisaged that the African participants would be placed in Australian organisations where they would be exposed, first hand, to organisational decision-making processes. Covering critical economic, environmental, social, and cultural issues in an experiential format, African participants would acquire skills which would be capable of emulation (and modification as needed) in their home countries. As in the current GLF program, expert presenters would be involved.

It would provide an “insider’s view” of complex issues and aspects of society that they might otherwise never experience, challenge participants to think beyond individual and sectional interests; and provide interaction with established leaders in Australia.

Unlike most leadership and scholarship programs, ALPA would be offered, not to individuals, but to carefully selected groups of people who think beyond self-interest, and from one African country at a time. This is because, at the program’s completion, the graduates should automatically have a support group within their own countries whose members would understand and identify with the changes that they, inevitably, will want to bring about.

The ALPA program would be a not-for-profit venture. It would also be significantly different from existing leadership programs operating in African countries in a number of additional ways, notably by providing:

- a group of mostly young African leaders with sufficiently intensive, common exposure to leadership issues in Australia to forge a bond among members of their group and a commitment to bring about positive change in their country of origin;
- embedding (and rotation) of members of the group within Australian organisations for sufficiently long to observe, first hand, decision making processes in these organisations;
- a forum for synthesis of what they have observed and learned prior to returning to their country of origin;
- an opportunity to return and share experiences with new participants and work through issues of contention that may have arisen since their participation in the

program.

The facilitators of ALPA will be able to draw on an extensive network of former participants, sponsors and friends of the Governor's Leadership Foundation both to find placements for ALPA fellows and mount an exciting program of workshops, presentations and site visits.

Whereas various foundations, such as the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, already run leadership programs in African countries, they are primarily locally-based in African regions and communities and target specific problems such as AIDS prevention. Indeed, important progress is being made thanks to these programs.

But the addressing of these most urgent local problems provides no opportunity for broadening life experiences and finding different ways to do things. By contrast, ALPA would offer an opportunity to observe and learn the decision-making processes in a successful democracy such as Australia.

While recognising the imperative of addressing those urgent local problems, ALPA believes some of Australia's financial assistance should be redirected into programs that can alleviate those crisis situations.

ALPA is based on the premise that future African leaders need to be exposed, first hand, to case studies of good governance and leadership that go beyond self-interest, in order to find ways of instituting similar principles in their countries. The opportunity to observe well-run institutions and organisations in Australia combined with an opportunity to discuss the differences with others is likely to stimulate the participants' creativity as to what changes they might be able to bring about in their home country.

Furthermore, as the program evolves, the network of contacts of former fellows within Africa will prove invaluable in providing support to those returning home. In addition, during the ALPA program participants are likely to extend their networks of international contacts through those Australian leaders who will have interacted with them during their placements or acted as presenters or facilitators.

The systems in their own countries will be different from those in place in Australia. However, having been involved in the program, these future African leaders will be much better equipped to find their own solutions to local challenges that will still embody the broad principles of good governance and sound leadership.

Why would ALPA succeed where scholarship and fellowship programs haven't really met expectations of African countries? The answer is subtle. Scholarship and fellowship programs are all about an individual bettering himself or herself. A bright young person from a developing country who is placed in a fine educational institution in a western country, for an extended period like a Master's degree, is likely to be tempted by the enhanced personal career opportunities in the western country. That is why so many participants in schemes like this ultimately return permanently to the host country.

By comparison, the ALPA program would be short, intensive and targeting a cohort. That cohort would, throughout the program, focus on what they will achieve together when they go back. The group spirit and focus would reinforce returning and implementing what has been learnt.

Additionally, the Australians with whom they would be interacting would be reinforcing the same principle, whereas a bright student in a Master's program may well be encouraged by his or her Australian mentor to come back to study for a PhD and postpone the idealistic goals of doing good back home.

Some in a scholarship/fellowship program who genuinely want to return and help their countries may become even more disenchanted after an experience of taking up a scholarship in a country like Australia. They will quickly observe the huge contrast between the way things work here and the way they work back home and may decide that, for a single individual, it is either too hard or impossible to implement the skills they have learned. This is where the group support and maintaining the focus on the intended purpose of the program of ALPA would make the difference.

The selection process would be a vital aspect of the program's success, and applicants would be assessed, amongst other things, on their networks, commitments, and capacity to influence others, both formally and informally. They would need to be people who have a desire to develop their own leadership potential beyond self-interest and who desire to work with others to achieve a better society. Furthermore, the country of origin would need to be supportive of the program, but would not be allowed to influence or control the selection.

Potential benefits for Australia

The ALPA program could be designed in a way that it is beneficial to both Australia and Africa. It would be wrong to think that – because of the current poverty of African nations – all the benefits would flow in one direction, that is, from Australia to Africa. After all, as recently as the 1960s both China and India were desperately poor countries. Africa is the one large region of the world where there is still almost unlimited, untapped, potential for growth. It is no coincidence that a country such as China is currently busy forging many bilateral relationships with African countries.

Has it been done before?

The Colombo Plan, which was in place between 1949 and 1957 was responsible for thousands of young Asians undertaking tertiary studies in Australia, as well as building bridges between Australia and Asia.

The University of South Australia, in an alliance with the Indonesian Government and its Supreme Court, and with AusAID assistance, ran an environmental law and enforcement program in Indonesia from 2001-2008. Almost 1500 Indonesian judges, lawyers, prosecutors and police participated in the program in Indonesia, while a smaller number were selected to visit Australia, spending six weeks in Sydney and six weeks in Adelaide being exposed to our systems.

With Timor Leste embarking on the setting up of local government this year, their Australian Consulate has established its "Friendships with Local Government Program". East Timorese local government employees and officials are being sponsored by local government entities for stays in Australia during which they observe local government processes which ensure transparency and accountability. The Victorian Local Governance Association has played a lead role in this, and has been responsible for preparing the training programs.

Through the African Refugee Intake (Migration) Program, Australia is already engaged in finding solutions to problems in African countries. At the same time, the existence of such a program means that, in addition to environmental and health programs, political and social problems have also become global problems requiring

global solutions. Through ALPA, Australia will be assisting those who are daily affected by those global issues in the search for a global solution.

These examples show that a transfer of knowledge from Australia to another country has been done before and is still being done, thus demonstrating that the ALPA proposal is very feasible.

But what ALPA offers is the turbo-charging to make the difference and ensure these sort of programs really work. We can do this by offering and developing a program that:

- challenges its participants to think beyond individual interests and to rise above adversarial approaches;
- encourages awareness of the responsibilities of citizenship;
- encourages the questioning of existing value systems and the construction of new ones;
- exposes the participants to problems they will encounter and their possible solutions;
- provides the opportunities to meet and work with others committed to solving the same problems; and
- promotes continuing networking and support beyond the program presence in Australia.

Conclusions and recommendations

We ask that the committee recommend to the Department of Foreign Affairs a program be developed, in co-operation with ALPA, to bring groups of potential young leaders from selected African countries with the intention of exposing them to systems of leadership and governance they might not otherwise encounter.

Most importantly, the teaching of good governance to a new generation of African leaders will help to permanently eradicate poverty and refugee problems in accordance with the current Millennium Development Goals, which Australia supports.

Appendix
List of people and groups supporting this proposal

Adjunct Professor Rob Fowler
Chair, IUCN Academy of Environmental Law
Law School
University of South Australia

Mesfin Tessema
President
National Ethiopian Community Association Council in Australia
(letter of support attached)

Francis Elekwachi
Principal
FNE Lawyers
(letter of support attached)

Niki Vincent BA (Hons Psych) MAICD, MAIM
Chief Executive Officer
Governor's Leadership Foundation
Leaders Institute of South Australia

Senator Michael Forshaw - Chair

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Letter of Support for the Submission made by the committee for the Australian Leadership Program for Africa (ALPA) to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

8 December 2009

Re: Inquiry into Australia's Relationship with the Countries of Africa

Dear Senator Forshaw,

For the past 30 years I have been involved in the struggle against poverty and human rights violations in Ethiopia, my country of origin. I am one of those lucky Ethiopians that Australia, my adopted country, rescued. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Australian people for opening their hearts and country to welcome us, the refugees, to their country. I am now proudly Australian but have not forgotten the plight of so many Ethiopians. As a result I am working towards assisting my fellow Ethiopian-Australians to be better citizens of Australia through "doing well by doing good". The latter also involves bringing awareness about the desperate conditions experienced, for so long, by people of Ethiopia and searching for a more permanent solution to their problems than those offered by emergency aid programs.

I recently learned about ALPA and what it stands for. I strongly support this important and timely endeavour as it would empower up and coming African leaders by clearly demonstrating to them the skills of good governance and the ensuing benefits to diverse stakeholders.

I strongly believe that Africa's most serious problems are a direct consequence of absence of good governance. After all Australia, just like Ethiopia, also suffers from crop failures caused by regular droughts in various parts of the country. However, the notion that the latter might lead to hunger in those regions is completely foreign to Australians. This difference cannot be explained merely by the obvious disparity in wealth between these two countries. With all the foreign aid that has been made available over the years, with good governance, more permanent solutions would surely have been found.

The ALPA program goes to the heart of the problem. By empowering, initially only a handful, of mostly young African leaders it will plant the seeds of hope in the hearts of so many African people yearning for a change. It can be expected that these Australian trained pioneers will lead by example and inspire many others to act like them and that, in turn, will bring about a change much more permanent than the constant "bandaid" of emergency food and relief supplies has delivered in the past.

The area covered by this initiative is one that deserves most urgent attention by the Australian government as it is committed in contributing to the Millennium Development Goal to help African countries do well. On behalf of the Australian-Ethiopian Council, I would like to urge you to give ALPA proposal a chance to prove its worth.

Sincerely Yours

Mesfin Tessema

President, National Ethiopian Community Association Council in Australia

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OUR REF: 090001-ALPA/FNE01
YOUR REF:

7 December 2009

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir or Madam

RE: AUSTRALIAN LEADERSHIP PROGRAM FOR AFRICA (ALPA)

I am writing to you to express my support for establishment of the proposed Australian Leadership Program for Africa (ALPA).

I am an African Australian engineer and legal practitioner. I was born in Igboland in the South-East of Nigeria from where I and my family migrated to Adelaide in 1992.

As a young man full of ideals and patriotism for my country of birth I returned to Nigeria in 1982 from the former Soviet Union, armed with a Masters of Science Degree in Mechanical Engineering and experience I gained in Soviet and Western European societies. Like many thousands of my fellow Africans at the time who were privileged to gain European education, upon completion of my education funded under a scholarship program, I hurried back to Nigeria with enthusiasm and patriotism to contribute to national growth and development. It wasn't to be. The biggest obstacle that I confronted was the absence of an enabling environment to do and enjoy one's work as a professional. There was endemic corruption at all levels and management decisions are made based on other than productive considerations. The systems, standards, rules and regulations that were in place were being ignored and things were being done at the whims and caprices of which ever boss was most powerful than others. You find that rules, standards and regulations no longer applied or are applied selectively to suit the most powerful. Any effort you make to do things in accordance to laid down rules and regulations or to apply some tested systemic approach earns you reprimands rather than accolades. There is a prevailing environment of endemic corruption, cutting corners, lack of infrastructure, poor maintenance culture, absence of due process in decision making, absence of probity, absence of accountability and responsibility in

leadership and government at all levels. There is impunity at all levels of governance and society. The same is true of most African countries. My first year in the productive African environment was that of surprise and shock. I persisted through the first 5 years with sheer determination to succeed against the odds. Disappointment set in. Then I went through the next 5 years with hope that things will change with persistent effort. By the 10th year frustration had set in and you begin to question the rationality of patriotism and loyalty towards a nation that is in deed without responsible or accountable leadership at any level. I took my family and left. We returned to Nigeria in 2007 (15 years after we left) to find, not surprisingly that Nigeria, as most of other African countries but a few has degenerated from poor governance and poor leadership into a state of near anarchy. I and my family had to pay for armed paramilitary police provided by the State Police Command to guard us all through our trip that lasted 6 weeks! It is worsening as I write with kidnapping for ransom money now rife across the entire country. The population is restive and the social anger threatens to boil over and explode any moment!

As one who has had the opportunity of living in the African environment as a professional I can vouch that the problem is not poverty per se. Nigeria and in deed most of Africa have abundant wealth and resources. It is not inadequate development aid either, as most development aid funds do not get to those for whom they are meant. Western development aid to Africa is not effective and cannot be a solution to the larger problem of poor governance and poor leadership.

A program such as APLA would provide a more sustainable long term solution in the circumstances.

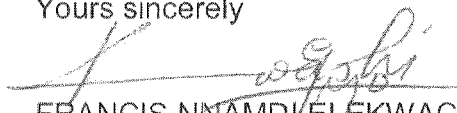
Development aid attempts to cure only the symptoms of the actual illness which is poor governance and poor leadership in Africa. In the result, development aid has become a bottomless pit into which the West sinks billions of dollars annually to no avail. It is not sustainable. Development aid is unable to prevent the civil wars and civil strife and the illegal migration of millions of young Africans into the West caused by the illness of poor governance and poor leadership. The problem needs to be tackled and cured at source, not the symptoms. This is where a program such as APLA will make a great difference as a cure for the ailment. Once the illness is cured the symptoms will gradually disappear or reduce over time.

Scholarship programs and fellowships offered to individuals are not able to address the problem either. Beneficiaries of such programs soon leave their country and return to

the West or Australia due to the same prevailing difficulties I described earlier above. Many would simply not return to Africa at all for the same reasons. However, an ALPA program targeted at persons playing key roles in governance or who have potential to play such roles in the public and private sectors is unlikely to encounter similar problems. These are people who are already in important positions at reasonable levels in government, civil service and private sector and who are unlikely to want to abandon their employment in their home country and stay back in Australia after the program. These people would learn the rudiments of good governance, leadership and practical implementation of key systems and institutions that sustain and guarantee a free democratic society. The participants would then return to their respective countries and put into practice what they have learnt and seen in Australia.

I totally support this ALPA initiative as a fresh, innovative and more sustainable means of making a real difference in the overall development of African countries. It is a program that has the capacity to in the long run reverse the regression in Africa, stop the outflow of African youth to Europe and other countries and save many African countries from future civil strife, war and many disasters, natural or otherwise.

Yours sincerely



FRANCIS NNAMDI/ELEKWACHI
BARRISTER & SOLICITOR

**PRINCIPAL
FNE LAWYERS**