



## **MEDIA STATEMENT BY AFRICAN MONITOR**

### **Communities want to be active participants in development**

---

**Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2011**

#### **For immediate release**

A strong call for an increase in economic opportunities for grassroots communities and the need and right to self-determination and self-actualisation is evident among communities in Africa as they express the need to independently and sustainably participate in the processes of development.

This is identified in the 2011 Development Support Monitor (DSM) released in Sandton today (9 November 2011) by African Monitor, an independent organisation that monitors development funding commitments, funding delivery as well as the impact on grassroots communities in Africa.

The aim of this issue of the DSM is to serve as a warning that if Africa's current development trajectory does not actively engage with the skills, knowledge base and experience of grassroots communities, the African Moment will not materialise.

The African Moment is the renewed hope that Africa is on the brink of a major development breakthrough.

Speaking at the launch, African Monitor President, Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane said the report pointed out that the people of Africa, including the youth, are regaining the conviction that they are the instruments of their own sustainable upliftment.

However, the environments in which communities operate are not conducive to this. Economic and legislative environments block grassroots communities' ability to access economic opportunities.

It also highlights economic services, human development and grassroots participation as key to the success of Africa's development trajectory. African governments need to give equal focus to these.

The DSM report also noted that there were critical drivers which, if unlocked, would increase the opportunity for grassroots communities to actively participate in their own development.

These were necessary for inclusive economic development and unlocking these opportunities, if acted upon. They are:

- **Economic Infrastructure:** African infrastructure is inadequate and disjointed. Massive investment is needed to address the backlogs and to support accelerated economic development. The continental, regional and national initiatives should include rural and semi-urban infrastructure for investment in development to be truly inclusive. The forthcoming Ministerial Conference on Rural Infrastructure should promote integration of rural infrastructure into the African Union's programmes. Development partners should increase and refocus their support with regard to rural and semi-urban infrastructure.

- **Agriculture:** African governments have largely not met their budgetary commitments to the agricultural sector, and they have been slow to implement the CAADP. Since 2008 development partners have shown increased commitment and improved delivery. However it is of increasing concern that this support is in the form of food aid as opposed to sustainable investment that would lead to improved productivity in the agricultural sector.

- **Informal sector:** Data that tracks delivery to the Informal Sector does not exist. This in itself is a significant indication of the extent to which this sector is excluded in budgetary allocations and development interventions by African governments.

This sector needs to be recognised as a legitimate economic activity which provides economic opportunities for most Africans. African governments must put policies in place that prioritise this sector. Furthermore, they must pledge direct financial support to it.

- **Technology:** Africa must develop and acquire appropriate technologies that increase productivity in the agricultural and informal sectors, fight tropical diseases and improve infrastructure development.

African governments have recognised the need to invest in science, technology and innovation, but the investment is no more than 0.37% of their GDPs. Development partners' support for science, technology and innovation is only around 3% of the total aid to the least-developed countries.

The agricultural and informal sectors need to be transformed to highly productive sectors to benefit African economies. It is thus imperative for African governments and development partners to invest in science, technology and innovation.

- **Education:** Despite notable growth in enrolment figures during the 2000s in Sub-Saharan Africa, the quality of education, as measured by students' learning achievements, has remained relatively low. More than 20% of students in grade 6 of primary education still do not master basic reading skills. This suggests a need for urgent action to improve the quality of education.

There is a growing recognition that children can stay in school and not learn much, making completion of primary school a hollow achievement. It is therefore crucial that national and international partners work together to put the correct mechanisms in place to monitor the quality of education.

- **Health:** African governments and development partners have increased their health spending over the last few years. Real progress in the provision of health services has been observed, particularly the roll-out of ARVs and insecticide-treated nets. This has resulted in reduced malaria-related morbidity. The incidence of HIV infection also declined by more than 25% in an estimated 22 countries.

The health systems still reflect inadequate capacities. For instance, the availability of health workers and health facilities is very limited. For the majority of African countries, there is less than one health worker per 10,000 people.

Immediate investment is therefore needed in order to strengthen the healthcare systems, to provide quality health services beyond the current fight against malaria, HIV and TB and to improve maternal and child health.

- **Grassroots participation and influence:** The decline of citizen's participation in countries across Africa is a significant cause for concern, whereas the African Union regards such participation as an inalienable right of citizens. African nations that choose to ignore the rights of citizens to participate freely in political, social, and economic processes are acting in direct violation of this right. There is a clear need for the African Union to take a harsh stance on nations that choose to perpetrate these violations.

The report says that although a lot of policy progress has taken place in the area of human development, which includes all those areas directly related to the Millennium Development Goals, eg education and health, evidence shows that there are gaps in the implementation, particularly in the allocation of resources and quality of services.

It adds that it is important to note that the active participation of ordinary citizens in the development agenda is a critical element that will not only bring dignity to people's lives, but will also strengthen the effectiveness of policies and interventions.

The Development Support Monitor 2011 is a first in a series of publications that will look at various questions to promote an inclusive agenda to achieve the African Moment for grassroots communities. Over a period of time, the DSM will seek to answer the following questions:

- What are the structural economic, social and political fundamentals that will facilitate the inclusion of grassroots communities in Africa's development path?
- What policies, approaches and practice changes need to be made for sustainable development?
- How should development resources be generated and allocated to meet the imperatives for an inclusive development agenda for grassroots communities?

Archbishop Ndungane, quoting from the report, added: "In order for the African Moment to materialise, Africa's development stakeholders, which includes decision makers, development institutions, citizens, civil society, business and political institutions, need to collectively engage to ensure that every African has a source of income, a roof over their heads and access to quality education and health care, and has the capabilities and means to pursue their dreams in a peaceful environment."

ENDS

---

African Monitor was established in 2006 as an independent continental body to monitor development funding commitments, funding delivery as well as the impact on grassroots communities. It also works towards bringing strong additional African voices to the development agenda.

The Development Support Monitor (DSM) is an independent monitoring report, which catalogues and tracks commitments made by African governments and their development partners, for Africa's development, from an African perspective. Its main purpose is to promote greater accountability by making the commitments more widely known, because if these commitments are not widely known, they cannot be taken seriously by donors, African governments or communities. The report assesses the extent to which these commitments are being met in real terms as well as the impact on the relevant communities.

ISSUED BY QUO VADIS COMMUNICATIONS ON BEHALF OF AFRICAN MONITOR

MEDIA CONTACT	CLIENT
Ulwazi Mgwadleka Tel: 011 487 0026 Cell: 083 998 8389 E-mail: <a href="mailto:ulwazi@quo-vadis.co.za">ulwazi@quo-vadis.co.za</a>	Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane. President of African Monitor  Namhla Mniki-Mangaliso Director of African Monitor  Tel: 021 713 2802