



News Release

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“THE CASE FOR PARTNERSHIP WITH AFRICA”

The Right Honourable The Baroness Amos, Leader of the House of Lords was recently the guest speaker at the Spring Lecture of the Oxford-Cambridge Club held at the Nigerian Institute for International Affairs, in Lagos. She spoke on the topic: “The Case for Partnership with Africa.”

The Baroness Amos spoke on several issues ranging from the challenges militating against Africa’s quest to realising the Millennium Development Goals to conflicts and conflict resolution within the continent to the Nigerian elections and the way forward.

The following is the transcript of Baroness Amos’ speech at the occasion.

**Graeme Bannatyne
Press Officer
7 May 2007**

LECTURE BY THE RT. HON. THE BARONESS AMOS,
LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS, TO THE OXFORD-
CAMBRIDGE CLUB IN LAGOS, NIGERIA ON FRIDAY
27 APRIL 2007

THE CASE FOR PARTNERSHIP WITH AFRICA

It is a very great pleasure to be back here in Nigeria, addressing a society that embodies so well the strong links between Nigeria and Britain. But I feel I have to share with you that I am only here because of the persistence of one woman, your President. I think that not a day has gone by in the last year when she has not emailed, rang or contacted my office in some way to check that I will actually be here. So thank you very much for the invitation.

It is also a pleasure to visit the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, which is modelled on Chatham House in London, and has many friends there.

The focus of my lecture today will be on the challenges facing the African Continent and in that context I would like to say a little about the role of Nigeria, and make the case for a new partnership with Africa.

There are three particular reasons that I am delighted to be here: the first, and many of you may know this, is that this year in the United Kingdom we are commemorating 200 years since the Act which abolished the slave trade, although slavery itself was not abolished until many years later. I have to say I often wonder when I stand up in the

House of Lords at the dispatch box, what my ancestors would say were they to realise that their descendent, a descendent of slaves, is now Leader of the House of Lords. So standing here before you in 2007 is particularly special for me because I am here as an African woman.

The second reason is because of the close ties between Britain and Nigeria and the importance of the Nigerian diaspora in the United Kingdom. Every time I come into Lagos, and it does not matter whether its day time or night time, the vibrancy, the traffic, the dynamism, absolutely hits me and anytime I am in Peckham (where many of the Nigerian Diaspora reside), the vibrancy, the dynamism hits me. I think the traffic is slightly better in Peckham in London than it is in Lagos in Nigeria.

The third reason that I am really pleased to be here is because I think that if we work in partnership, the future belongs to this continent. I will say more about that later.

At his trial in 1964 Nelson Mandela spoke famously of his commitment unto death of the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony with equal opportunity.+

I doubt whether any human being would claim not to share that ideal for any society in which they live.

And that is an ideal to which every African should be able to aspire to.

But across the continent, many Africans have had little opportunity in modern times to determine their own destiny, run first by European powers and then caught up in the battleground of the proxy conflicts of

the Cold War. By the early 1990s some African countries found themselves totally ill-equipped even to begin functioning as states. A paralysing cycle of conflict and poverty set in, in many countries.

The end of the Cold World has brought new and different challenges. As political, economic and technological barriers have fallen, the world is now global, with a revolution in communication.

The internet has revolutionised our lives, making communications easier and cheaper for all.

This has delivered an unprecedented potential for economic growth, but also for keeping in touch with loved ones, developing new social and personal relationships, freedom of speech in a way we have never had before. It has opened up our lives.

I have seen ways in which mobile phones and use of the internet has opened up trading opportunities for some of the poorest people in the world, where people in, for example, villages in India have been able to use a mobile phone to check what is selling in a market that day. So they can make decisions about whether to make a very long journey to market depending on the goods they have to sell.

This new openness also poses challenges with respect to competition for jobs and where they are located. Around issues of censorship and regulation. And with respect to the use of those new technologies, the impact of those technologies in fostering dissent and dissonance across a range of political, economic and social issues. Here on the African continent you face these new challenges as well as the continuing battle to tackle poverty and inequality.

Challenges facing Africa

As the Cold War ended, it allowed African states and the international community to begin to reach a consensus on the problems facing the African continent and to start to take action to redress the balance.

In September 2000 the United Nations Millennium Development Goals were agreed by 190 member countries. 18 ambitious goals were set, targeted at halving global poverty and hunger, improving healthcare for women and children, opening up access to education and protecting the environment amongst others.

Responding to the challenges in Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe and sub-Saharan Africa these goals are due to be delivered by 2015. But implementation has been mixed.

It is likely that the world will meet the target to halve global poverty thanks to rapid economic growth across the new powerhouses of China and India. But on the African continent the development indicators are sobering.

- Africa remains the poorest continent in the world with half the population existing on less than one dollar a day. In Nigeria this means 70 million people. That's more than the population of Great Britain.
- On the continent, two thousand children under five die every day from malaria.
- 25 million Africans are affected by HIV/AIDS. 3 million of them are Nigerians living with the disease.

- 250 million Africans do not have access to safe drinking water, including almost half of all Nigerians (48%).
- 40 million African children are still deprived of an education including 7 million in Nigeria.
- And, in sub-Saharan Africa where a third of the population is already malnourished, it is possible that the damaging effects of climate change will bring about a 20 per cent drop in food production.

So a tiny change in those sobering statistics would have a huge and positive implication for this continent.

But it hasn't always been this way. After the Second World War, per capita incomes were roughly equal in South Korea and Ghana. Even 30 years ago, that's not that long, the average income in sub-Saharan Africa was double that of both South and East Asia. Yet today, South Korea is the 11th richest nation in the world and India the 12th richest. Despite the depth of poverty which continues to exist on the Asian continent, Africa has stagnated whilst Asia has moved ahead.

I know that it is African people and governments who will lead the push for change but, it is inconceivable to me that a country like Britain with its strong historical ties to many African countries would not do its best to assist you to address the challenges you face. I think that for a number of reasons.

Not only because it's morally the right thing to do. We are one of the richest countries in the world.

But also because in a world where the effects of our global interdependence are felt quicker and deeper than ever before, it is in our own interest to do so.

African countries destabilised by conflict, poverty, injustice, poor governance and environmental degradation have a political and economic destabilising effect not only on the continent but across the world. If I take migration as an example, it's a case in point.

The pressures on neighbouring countries from refugee populations fleeing conflict, places a huge strain on countries which are already poor. We have seen this for example, with refugees moving from the DRC during the period of conflict to Tanzania or refugees moving from Darfur in Sudan to Chad. Within country, the impact of internally displaced people places a huge humanitarian burden on already scarce resources.

The developed world feels the impact too. African migrants are heading northwards towards a safer, richer Europe, risking their lives for a better future for themselves and their families.

There has always been and will always be migration. I am a product of it. It adds to the richness and diversity of countries like Britain but the reality in the majority of cases is that people leave their country of origin not because they want to but because they have to, to survive.

Well functioning states on the African continent, utilising the talent and resources which exist would be a major contribution to development in today's world. That is why the international community must support Africa's development. Not by imposing solutions or policies, but by

supporting and encouraging African countries to take the lead in tackling the causes of conflict and addressing economic and social challenges. We see significant shift in that respect. There are now far fewer conflicts on this continent than at any time in recent political history.

Conflict Resolution

We have seen the way in which conflict prevention has moved from being one where the support of the International community has had to be in the fore front to help in the resolution of those conflicts, for example historically with American and Russian mediation in **Angola** in the late 80s/ early 90s which secured the withdrawal of Cuban and South African forces, paving the way for multi-party politics, or more recently where we had a substantial UK political, economic and military investment in **Sierra Leone**, helping to secure long-term peace and stability there with elections due to take place in July.

The UN peacekeeping mission in **Liberia**, for example, has underpinned security sector reform and helped President Johnson-Sirleaf deliver a hugely challenging governance and development programme.

We now have African countries themselves playing the leading role in that conflict resolution. In recent years, Nigeria has played a crucial role in conflict resolution through ECOWAS and its contribution to the African Union Mission in Darfur. And we see the interventions in for example DRC, Burundi, Liberia, Cote D'Ivoire just to name a few where African leaders themselves have taken responsibility for negotiation to end those conflicts. So there has been a significant shift.

Development Aid

The Millennium Development Goals, as I already mentioned, have focused the world's attention on eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education and combating HIV/AIDS and other preventable diseases.

But as the Commission for Africa report stated so plainly in 2005, unless there is a massive injection of international support for Africa's development, there is little or no hope of meeting those 2015 goals.

Many have argued that **aid** doesn't work. That despite fifty years of international assistance, Africa still isn't working.

I dispute that because they don't look at the many, many opportunities which have taken place on the continent and which have been grasped by African people themselves. There is a diet in our international media of negative stories about this continent. I have to say that in terms of branding of the continent, it is either, poverty, starvation or corruption. But we all know that the reality is very different to that and part of the responsibility that we all have is to work together to turn that around. Why else did the international community agree in 2005 to double aid to Africa if it was going to have any hope of meeting the Millennium Development Goals?

I don't think that aid is the long-term answer to Africa's challenges. Only sustainable economic growth can pull Africa out of poverty, as it has done in South Korea, in Vietnam and most spectacularly in China.

Just a few months ago, the Chinese economy overtook the UK to become the fourth largest in the world with the ever-changing skylines of Shanghai and Guangzhou testament to its economic dynamism.

One single factory in China now produces 80 per cent of the world's photocopiers, 40 per cent of the world's microwave ovens, 50 per cent of the world's computers and textiles, 60 . 70 per cent of the world's mobile phones.

And in post-war Japan, technological innovation in China is also being enhanced. It's not about China just competing in terms of a low quality, low value market.

There was a recent report on one of our T.V stations in the UK that China is now competing with Italy to produce some of the best violins in the world. Indeed, they are competing creatively too because they don't only know how to make the violins but playing them better and better as each month goes by.

With this record, we should all be slightly worried that they are going to leave us all standing at next year's Beijing Olympics.

We all know that a thriving economy requires investment. Of course that means creating the right economic conditions to attract foreign capital. But it means more than that, it means nations retaining their own savings, something that Africa . with an estimated \$15 billion of capital flight per annum and 40 per cent of its wealth held overseas . must turnaround.

If we are serious about development then we need to be serious about leaving our money here, on this continent.

It also demands a skilled, well educated and healthy workforce. Each year, Africa loses some 70,000 of its skilled professionals stunting prospects for growth. Zambia has lost 1200 of its 1600 doctors in recent years. Now how can you lose that number of your doctors without it having an impact on social development?

Development aid can have an immediate impact. It can help to kick start progress in key social and economic sectors.

We saw that in Mozambique after the civil war ended where aid totalled more than 50% of national income. In partnership with the government of Mozambique the international community helped to increase the growth rate to an astonishing 12%. Poverty in Mozambique fell from around 70% in 1996 to just under 55% by 2003.

In Ghana, development aid and debt relief have helped build a stable democracy with a growing economy.

Development Aid has also helped in terms of health indicators by eradicating smallpox and I very much hope that polio will soon be eradicated.

In Nigeria, where there are significant domestic resources that could be used for poverty reduction, international development assistance constitutes only around 1 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI).

The UK Department for International Development is therefore focused

on supporting the Nigerian government's efforts to improve the effectiveness of Nigeria's own expenditure on poverty reduction.

DFID supports technical assistance to Federal and State governments, and works with civil society, to help improve the systems that underpin the delivery of basic services to ordinary Nigerians.

Debt relief too has acted as an enabler for growth.

In **Zambia** money not now being used to pay off debt has enabled the government to end fees for basic healthcare in rural areas.

Here in **Nigeria**, British aid has supported the Nigerian government's work to design and implement a system for monitoring expenditure of Federal debt relief gains of around \$750 million a year, in order to ensure that those gains are spent on poverty reduction. Nigeria's debt relief gains have already been used to re-train 145,000 teachers and recruit 40,000 new ones.

New Partnerships

The longer term solution has to be based on sustained economic growth. Africa's partners will need to be committed to long-term partnerships to create situations where economic activity can thrive and where African countries can achieve sustainable growth and development.

We are moving towards that as a British government. The UK has agreed ten year education funding programmes with Mozambique and Ghana. In Nigeria we have supported the Federal Education Ministry's

reform programme, particularly the development of a National Framework for education and a 10 Year Federal Plan.

Central to the international community's agreement in 2005 to double aid, cancel debt and improve access to international markets was a commitment by African leaders themselves to lead their own development by improving governance, upholding the rule of law and using their resources to fight poverty.

We are adopting the same principles in our effort to reduce global poverty.

Human rights and transparent, accountable government are at the heart of the UK government development agenda. Of course they bring challenges in forging our new partnerships because we all know that the world is not fair.

When we talk about transparency and accountability, we are not all starting from the same place. So what it means is that we need a sustained and regular dialogue with our African partners. We know that well run countries maximise their chances of development. Indeed, there is clear evidence that, with the right leadership and political will, progress is going in the right direction.

At pan-African level the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development, NEPAD, is already making a difference. Twenty three countries have signed up to the Africa Peer Review Mechanism. Ghana, Rwanda and Kenya have completed reviews.

There is a new Investment Climate Facility to identify and remove the barriers to doing business in Africa. And the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights has shown a clear willingness to write critical reports on their member countries.

But these initiatives at multi lateral level need to be supported by progress at the national level too.

Here I want to speak specifically about **Nigeria**. I personally watched with some disappointment your elections here earlier this month. Not because I expected a perfect election . we have seen allegations of fraud in elections in the UK and US, and these are mature democracies. But because I expected Nigeria to build on the progress it has made in the last few years.

We talked about challenges facing the continent as a whole. At a national level one of those challenges is to ensure accountability, year after year, budget after budget, large public sector contract after large public sector contract. People expect a degree of consistency. That's what gives the business community the confidence to invest and engage.

And every few years . every 4 years in Nigeria . everything that government is doing is held accountable when the national and regional governments face the electorate at the ballot box. You in Nigeria have done that three times in the last 10 years. The picture described by the election observers, foreign and domestic, was of an election seriously flawed. Not an improvement on the last time you did this.

And I think that you've let down the people in INEC, the police and army and others who have worked so hard in their Districts and States to produce credible results. Here in Lagos, I am sure that many feel that you did quite well and much better than in many of the other States.

But there were too many States and Districts which were disorganized or where there are substantiated allegations of rigging.

The evidence is overwhelming. The exotic arithmetic after dark gave a poor service to all those Nigerians who wanted a good election. Those who want to see (and I am one of those), Nigeria take its rightful place at the centre of democratic development on the African continent.

We are not going to see progress, and I feel this really strongly, if certain countries on this continent don't work and Nigeria is one of those countries. You are central to Africa's development.

The overall result may even have been right. But there was too much rigging going on for us to know for sure. That sort changes all of you as Nigerian people.

So, what next? That is for Nigerians, not outsiders like me, to prescribe.

But I just want to say something as a friend of Nigeria. One who worked tirelessly to secure that historic debt deal in the face of a great deal of international criticism.

And I have to tell you that Britain really stuck its neck out for Nigeria over that debt deal. For me, looking in from outside, it's important that Nigeria

sticks to the Constitutional path because Britain and your other international friends cannot accept anything less.

The electoral tribunals and other peaceful, constitutional, channels are being set up. They need to be used and they need to be used as swiftly as possible because you have to give some confidence back to the Nigerian people.

Looking to the future

So what about future challenges.

The reality of living in a post-Cold war, globalised world is that the key challenges that both the developed and the developing world face all transcend borders and can only be solved by us working together.

Working together on tackling:

- poverty and disease
- environmental degradation and the impact of climate change
- creating global security
- rooting out drugs and serious crime networks

They are a threat to all of us so they are the responsibility of all of us too. We have to find a way of living with each other which transcends narrow cultural, national and religious interests.

In the decade following the fall of the Berlin Wall there were some countries where the government thought not getting involved in a global

change might be an option. Subsequent events have proved them wrong. Terrorist attacks in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and the United States have highlighted that interdependence.

We need to strengthen global governance through the United Nations and promote what is described as the Responsibility to Protect agenda.

We have to sustain global efforts against weapons proliferation and work towards a solution to the horrendous conflict in the Middle East.

We have to recognise that conflict over resources including water is becoming a feature of our modern world.

And we have to recognise that our citizens will demand justice and equality in a world where there are still too many with too little.

Countries need to look outwards and need to build strategic alliances. For the UK with our EU partners, with the United States, with the African Union and with our Commonwealth partners. Here in Nigeria your strategic alliances will be different.

But in both our countries we also need to work with non-state actors. In civil society, faith groups and with the business community. Not controlling or silencing alternative voices but protecting civil liberties as we make our societies safer and more secure places in which to live.

Increasingly too, it means going out to win the battle of ideas and values. As well as bringing death and misery through their campaigns, terror networks like Al Qaeda aim to divide our societies.

We know this in Britain where educated, Yorkshire born Muslims were responsible for the July 7 bombings. We can't blame it on anybody else. Here in Africa intelligence reports that there are more Al Qaeda cells than in the Middle East.

So it is really important that we work together on these issues. It all comes down to a question of what kind of world we all want to live in. One divided by our difference, or one where we can draw strength from our diverse societies?

You here in Nigeria know this more than many other countries. We can learn from you. Religious diversity for example is a defining part of your national identity. It has major strengths but I recognise it brings major challenges too.

Conclusion

No country, no continent can grow and prosper independently from the rest of our increasingly connected world. That is as true for Britain and Europe as it is for Nigeria and Africa.

Africa's future is inextricably linked with the future of the rest of the world. Its fate will be determined by its people in partnership with the people of the rest of the world.

So let's work together to deliver a just, fair and prosperous world. It's the major challenge of our time and I certainly don't want our children and

grandchildren to look back at our generation and ask how come you did so little with so much+

Thank you.

ENDS