

## **EVALUATING AUSTRALIAN DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE APPROACH TOWARDS AFRICA**

**Awojobi, Oladayo Nathaniel**

Berlin School of Economics and Law, Berlin, Germany

dawojobi@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

*Africa has been engulfed with a lot of development challenges despite the endowment of natural resources in the continent. The modernization theorists have argued that Africa needs to follow the development approach of industrialized nations before it can develop. On the contrary, the dependency theorists blamed the industrialized nations for Africa underdevelopment. While the new African scholars put the blame of African development crisis on the doorsteps of African leaders. The enormous challenges befalling Africa made some rich nations to offer development assistance to countries in Africa and one of such country is Australia. This study was taken to evaluate Australian development assistance to Africa. The study found that the Australian Government has committed a lot in assisting Africa in the areas of education, financial aids, human development, humanitarian assistance and peace and security. However, most of the development aids are concentrated in the Southern African countries. Furthermore, the study found that most of the financial aids are mismanaged by African leaders and it calls for the monitoring of funds to African countries. Finally, the study proposed for a comparative study on Australian development assistance to Africa and Asia.*

*Keywords: Africa, Assistance, Australia, Development, Underdevelopment*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Africa has been considered to be the dark continent of the world this is due to the enormous challenges facing the continent such as the high prevalence of poverty, insecurity, political corruption, low human development and high unemployment rate. For instance, the official released result of the Ibrahim Index for African Governance in 2013 shows that among the 47 countries that were assessed for the delivery of public goods and services, and policy outcome only four countries were able to scored 71% to 77% out of a total score of 100%. Mauritius was

the only country that scored 82%. The summary of the result indicates that Africa is still in development crisis. The likes of Emile Durkheim, David Apter, David McClelland and Wait Rostow, who belong to the modernized theory school of thought argued that for Africa to develop, the continent needs to follow that path of rich Western Nations. However, this notion was contradicted by the dependency school who has in its fold, Walter Rodney, Francois Perrous, Kurt Rothschild, Walden Bello and Kunibert Raffer argued that the Western Nations were responsible for African underdevelopment through their colonial policy. The third school that has emanated from this face-off between the modernization theorists and the dependency theorists is the African development school of thought who assert that African leaders are the cause of African underdevelopment. They buttressed their hypothesis on the fact that the continent is naturally endowed with natural resources and these resources are sold to other countries and the money ended up in the private pockets of African leaders in which they splashed in private banks overseas.

According to Lubeck, (1992), Africa is the only continent in the world experiencing “absolute declines on virtually all indices of socioeconomic development.” Across the African continent, millions of people lack access to food and potable water and sanitation, while in every year, two million children die in the first one year of their lives (Schweb, 2001). With a population increase, more than half of African population live below the poverty line (Rasheed, 1996). One way for rich countries in the world to assist developing nations in promoting development is through development cooperation, the major aim of development aid is to promote economic development. Foreign aid can significantly impact positively in the life of a country if properly utilized for its purpose (Odunsanyan et al. 2011). However, most of financial aid to African countries are mismanaged by public office holders, thereby putting the progress of the continent into jeopardy.

Australia is of the leading country in the world that has contributed immensely to development assistance to Africa. According to Negin and Denning (2011) “the Australian Government has committed increased levels of funding to aid Africa.” Aside the level of aid to Africa, the Australian Government has played a major role in the peace and security in the continent, promoting human and economic development. Further to this, Government of Australia is committed to the uplifting of the continent despite the challenges befalling Africa. Thus purpose of the paper is to evaluate Australian development assistance to Africa vis a vis assistance in development aid, security, human development and the support for humanitarian assistance.

## AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT CRISIS: A REVIEW

The crisis of development in Africa has polarized African scholars on who should be blamed for the underdevelopment of Africa despite the abundance of human and natural resources. Some scholars have directed the blame on the Western countries through their colonization of Africa while other academic experts have pointed fingers at African leaders for the economic woe of the continent. The crisis of development is the major obstacle confronting Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This owing to the fact that the continent has remained underdeveloped despite the presences of huge endowed natural and human resources (Alomona, 2009). After many years of the end of colonialism, Africa is still enmeshed with the problems of poverty, inadequate infrastructure facility, unemployment, high mortality rate, political instability and the insecurity of lives and property (ibid.). Scholars in Africa and different schools of thought have surfaced to proffer solutions in addressing these problems. In the late early 1970s and the late 1980s when most African countries were gaining political independence the like of (Water Rodney, 1972; Claude Ake, 1982; Okwudiba Nnoli, 1981; Daniel Offiong, 1981) blamed colonialism, neo-colonialism and dependence as responsible for African underdevelopment. For instance, Ake (1982) asserts that: *The present conditions of the third world countries are not in the least analogous to the conditions of the industrialized countries in the earlier stages of their economic development. The present condition of the third world is the effect of the slave trade, pillage, colonialism and unequal exchange.*

In a similar situation, Walter Rodoney (1972) after analyzing the intervention of the Westen Nations in African Governance vis a vis the underdevelopment of Africa posits that: *African development is possible only on the basis of a radical break with the international capitalist system, which has been the principal agency of the under development of Africa over the last seven centuries.*

Sandbrooks (1985) claims that the colonial masters in Africa put a stumbling block to industrialization and sustainable development by putting together the economics of their colonies “in a self-serving fashion. The benefits they obtained included secured sources of inexpensive raw materials and foodstuffs and market for their manufactured goods”. As Mabogunje (2000) adds that the colonial authority did not support African nations to develop, transform and adopt economies “to a capitalist system of production to enable to sustain economic growth”. However, the colonialists did not leave without any remarkable achievements. For instance, they built roads, health centers, ports and railway lines. Which made some of the African countries to have an increased per capita income before independence (Mbeki, 2005). African scholars have berated the continent’s development crisis on African leaders. The former United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan admonished

African leaders for the underdevelopment of the continent, he said, *“power gets personalized in the winner-takes-all kind of politics. He continues by saying, there are insufficient accountability of leaders, lack of transparency in regimes, inadequate checks and balances, non adherence to the rule of law, absence of peaceful means to the change or replace leadership, lack of respect for human right and excessive political control.”* Renowned novelist, Chinua Achebe using Nigeria as a case study, asserts that: *The trouble with Africa is simply and squarely the failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the African land or climate and the collective psyche or anything else. Instead, African problem is the heartless unwillingness and unacceptable inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibilities and challenges of personal example, which are the hallmarks of true leadership,* he continues, *without peace, no meaningful social programme can be undertaken; without justice, social order is constantly threatened. And the reason is simple. A normal sensible person will wait for his turn if he is sure that the shares will go around; if not, he might start a scramble.*

Africa is rich in mineral resources according to the World Bank. As Sorensen (1986) admits that countries with rich natural resources might have a poor population if the income generated from the sales of mineral resources to other countries is squandered by the leaders. A case in point is that in Nigeria, since the discovery of crude oil over 400 billion dollars have been generated as petroleum revenue. According to Oby Ekweze and Nuhu Ribadu, this money has ended up in the pockets of the country's leaders. No wonder, corruption is being blamed for the high rate of poverty, unemployment, insecurity and infrastructure decay in Nigeria. Bates (2003: 19) Ake (1993: 240) Schwab (2000, Zack-Williams (2002: 1-2) bemoan African leaders inept and corruption tendency as the reason for the continent's underdevelopment. A study by the National Bureau of Economic Research (1999) gives a vivid picture of African economic sluggishness since independence, “36% of the region's population lives in economies that in 1995 had not regained the per capita income levels first achieved before 1960. Another 6% are below levels first achieved in 1970, 41% below 1980 levels and 11% below 1990 level. Only 35 million people reside in nations that have higher income in 1995 that they had ever reached” (Mbeki, 2005). Furthermore, Lubeck (1992) corroborated the data analysis of the National Bureau of Economic Research by elaborating more on African development crisis. According to him, “any review of development and social structure must grapple with African's alarming statistical trends: (i) the world's highest annual population growth rate (3.2% average), which will raise Africa's absolute size from 451 million (1987) to 673 million by 2000; (ii) an absolute decline in the index of per capita food production (-5 since 1979), annual requiring \$18 billion worth of food imports for food deficits and for the 30 million facing starvation (World Bank 1989); (iii) the world's highest ratio of external, mostly public, debt to GNP (115%) and debt to export

earnings (350%); (iv) the world's lowest rate of industrialization (10% of GNP); (v) the highest infant mortality rate (more than 150/1000) and the lowest average life expectancy (51 years); (vi) more than half the world HIV infection ( 6million) (Becker, 1990, Larson, 1990); (vii) the largest number of refugees (4 million); and (viii), despite a 2.5% annual increase of export commodity volumes between 1986 and 1990, an annual decline in export earnings of 16% (World Bank, 1989, United Nations, 1991)." In addition, Heleta, (2007) postulates that the environmental degradation that is being experienced in some parts of the Sub-Saharan Africa will definitely increase the size of people living in acute poverty and push Africa to additional suffering through conflicts, economic stagnation, and underdevelopment.

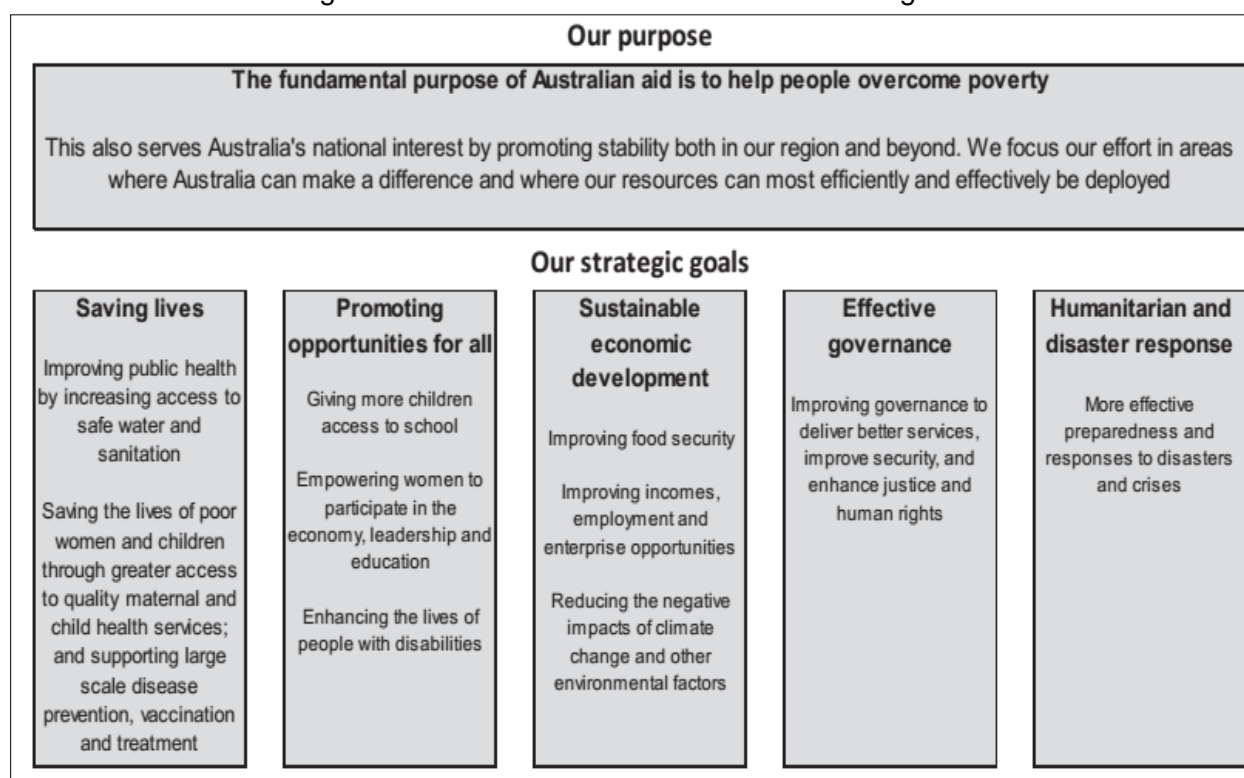
### **AUSTRALIA DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO AFRICA**

The Australian Government has been one of the foremost countries in the world in providing development assistance to Africa. The development assistance ranges from human development, security assistances and humanitarian assistance. The nitty gritty of Australian development assistance to Africa is to see the continent advance towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). For instance, the Australian Awards, is a foundation stone of the Australian Government development drive in Africa in providing quality postgraduate education, training and professional development opportunity for Africans. A case in point is that the development skills that these Africans acquired from Australia through the Australian Award are used to for the development of individual countries of participants of the programme. The Australia-Africa Partnership Facility (AAPF) which is located in Africa is another avenue of the Australian Government in increasing development cooperation between Australia and Africa. According to CARDNO who manages the facility, the AAPF is an idea of the Australian Government, with an endowment of 65 million Australian dollars. The aim of the facility is to develop cooperation between the Australian Government and countries in Africa, while the core objectives are to build concrete partnership that will lead to sustainable development in selected areas in African countries and the foster of good working relationship (CARDNO, 2014). Further to this, the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade pinpoints that the government of Australia share a cohesive cooperation with African countries in promoting development strategies on the continent. For example, the core aim of Australian mining industries in Africa is to provide countries in Africa the ample opportunity to accelerate growth and reduce poverty. In addition, Australia is investing in agriculture in the continent this is because agriculture provides the bulk of employment for Africans. A case in point is that the support of the Australian Government in agriculture production in Africa is to enhance market development and increase livelihoods in the continent. Aside this, the Australian Government

assists African countries in the areas of peace and security, humanitarian assistance and volunteer works. As a result of this, the Australian Government has entered into political and diplomatic tie with all countries in Africa and it has established a tie with regional organizations in Africa such as the African Union (AU), Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS), the East African Community and the Southern African Development Community.

## EVALUATION AND RESULTS

Figure 1 Framework for the Australian Aid Program



Source: Australia Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2012

This section of the study will elaborate on the major areas that the Australian Government has played in development assistance in Africa. These areas include development aid, human development, peace and security, and humanitarian assistance. According to the Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade the core aim of the country development assistant is to reduce poverty vis a vis saving lives, promoting opportunity for all, sustainable economic development, effective governance and humanitarian response. Diagram 1 above depicts the framework of Australian aid program.



### Australia Aid to Southern Africa Development Communities (SADC)

Countries in Africa are facing development obstacles despite the improvement in peace and economic growth. African remains the poorest continent in the world and conflicts and civil strife make the continent inward road to achieving the millennium development goal to be a mirage (Ausaid, 2010). "Looking West: Australia's strategic approach to aid to Africa 2011-2015" is to eradicate poverty and by promoting rural sustainable development in meeting the target of MDGs (ibid). Most of the Australian development aids are concentrated in the Southern Africa countries. The rationale behind this according to McMurray (1996) is that South Africa which is one of the countries in the SADC needs assistance after the end of the apartheid regime. In 1996-19997, an estimated amount of A\$105. 6 million was budgeted for Africa with a substantial amount going to the SADC. Gordon Bilney who was the Minister of Development and Cooperation and Pacific Island Affairs in 1995 came out with a policy on Australian aid to Africa. The policy thrust focused on the SADC. For instance, for country recipient program, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Mozambique received \$20 million yearly, for reconstruction, the Horns, East and South Africa got \$2.5 million annually while in the training aid program, Botswana, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia received \$10.5 million per annum (Ausaid, 1996). Australian financial aid assistance to SADC countries is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Total Australian Development Assistance to SADC 1995-1996

<b>Country</b>	<b>A\$million</b>
Angola	3.826
Botswana	1.4
Lesotho	0.428
Malawi	0.973
Mauritius	2.875
Mozambique	10.763
Namibia	1.667
South Africa	10.929
Swaziland	0.983
Tanzania	1.723
Zambia	1.64
Zimbabwe	5.518
South African NGOs	4.057
Black Communities	0.163
Regional Southern Africa/ Regional South of Sahara	3.085
<b>Total Southern Africa</b>	<b>47.155</b>
<b>Total Africa/Indian Ocean</b>	<b>134.031</b>

Source: AUSAID 2008

However, the concentration of Australia aid to SADC has been criticized. According to MuMurray (1996) “why does so much Australia’s development assistance go to some of the most developed African countries while the poorest receive mainly ‘bandaid’ assistance in the form of food and humanitarian aid.” A case in point is that South Africa is one of the developed countries in Africa, yet it received much aid from Australia. It is on this ground that the Australian Labor government that came to power in 2007 decided to change the development assistance policy in Africa by “broaden and deepen the engagement with Africa using the term ‘re-engagement’ to describe the effort” (Negin and Denning, 2011). From an available evidence, the likes of Botswana, Ghana, Rwanda and Tanzania have made remarkable progress on economic and social indicators which indicated that aid to Africa can have an affirmative effect on social indicators and growth (Radelet, 2010). The economic emergence of some African countries like Nigeria which is the largest economy in Africa and the 26<sup>th</sup> in the world prompted McKinsey (2010) to posit that African middle class has increased significantly and investors from other continents now see Africa as an emerging force. In a similar manner, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecast robust economic growth in some African countries in the near future. To sum up the positive impact of Australian development aid to Africa, this is how Radelet (2010) puts it: *It is time to move away from the strong caricatures of both sides of this debate. Aid is neither the panacea nor the demon it is sometimes made out to be. [Aid] can play an important supporting role in helping to achieve important development outcomes.*

However, with the substantial amount of aid Africa has received in the early 1960s, the positive impact has not been felt. This is because most of the aid funds were either stolen by African leaders or they use the fund for elephant projects (Ayittey, 1998). In a similar vein, Kankwenda (2004) asserts that after over 40 years of the West trying to assist African through development aid “the gaps have not only wider and the need for development aid has increased.” In a nutshell, the financial aid to Africa from Western donors are stolen by African politicians and lodged in some banks abroad.

### **Peace and Security**

Empirical evidence has shown that poverty played a major role in most the armed conflicts in Africa. “No less than 28 Sub-Saharan African States have been at war since 1980” (Shah, 2010). Australia as a regional power block has a solid interest in the security, stability and prosperity of Africa (Ausaid, 2010). The commitment by the Australian Government to the peace and stability in Africa prompted the Rudd government to intensify Australian effort in the maintaining of peace and security in the Sub-Saharan Africa, Although, the National Security Statement of 2008 pinpoints the role of Australian defence and security plan, Africa was not



captured in this plan. However, the Defence White Paper of 2009 did. And it states: *It will remain in Australia's interests to encourage peace and security in Africa as part of our contribution to global security, through targeted defence cooperation and capacity building in area such as peacekeeping. These efforts will contribute to Africa's capacity to manage its security (Department of Defence, 2009).*

So far, Australia has participated in 13 peacekeeping operations in Africa (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2010). This is because Australia now considered peace and security as a vital tool for African development (Smith, 2010). Table 2, shows Australian participation in peacekeeping operations in Africa.

Table 2: Australian participation in multinational peacekeeping operations in Africa

<b>Name of operation</b>	<b>Theatre</b>	<b>Dates of Australi involvement</b>
UN Operation in the Congo (ONUC)	Congo	1960–1961
Commonwealth Military Training Team—Uganda (CMTTU)	Uganda	1982–1984
UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG)	Namibia	1989–1990
United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO)	Western Sahara	1991–1994
UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I)	Somalia	1992–1993
Unified Task Force (UNITAF)	Somalia	1992–1993
UN Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II)	Somalia	1993–1995
UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR)	Rwanda	1994–1995
UN Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ)	Mozambique	1994–2002
UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE)	Ethiopia/Eritrea	2001–2005
International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT)	Sierra Leone	2000–2003
UN Mission in the Sudan	Sudan	2006–present
UN-AU Mission in Darfur	Sudan	2008–present
UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO)	Horn of Africa	2009–present

Source: Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, 2008.

Australia has contributed immensely to peace in Africa, evidence from Congo, Namibia, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone gave credence to this. However, Africa is still the center point of conflict in the world. Nigeria, Lybia, Central Africa Republic, Southern Sudan and Somalia are all engulf in armed conflicts.

### **Humanitarian Assistance, NGOs and Volunteers Support in Africa**

The Australian Government has played significant in humanitarian assistance to some African countries that are in need of assistance due to conflicts, poverty and droughts. For instance, the droughts that affected the Horn of Africa 2011 made over 13 million people in need of humanitarian food aid (CARE, 2011). Australia was one of the countries of the world to respond to the need of the people in the Horn of Africa. Australian donated \$112 million to the humanitarian effort in 2011 which was the country's largest international humanitarian operation in financial term (DFAT, 2014). Further to this, "the Australian public also contributed an additional \$13.6 million to the crisis through the innovative 'Dollar for Dollar Initiative' in which the government matched donations" (ibid.). Aside the Australian Government contribution to humanitarian assistance some African countries, Australian Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and volunteers are also contributing their stakes to African development. Michael Holman in (Ausiad, 2008) puts the number of NGOs working in Africa to be 25,000. The focus point of some of these NGOs is to reduce poverty in Africa. For example, the Australian African Community Engagement Scheme (AACES) is a joint program with some Australian NGOs and their Africa based partners. It facilitates the reduction of poverty in Africa through the implementation of community-based interventions for the less privileged and disadvantaged people. In addition, the Australian volunteers are a set of people that are committed to poverty alleviation and economic growth in Africa. The Australian Government has acknowledged its contribution in the assistance it has given to some African countries that have saved the lives of people. According to the (DFAT, 2014) "the exact number of lives saved by Australian assistance is hard to estimate, but it is clear that millions of people received much-needed assistance." This statement was also corroborated by the evaluation report of K Hedlund, N Majid, D Maxwell and N Nicholson (2012): *"the unconditional cash and voucher response... quickly achieved an impressive scale, building principally on international and Somali NGO field capacity. The evidence marshalled in this evaluation suggests that cash and vouchers made a quantifiable difference in reducing hunger and improving food security, enabling a more rapid recovery than would have been possible without assistance."*

However, the Australian aid assistance to Africa has been focused on some countries in the Southern Africa, leaving many countries in the West and Northern Africa from Australian

development assistance. Presently, Australian development assistance has been concentrated on Eastern and Southern Africa that includes Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa (Ausaid, 2009).

## **Education**

Education is the bedrock of any society that wants to develop economically and politically. The Australian Government knows the value of education as an apparatus for human development. That is why it has taken the step in providing quality education to Africans. One area the government of Australia has been supporting African students to come to Australia for study is through the Australian Awards Scholarship. The purpose of the Australian Awards Scholarship is to provide sound education opportunities for Africans in order for the recipients of the scholarship to contribute to the socioeconomic development of their countries. The scholarship is awarded in the areas of Agriculture, Health, Mining, Natural Resource Management, Public Policy, and Water and Sanitation. According to the African head of the Australian Agency for International Development, Jamie Isbister, "Australia's development assistance to Africa is focused on building human resource capacity. This is why we have provided scholarships and fellowships to more than 4, 000 African professionals since the 1970s" he continues, through Australian Awards, Australia has become a key contributor in assisting Africa build capacity in priority areas as it strives to meet Millennium Development Goal" (Ausaid, 2014). However, there has been concern about the distribution of the scholarship. For instance, scholarships to countries like Ghana and Gambia have been reduced. Aside the Australian Awards, there is also the Australian Awards Small Grant Scheme that is meant to support Alumni that are involved in development activities in their respective countries.

## **Health**

Another important area the Australian Government has supported Africa is in the area of health. For instance, the Hamlin Fistula Hospital in Ethiopia has received immense support from the Australian Government since 1984. In addition to this, the Australian Authority has assisted African countries in the area of water and sanitation. For example, Mozambique has benefited in this area because it has one of the lowest water and sanitation coverage area in Africa (Ausaid, 2010). Furthermore, the Australian Government has shown concern on the Ebola Virus Disease that is ravaging West Africa. According the Australian Ambassador to the Republic of China, Victor Bockarie, the Australian Government is providing one million United State dollar through the World Health Organization to fight the Ebola virus (Sierra Leone Government, 2014).

## CONCLUSION

This study was done to evaluate the Australian development assistance to Africa. The Sub-Saharan Africa is still going through a development crisis when compared to the other continents of the world. The international community has been of assistance to Africa in the area of development. Australia is one major player in this regard. From the analysis of the study, the Australian Government has contributed immensely to the development of Africa in the area of education, health, humanitarian assistance and peace building. However, despite the assistance given to Africa by development partners, poverty, inequality, high mortality rate, HIV prevalence, civil wars and environmental degradation still ravage parts of Africa. Furthermore, some scholars have bemoaned the financial aid given to African countries, their argument is that this fund to not get to the masses because African leaders either mismanaged the fund or they use it for elephant projects that are not of benefit to the society. It is necessary for development partners to monitor the funds that are given to African countries so that the funds can be used for the purpose they are meant for. Finally, analysis of this study cannot be generalized, for a holistic appraisal of Australian development assistance to Africa, there is the need for further research by the use of quantitative analysis and a comparative study of Australian development assistance to Africa and Asia.

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